Anju Biswas is a Ph.D. candidate in the Agronomy Department at the University of Florida, expected to graduate in Fall 2022. She works with Dr. Esteban Rios, working on alfalfa breeding using Phenomics and Genomics selection and Crop Modeling to develop heat-stress tolerant alfalfa cultivars. She has obtained a prestigious seed grant award (~77.5k) from the AG2PI community. Originally, she is from Bangladesh and earned her BS in Ag and first MS in Genetics and Plant Breeding from Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University. Then she started her second MS at Delaware State University in Plant Science. She also worked with hort crops during her BS and MS and was experienced in marker-assisted selection, biochemical analysis of fruits, and tissue culture. She served in NAPB’s GSWG for three years. She has secured fellowship, seed-grant awards, scholarships, travel grants, and awards for posters and oral talks during her graduate studies. Now she is in the final year of her Ph.D. and looking for a job. She is open to working either in academia or industry upon completing her Ph.D.

Mentor: Dr. Ksenija Gasic, Clemson University
Autumn Brown is honored to be selected as a Borlaug Scholar this year. She is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, under the guidance of Dr. Shelby Ellison. Her project focuses on the genetic basis for many different fiber traits in Hemp (*Cannabis sativa L*). She is originally from a small town in Arkansas and that is where she developed her love for horticulture, as both her parents and grandmother had big gardens. She attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and received her bachelor’s degree in Horticulture with double minors in Crop Biotechnology and History. Autumn enjoys helping undergraduates with their research projects and helping them learn different techniques to expand their knowledge as future Plant Breeders. She is currently the Plant Breeding/Plant Genetics representative for the PSGSC (Plant Science Graduate Student Council), and part of many other groups and mentoring communities.

*Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Peterson, Sun World*
Mjay is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Plant Sciences at the University of Minnesota under the guidance of Drs. Aaron Lorenz and Robert Stupar. Her research focuses on identifying the genetic basis underlying the resistance to iron deficiency chlorosis in soybean. Her work includes characterizing the candidate gene conferring resistance to IDC and introgressing the IDC QTL into elite Minnesota soybean varieties. Mjay received her B.S. in Plant Pathology from Visayas State University, Philippines, and M.S. in Plant Science from Tennessee State University. Apart from her academic work, Mjay is actively involved in various leadership activities which include mentoring several undergraduate students, organizing the UMN Plant Science Symposium, serving as Council of Graduate Student (COGS) representative for Applied Plant Sciences Graduate Club, and volunteering in the Plant Breeding Center Vegetable Breeding working group.

*Mentor: Dr. Brittney Jones, Bayer*
Dinesh Ghimire

Dinesh is pursuing a M.S. in Biotechnology at West Virginia State University (WVSU) working with Dr. Liedl in the tomato breeding project. He received his B.S. in Agriculture Science from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He worked as Research Assistant in Lumbini Seed Company and National Maize Research Program in Nepal. He has also worked as a teaching assistant in WVSU. He has served in many organizations and participated in various workshops, trainings, climate activist meetings, and professional conference. Currently, he is working in developing multiple pest resistance vintage tomato varieties. He is utilizing marker-assisted selection and background genome selection for accelerating breeding. He is also studying crossing barriers encountered while making crosses. He is willing to continue his journey by pursuing Ph.D. in plant breeding and utilizes genetic, high throughput phenotyping and bio-informatics tools.

Mentor: Dr. Amanda Hulse Kemp, USDA-ARS
Emmanuel Miguel Gonzalez grew up in El Centro, CA, where he developed an interest in both astronomy and plants. He decided to pursue his interest in plants by earning a BS in Biology with an emphasis in plant biology from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA. He is now a PhD student in Dr. Duke Pauli’s lab at the University of Arizona School of Plant Sciences. Emmanuel’s research involves leveraging sensor technology, high performance computing, and machine learning to extract phenotypic trait information from the world's largest robotic field scanner at the University of Arizona's Maricopa Agricultural Center. He aims to study these phenotypic trait data to identify genetic factors contributing to stress-adaptive traits and develop predictive models for key agronomic traits. The tools and methods developed throughout his research contribute to the worldwide effort aimed at developing resilient crops that can thrive in increasingly inhospitable environments. Emmanuel enjoys mentoring students from diverse academic backgrounds, ranging from computer science to life sciences.

