

The Plant Sciences Major – Admission Requirements

Selection Criteria

There are no magic numbers that can perfectly predict our admissions decisions. The admissions committee reviews each applicant's academic achievement and interests as they relate to the mission of the college and the desired major of Plant Sciences, and considers how each applicant might contribute to the life of the Cornell community. Admission decisions are based on:

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is the primary selection criterion. And by that we mean, whether you have taken a reasonable number of the most rigorous courses offered at your school (e.g. advanced placement or honors courses where available), and how well you have performed in those classes. We look at the rigor of your high school courses, how well you did in those courses, and whether or not you really challenged yourself within the academic framework offered at your school. We realize that not all students will have the same opportunities available to them, and that some schools do not offer honors or advanced placement courses, so we evaluate whether students have fully utilized the resources at hand.

Standardized Test Scores

Standardized test scores suggest the potential for academic success. Either an SAT or ACT is required to be considered for admission to the college, and we encourage students to submit two SAT Subject Tests (mathematics, and a science). There are no score cut-offs, and we find that successful applicants to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences present a wide range of standardized test results.

Academic Interests

A significant factor taken into consideration by the selection committee is the extent to which your background and interests are appropriate for the study of the plant sciences. We would expect applicants to have a good background in math and science, to have studied biology in high school, often also chemistry, physics and earth science.

Accomplishments Outside of the Classroom

The decision to admit a student looks at a combination of academic and personal factors, so thorough consideration is given to a student's accomplishments outside of the classroom. For plants sciences the extent to which you have developed your interest in plants will be an important factor in admissions. As examples, this could be from your independent studies of the biology of plants, reading about plant explorers or ethnobotany, research in plant molecular

biology, a strong interest in plants and the environment, gardening or working on a farm or for a plant related business. As a part of the application process, you'll be asked to write about your academic interests and activities and to articulate how you see your interests blending into the curriculum for the Plant Sciences major. Other external activities or interests covering a wide array of activities such as athletics, social service, the arts, or intellectual pursuits, will also contribute a favorable decision to admit to the Plant Sciences major.

Transfer applicants

The same criteria apply, but we will also take into consideration your academic achievements at your current or previous college, and the way your interests have developed during your pre-Cornell college year(s). You should have taken a year of college biology and chemistry, as well as two semesters of English concentrating upon writing, and generally maintained a B average. Study in other areas is, of course, valuable, but can be in any of a wide variety of courses, related or unrelated to the studies required for the Plant Sciences major (see graduation requirements).

Overall

Background, accomplishments and activities will vary widely depending upon whether you grew up in a rural, suburban or an urban environment, and we expect to see different achievements according to the environment and resources available, so that no two students are likely to be identical. We encourage students with an interest in plants, ranging from the purely scientific point of view to a desire to grow plants, to consider the Plant Sciences major as *the* place for them at Cornell. A further check-out of the links on these pages will tell you about who we are, what you will study, the resources offered, and the opportunities that await you.