

PhD position (f/m/d) in Plant Molecular Biology in MYBstery

Are you fascinated by protein posttranslational modification and protein complexes, and want to dissect how plants express the right genes at the right time and place? Do you want to be part of a European team working to resolve the regulatory interactions controlling suberin biosynthesis across different root barriers? Then you might be the candidate for this vacancy in the MYBstery project.

For the MYBstery project, we are seeking a highly motivated and talented PhD candidate to unravel how MYB transcription factors dynamically regulate suberin deposition in root barriers in collaboration with the team of Dr. Kaisa Kajala at the University of Utrecht (UU). Root barriers shield plants from the environment by regulating water loss, gas exchange, and nutrient uptake, while also preventing pathogen penetration. The deposition of highly specialized biopolymers such as suberin confers these protective properties; therefore, manipulating suberin represents an untapped opportunity for engineering stress-tolerant crops.

Your project will entail resolving the MYB TF post-translational modifications and stability of MYB proteins and MYB protein complexes influencing suberin deposition. You will work in the model plant *Arabidopsis* and with a commercially important species such as chickpea. You will collaborate closely with the MYBstery Postdoc at UU, who will address complementary questions about the spatiotemporal gene regulatory networks of suberin deposition by MYB-TFs. You will participate in regular lab visits for training and knowledge exchange between the two collaborating labs and benefit from annual opportunities to attend field conferences. The position will be based at the University of Freiburg under the supervision of Prof. Laura Ragni (U-Fr) and Dr. Kaisa Kajala (UU). The preferred start date is 1st September 2026.

What we are looking for:

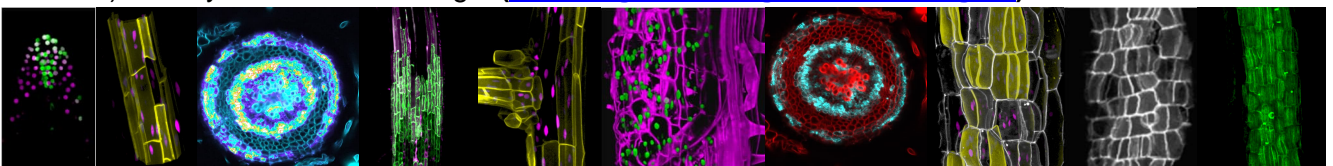
- A curious, highly motivated person with a passion for science.
- Expert in plant molecular biology (M. Sc. in plant molecular biology, plant biochemistry, plant biotechnology or similar).
- Prior experience in protein-protein interaction (biochemistry approaches)
- Team player, goal-oriented, independent thinker, well-developed organisational, analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent spoken and written English.

What we are offering:

- A 3-year funded PhD position in an international NWO-DFG joint project.
- Friendly working environment, international, vibrant [Plant Freiburg Community](#)
- State-of-the-art research infrastructure.
- Additional training and soft skill/personal development via [GRACE](#).

The application deadline is the 30th of April 2026.

Please send your application as a single **PDF** (motivation letter, CV, and contact details of three referees) directly to Prof. Laura Ragni (laura.ragni@biologie.uni-freiburg.de)



For more info on the research topic: see *Wunderling et al. 2018*, *Andersen et al. 2021*, *Serra et al. 2022*, *Molina et al 2025*, *Xiao et al 2025*, *Jo et al 2025*, [Kajala Website](#) and [Ragni Website](#).

The University of Freiburg is an equal opportunity employer and particularly welcomes applications from qualified women and individuals with disabilities. Formal employment procedures will be carried out by the central administration of the University of Freiburg. Salary and benefits are in accordance with TV-L E13, in line with the guidelines of the University of Freiburg and the DFG.