Mentor: Dr. Dave Bubeck, Corteva
Andrew McCutchen Horgan

Andrew Horgan completed his B.S. at Texas A&M University where he earned a double major in the departments of Plant Pathology & Microbiology, and Soil & Crop Sciences. Upon graduation he continued his education at Washington State University, completing his M.S. in the Department of Crop Science working with the winter wheat breeding program. Andrew is currently a 2nd year PhD student at Texas A&M University in the Department of Horticultural Sciences. He is advised by Dr. Amit Dhingra at Texas A&M and Jim Giovannoni at Cornell University and his research aims to further understand the genetic and physiological processes that regulate fruit firmness, cell wall degradation, and ripening parameters in horticultural crops. He currently serves as the Chair for the Texas A&M Genome Editing Symposium, served as the President of the Texas A&M Horticultural Graduate Council for the 2021 academic year. He hopes to use his education and experiences to help advance the nutrition and economic return of small-scale horticultural production, with a focus in developing regions.

Mentor: Dr. Kiru Pillay, Bayer
Sarah Jones is a PhD student in Plant Breeding in the Soynomics group at Iowa State University. Studying with Dr. Danny Singh, she researches phenotyping strategies to improve drought tolerance in soybean. Sarah earned a BS in Horticulture Science with a minor in Spanish from Texas A&M University and her MS in Plant Breeding from Iowa State University. She interned at a rose breeding company in Texas, worked in a discovery team at Monsanto, and served as a staff member in the vegetable breeding program at Texas A&M University and the Singh soybean breeding program at Iowa State University. Sarah gained breeding experience in over 12 crops from high value horticultural crops and ornamentals to agronomic row crops and has held multiple leadership positions at Iowa State University including co-chair for the Corteva sponsored RF Baker Plant Breeding Symposium.

Mentor: Dr. Stephanie Sjoberg, Syngenta
Gurleen Kaur

Gurleen is a PhD candidate at the University of Florida majoring in Horticultural Sciences and is slated to graduate in December 2022. She wants to work in the private industry in plant breeding after graduation. She works on tomato flavor improvement with Dr Harry Klee using omics techniques, bioinformatics, and gene editing. She got her masters from New Mexico State University in peanut breeding and an undergraduate from Punjab Agricultural University, India. She belongs to a farm family and is a first-generation graduate. She is trained in traditional and modern plant breeding techniques. She also has teaching experience as a teaching assistant. She has served in many student organizations as President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, organizing symposiums, field trips, workshops, online journal clubs, and professional development events. Currently, she is the Chair of the George Washington Carver Scholars Program, NAPB. Gurleen has won numerous awards, scholarships, oral talks, and travel grants.

Mentor: Dr. Sarah Potts, Corteva
Mitchell Allen Kent

Mitchell Kent grew up in central Illinois where he received a bachelor's degree in crop science from the University of Illinois. Mitchell then moved to Texas where he received a master's degree in plant breeding working in the sorghum breeding and genetics lab and his research focused on specialty sorghums. Currently, Mitchell is working on his PhD in the same lab at Texas A&M University and is focusing on genomic prediction to screen for sorghum seed parents.

