The Fleishman Root Agroecology Lab in the Department of Plant Science at Penn State University is recruiting a PhD student to begin studies in Fall 2027, with the opportunity to begin research activities as soon as spring 2027.

Our lab focuses on understanding the role of perennial root systems in supporting plant health and enhancing soil quality. We seek to explore the relationships between root system properties, root-microbe interactions, and biogeochemical cycling to improve agricultural and environmental resilience.

The initial PhD projects will focus on woody root ecology in vineyards and orchards. There is ample flexibility for students to tailor specific measurements and expand into related agricultural or forest systems based on their research interests and aptitudes. A background in plant science, sustainable agriculture, soils, or ecology is preferred but not required.

Students have the option to complete their degree through the Agricultural, Environmental, and Plant Sciences (AEPS) program or the Ecology Intercollege Graduate Program at Penn State. The lab is highly collaborative, with ample opportunities to interact with other students and faculty through university-wide initiatives, including the Center for Root and Rhizosphere Biology and the One Health Microbiome Center.

How to apply: Interested students can send a CV, a short description of your research interests and experience, and unofficial transcripts to Dr. Suzanne Fleishman at smfleishman@psu.edu. Please include "PhD Position in Root Ecology" in the email subject line.

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Root Agroecology Lab