

PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCE CAREERS

Plant scientists play an exciting role in the food we eat, where it comes from, what's in our food, and how growth methods impact the planet.

They use data from farm crops to improve how food is produced and are always on the lookout for methods that will produce more food for less – less labor, less pests and less water use. Plant scientists help maintain agricultural productivity and food safety!¹

Projected Growth³

Overall employment of agricultural and food scientists is projected to grow **8%** from 2021 to 2031.

Job Outlook²

The job outlook for plant scientists is bright! Careers in the soil and plant science field are expected to grow much faster than average.

Soil Scientist

Soil scientists gather information for construction, agricultural, government, industrial and scientific staff by studying soil characteristics and mapping soil types. They investigate the way soil responds to certain conditions, and study its chemical composition, structure, and properties.⁵

Average Salary:
\$91,463⁷

Conservationist

Conservationists act as protective guides and educators, advising private industries, government, policy makers and the public on the sustainability of natural resources.⁵

Average Salary:
\$64,460³

Plant Breeder

Plant breeders use information from studying seed characteristics to improve aspects like plant yield, size, quality, and maturity as well as resistance to drought, disease and more.⁵

Average Salary:
\$61,576⁸

Agronomist

When they're not scouting fields, managing soil, and analyzing markets, agronomists provide knowledge and leadership to growers in their assigned markets.⁵

Average Salary:
\$49,958⁶

Athletic Turf Manager

Athletic turf managers work to produce and maintain the playing areas for various sports. They plan, supervise, and manage athletic grounds and renovations.⁵

Curiosity is an essential skill for a successful plant scientist.¹

Some in this field study crop breeding, physiology, and management, then find ways to use genetic engineering to improve pest and drought resistance.

Others work to develop new technologies to control or eliminate the spread of pests.

Top Soft Skills⁴

- Patience
- Teamwork
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving



1. <https://ag.purdue.edu/departments/btrn/careers-in-plant-science.html>

2. <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx?keyword=Soil%20and%20Plant%20Scientists&location=UNITED%20STATES&onetcode=19-1013.00>

3. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/agricultural-and-food-scientists.htm#tab-5>

4. <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx?keyword=Soil%20and%20Plant%20Scientists&location=UNITED%20STATES&onetcode=19-1013.00>

5. <https://cals.ncsu.edu/crop-and-soil-sciences/careers/>

6. <https://www.zippia.com/athletic-turf-manager-jobs/>

7. <https://www.zippia.com/soil-scientist-jobs/salary/>

8. <https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Agonomist/Salary>

9. https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Plant_Breeder/Salary