*Mentor: Dr. Allen Van Deynze, University of California - Davis*
Mary-Francis LaPorte

Mary-Francis LaPorte is a third-year Ph.D. Candidate at the University of California Davis. She works in Dr. Christine Diepenbrock’s lab, studying Genomic Prediction of carotenoid traits in tropical and subtropical maize grain. Prior to graduate school, she studied Plant Biology at the University of Oklahoma. Throughout her studies, she has been interested in computational science—specifically how high-performance computing can be used to answer questions relating to plants and plant breeding. She receives support to study scientific computation from the Department of Energy’s Computational Science Graduate Fellowship. Outside of research, she teaches Software and Data Carpentries courses, which are community-hosted workshops designed to teach scientists programming and data management skills using a variety of open-source languages and tools.

Mentor: Dr. Donn Cummings, Monsanto (retired)
McKena is a PhD student working with Dr. Bob VanBuren in the Horticulture department at Michigan State University (MSU). She received her B.S. in Applied Biotechnology from the University of Georgia before moving to MSU to pursue a PhD in Horticulture and Plant Breeding. McKena’s dissertation is focused on the discovery of agronomic, domestication, and climate resilience traits in the underutilized cereal teff. She aims to explore the untapped genetic diversity of crops that are often globally neglected and highlight their potential as more sustainable, agrobiodiverse alternatives. McKena is an NSF-NRT-IMPACTS fellow and member of the Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Biotechnology program at MSU. She serves as an undergraduate research mentor and works collaboratively with the Horticultural Organization of Graduate Students and Horticulture Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee to strengthen community within the department.

Mentor: Dr. Ana Maria Heilman, North Dakota State University
Sam McDonald

Sam is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia. He works in the Soybean Breeding and Genetics Lab led by Dr. Zenglu Li. Sam received his B.S. from the University of Missouri in Plant Sciences with an emphasis in Breeding, Biology, and Biotechnology in 2017 and completed two internships with Pioneer (now Corteva) during this time. Sam’s doctoral research focuses on the identification of resistance genes to the fungal disease frogeye leaf spot using QTL mapping and GWAS approaches in addition to genome sequencing and gene expression. Sam is also interested in increasing the compositional value of soybean and leads a project that uses molecular breeding techniques to stack high protein with high oleic and low linolenic fatty acid traits. Sam has held various leadership roles at the University of Georgia, including the president of the Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Genomics Graduate Student Association.

*Mentor: Dr. Chris Saski, Clemson University*
Cassondra Newman received her B.S. in Plant Science with a specialization in Plant Genetics from the University of Florida. Currently, Cassondra is a third year Ph.D. student at North Carolina State University and is co-advised by Dr. Dunne and Dr. Hulse-Kemp. At NCSU, Cassondra has directly integrated new genomic and phenomic technologies into a peanut breeding program which previously used only phenotypic recurrent selection for cultivar development. She developed a de novo reference genome, completed marker discovery, carried out tagSNP selection for an amplicon-based genotyping system, and characterized important wild species introgression blocks. She has also developed standard operating procedures for drone-based multispectral plant canopy data collection. Her project culminates in a genome wide association study where resistance to a devastating foliar disease, Leaf Spot, will be analyzed using the genomic and phenomic tools she developed. Cassondra has held leadership positions in several community, university, and professional organizations. She is currently the APRES Graduate Student Organization President and a veteran NCSU Graduate Student Peer Mentor.

Mentor: Dr. Jodi Scheffler, USDA-ARS
Edgar Sierra Orozco

Edgar is a fourth year PhD Candidate in the Horticultural Sciences department of the University of Florida. He works at the tomato breeding lab at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center under the guidance of Dr. Samuel Hutton. His project includes screening and mapping of resistance to target spot of tomato from several wild tomato species to ultimately provide the first ever target spot resistant tomato varieties. Besides his research, he fills leadership roles in student organizations: he is currently the president of the Gulf Coast Post doc and Student Association (GCPSA) and the vice president of the Mexicans in Gainesville student association. He also served in the past as Secretary of the GCPSA. He has obtained several awards including: the Fulbright scholarship, GCREC student of the year award, and travel, talk and poster competition awards. Before joining the graduate school, he worked for a few years in the private industry in a vegetable production farm.

