Botany

Overview

Plant science holds a special place at Connecticut College. Here, botany is its own department, distinct from biology. Major in botany and you have unparalleled study and research opportunities. Teaching and research are inextricably linked, and the department has an international reputation in coastal, marine and estuarine studies. We have an exceptionally strong program in freshwater botany, as well as courses in such diverse areas as terrestrial ecology, plant systematics, ethnobotany and plant cell biology. You focus on your areas of interest while developing a strong background in all aspects of plant biology.

Research Opportunities

Thanks to a low student-faculty ratio and ample funding, you are able to conduct research with a botany faculty member, often as early as your first or sophomore year. In recent years, students have worked on projects in many parts of New England and the continental U.S., as well as Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Venezuela and Peru. Faculty-student collaborations often lead to presentations at conferences and co-authorship of papers in top journals.

Facilities

We offer top-flight transmission and scanning electron microscopes as well as light microscopes. You get hands-on experience in our extensive greenhouses and learn plant identification and classification in our Graves Herbarium, a renowned resource for scholars. Another unusual resource for a small college is our 750-acre Arboretum, a living laboratory with hundreds of species of native trees and shrubs and a large variety of wetland and upland habitats.

Daniel Evanich
Botany major, chemistry minor

Q: Why Connecticut College?
A: I have always been really interested in plant biology and I knew coming in that I wanted to be a Botany major. The Botany Department is a huge reason why I decided to come to Connecticut College. It is unique for a small school like Connecticut College to offer a Botany major so I really felt like coming here was the best of both worlds. I also knew I wanted to do research and was excited at the prospect of getting involved in a lab early on.

Q: Have you done research?
A: I started working in Professor Rachel Spicer’s lab in the second semester of my freshman year and I can truly say it was one of the most rewarding experiences. Professor Spicer’s research centers on the plant hormone auxin and its role in vascular development and connectivity. My project was looking at alternative sites for auxin biosynthesis and trying to determine how these sites might contribute to the auxin content of the whole plant.

Q: What are your career or graduate school plans?
A: I started a Ph.D. program in plant biology at Cornell University in Fall 2015.
Faculty

Glenn Dreyer, Charles and Sarah P. Becker ’27
Director of the Arboretum; Adjunct Associate Professor of Botany
B.S., University of California, Davis; M.A., Connecticut College
Vegetation management; ecology and horticulture of native plants; invasive exotic woody plants; large and historic trees

T. Page Owen, Associate Professor of Botany
B.A., Oberlin; Ph.D., University of California, Riverside Botany

Peter Siver, Charles and Sarah P. Becker ’27
Professor of Botany; Director of Environmental Studies Program
B.A., SUNY Binghamton; M.S., University of New Hampshire; Ph.D., University of Connecticut
Limnology; acid rain; phycology

Kristine Hardeman, Senior Lecturer of Biology and Botany
B.S., University of Iowa; Ph.D., University of Oregon
Molecular biology; genetics; plant biotechnology

Rachel Spicer, Assistant Professor of Botany
B.S., University of Massachusetts-Amherst; M.S., Oregon State University; Ph.D., Harvard University
Xylem structure and function; vascular development in trees; parenchyma physiology

Pamela Hine, Senior Lecturer of Botany
B.A., Bates College; M.A., Connecticut College
Tidal marsh ecology; pollination ecology; environmental education; plant ecology

Manuel Lizarralde, Associate Professor of Botany and Anthropology
B.A., M.A., Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley
Ethnobotany; environmental anthropology

Chad Jones, Associate Professor of Botany and Environmental Studies; Chair of the Botany Department
B.S., Brigham Young University; Ph.D., University of Washington
Plant ecology; invasive plants; plant succession; GIS and ecological modeling

Sardha Suriyapperuma, Senior Lecturer of Botany and Biology
B.S., University of Colombo; M.S., Ph.D., University of Rhode Island
Molecular biology; plant and cell biology; microarray; genomics and linkage mapping; plant-microbe interactions

Selected Courses

Plants, Protists and Fungi; Indigenous Use of Tropical Rainforests; Ethnobotany of Southern New England; Marine and Freshwater Botany; Genetically Modified Crops; Electron Microscopy; Plant Structure and Function; Plant Systematics and the Local Flora; Environmental Plant Physiology; Ecological Restoration; Biofuels; Plant Ecology

About Connecticut College

Connecticut College educates students to put the liberal arts into action as citizens in a global society. A leader in the liberal arts since 1911, the College is home to nationally ranked programs for internships, community action, arts and technology, environmental studies and international studies. Our beautiful 750-acre arboretum campus is located in the historic New England seaport community of New London, Conn.

For more information, visit www.conncoll.edu/academics/