PhD position

The project group of Prof. Dr. Sybille B. Unsicker in the Department of Plant-Environment-Interactions at the Botanical Institute of Kiel University offers a

4-year PhD position to study plant volatiles in the context of biodiversity-ecosystem functioning relationships

Background:
Plant volatiles are key components of biotic interactions that underpin essential ecosystem functions (plant production, herbivory, predation). Few studies have investigated plant volatile emissions in complex natural communities, and our knowledge of the importance of plant volatiles in the context of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning (BEF) is limited. The influence of plant and soil history on volatile emissions is even less well understood. The aim of this project is to investigate, in the framework of the Jena Experiment (http://www.the-jena-experiment.de), whether plant diversity stabilizes plant VOC emission as an important ecosystem function, both over time and during periods of resistance and recovery during and after an extreme climate event. The plant volatile emission data collected in this project will help to test the research unit’s main hypothesis that multifunctional stability is highest in plots with high plant diversity.

We are offering
a 4-year PhD position (funded by the German Research Foundation DFG) within the research unit FOR 5000 “Biotic interactions, community assembly, and eco-evolutionary dynamics as drivers of long-term biodiversity–ecosystem functioning relationships”. The position will ideally start on February 1st 2023. Payment will be based on the tariff contracts for the public service (65% E13).
We provide an excellent research environment with enthusiastic scientists from different nationalities in the Botanical Institute at Kiel University, Germany (https://www.bot.uni-kiel.de/de) right at the Baltic Sea. The PhD student will be co-supervised by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Weisser, Terrestrial Ecology Research Group at Technical University of Munich (www.ls.toek.de) and associated with Kiel Plant Center (https://www.plant-center.uni-kiel.de/en).

Candidate requirements:
Master degree in Ecology or related disciplines
Strong interest in Chemical Ecology
Experience in field work
Experience in statistical analysis (preferably with R)
Willingness to work in an interdisciplinary team
Fluent verbal and written English communication skills
Excellent organizing skills
German driving license (at least willingness to get it)
Cultural prediction tools such as AlphaFold and Rosetta is an advantage.

Kiel University sees itself as a modern and cosmopolitan employer. We welcome your application regardless of your age, gender, cultural or social background, religion, ideology, disability or sexual identity. We promote gender equality.

The university is committed to increasing the percentage of female employees and therefore strongly encourages suitably qualified women to apply. Women are given preference in cases of equal aptitude, ability and professional performance.

The university is committed to the employment of severely disabled persons. Therefore, applications from
severely disabled persons and persons of equal status will be given preferential consideration if they are suitable.

We expressly welcome applications from persons with a migratory background.

Please send your application as a single pdf in English including a letter of motivation, summarizing your experience and future vision, CV of no more than 4 pages, list of publications and relevant certificates (degree certificates, etc.) and the names of two referees (including email address) to Prof. Dr. Sybille Unsicker sunsicker@bot.uni.kiel.de.

The application deadline is December 22, 2023.

The position is available from February 1st 2024.