*Mentor: Dr. Klaus Koehler, Corteva*
Luis Salazar is a 5th-year PhD candidate in the Horticulture & Agronomy Graduate Group studying plant breeding & genetics at the University of California, Davis. His research focuses on the physiology and genetics of salinity tolerance in wild lettuce species under his major professor, Dr. Richard Michelmore. As lettuce is a salt-sensitive crop, the objective of Luis’s research is to identify QTL related to salinity tolerance in wild lettuce species to breed salt-tolerant lettuce. Luis obtained his BS in Plant Sciences from the University of Florida in 2017. Luis currently leads the tomato breeding program SCOPE (Student Collaborative Organic Plant Breeding & Education Project) at Davis, which is a student-led organic plant breeding program where he is generating hybrid and inbred heirloom-type tomato cultivars with improved yields, disease resistance, and fruit quality for organic production. Luis’s aspiration after obtaining his PhD is to be an industry plant breeder with a focus on abiotic stress tolerance and fruit quality in horticultural crops.

**Mentor: Dr. Amy Jacobson, Corteva**
Liza Van der Laan

Liza Van der Laan is a PhD student at Iowa State University and is a member of the Soynomics Research and Breeding Group, advised by Dr. Asheesh Singh. She received her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Plant and Soil Sciences from Oklahoma State University. Her research centers around developing tools to breed more climate-resilient soybeans, specifically to heat stress. This includes gene expression studies, genetic screenings, and investigating high throughput phenotyping tools for field-based studies. Additionally, she works on breeding high yield-high protein soybeans and using machine learning methods to understand how weather affects these traits and can be used to predict these traits. Liza is an active student in the Department of Agronomy at ISU, holding a leadership position in the Agronomy Graduate Student Club. Additionally, she has been on the planning committee multiple times for the RF Baker Plant Breeding Symposium.

Mentor: Dr. Peggy Ozias-Akins, University of Georgia
Rebecca Arias

Rebecca Arias is an undergraduate Plant Science student at the University of Florida. With a background primarily in horticulture, she now spends her time studying plant breeding. She is the secretary of the Environmental Horticulture club at UF, which hosts the largest student-run poinsettia sale in the country. Academically, she has been accepted in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences honors program, and University of Florida’s University Scholars program, both of which will involve research cumulating into an undergraduate thesis. Rebecca has received numerous scholarships throughout her academic career at UF and has participated at events such as the MANRRS 2022 conference, and poster presentations at the 2021 UF Plant Science Symposium, and the 2022 Food for the Future forum. Life experience has cultivated a love of plants for Rebecca, and her enthusiasm is evident in her studies.

Mentor: Dr. Chandler Levinson, University of California - Davis
Caitlyn Bruntz

Caitlyn Bruntz is from Baxter, Iowa, where she graduated in 2020. She has led as captain in soccer and basketball and secretary and president of the FFA chapter. She is currently an undergraduate student at Iowa State going into her junior year in Agronomy and Seed Science. She has worked as a heavy machinery operator for a local farmer and in the Germination Lab at the Seed Science Center. She participated in the crops team contests which placed first in national competitions in the fall and spring. She has also had internships working with ServiTech as a crop scout and is currently a breeding intern at Bayer. Through the experience and knowledge she will have gained at Iowa State, she aspires to bring new innovations and insights that will be able to sustainably provide nutritional food to people around the world.

Mentor: Dr. Debora Menicos, Driscolls
Terryn Hutchings is a senior undergraduate at the University of California-Davis majoring in Plant Biotechnology. Terryn has received numerous agricultural scholarships and awards for her involvement with 4-H, FFA, and Agriculture Future of America. Her research interests revolve around the use of biotechnology and molecular breeding for improvement of nutritional and agronomic traits. Terryn was selected as a 2021 Integrated Pennycress Research Enabling Farm and Energy Resilience intern where she worked at CoverCress, Inc. Currently, she is working in Dr. Allen Van Deynze’s lab at the UC Davis Seed Biotechnology Center in support of the molecular breeding of peppers. After her graduation in March of 2023, she hopes to pursue a PhD in Crop Improvement – Breeding and Genetics and eventually plans to join the seed industry to deliver crops that improve food security at a global.

*Mentor: Hannah Senior, PBS International*
It’s my honor to be selected as a Borlaug Scholar this year. I was born in Nanjing, China. Growing up in a small vegetable and rice farm ran by my grandparents, I’ve had passion in growing crops since I was a kid. Now I am an undergrad at University of Wisconsin-Madison in Agronomy and Genetics. I worked in our sweetcorn breeding project and spent summer in the field in 2021. Now I am focusing on my senior thesis on plant tissue culture and transformation, hoping to gain more experience on the molecular levels. Besides study and research, I have been a member of UW-Madison Crop Judging team and have been competing around the country since freshman year. I am a peer mentor of the learning community Women in Science and Engineering here in UW-Madison, which connects me with many inspiring women in STEM. I hope I can contribute to a future in which we grow crops in a more effective, affordable, and culturally respectful way.

Mentor: Dr. Peng Chee, University of Georgia
I am a senior at Purdue University studying biochemistry and agriculture communications. I am currently working in Dr. Ejeta’s sorghum breeding lab researching Striga resistance. I have also had two internships with Corteva where I worked with hybrid wheat and efficacy trials of a new transgenic trait. I have also worked in Dr. Ma’s research lab working with soybean breeding. In addition to my research, I have been involved with the Agriculture Future of America organization that places an emphasis on developing agricultural leadership and professional skills. Outside of college, I have also been actively involved in my hometown where I run my own greenhouse business. After I graduate in December of 2022, I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in plant breeding and genetics with hopes of working to ensure a future where we live in a food-secure world for everyone regardless of geographic location.

Mentor: Dr. Sarah Turner-Hissong, Bayer
Bryceson G.
Keali‘iwiwo‘oleikamaunaki‘ekiʻe Tugade

I was born and raised in Hawaiʻi and have been interested in Food Security since I started participating in Hawaiian cultural conservation programs that perpetuate the understanding of ancient food systems. Since then, I have completed an Associate of Science in Plant Biology & Tropical Ag at Leeward Community College. Currently I’m pursuing a B.A.S. in Sustainable Community Food Systems at the University of Hawaii West Oʻahu. I had the opportunity to study at IRRI, where I gained a better understanding of global food systems. During my studies I have researched plant physiology using machine learning methods. I have also developed skills in food production working with KUPU, a non-profit in Hawaiʻi focused on place-based learning and served as vice-president of the UH West Oʻahu Aloha ʻĀina Student Service Club.

Mentor: Dr. Pat Byrne, Colorado State
Douglas Vines

Douglas is a senior Applied Biotechnology major at the University of Georgia. He works in Dr. Cecilia McGregor’s lab on allelic variation in a watermelon fruit shape gene, in which he contributed to the discovery of four novel fruit shape alleles. He has presented his research at Harvard College’s National Collegiate Research Conference and the University of Georgia’s Plant Center Retreat, at which his poster earned an award. Outside of his primary research, Douglas is a student worker in a fungal plant pathology lab, in which he has done soil sampling and isolate maintenance. He has been a UGA Plant Center REEU Fellow and interned at Corteva. Douglas is involved in leadership and service on campus as a UGA College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences Ambassador, the Fraternal Education Officer for Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and a regular volunteer at the UGArden student farm. After he graduates in May of 2023, he plans to pursue a Master’s in crop breeding and genetics. Douglas’ long-term goals are to eventually pursue a PhD in crop breeding and genetics and to be a fruit or vegetable breeder.

*Mentor: Dr. Don Jones, Cotton Incorporated*