LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

As a humanistic, sustainable and action-oriented university, Leuphana University of Lüneburg stands for innovation in education and science. Methodological diversity, interdisciplinary cooperation, transdisciplinary cooperation with practice and an overall dynamic development characterise its research profile in the core topics of education, culture, management/technology, sustainability and state. Its international study model with the Leuphana College, the Leuphana Graduate School and the Leuphana Professional School is unique in Germany and has won many awards.

The University is seeking a responsible, motivated and committed candidate for the Institute of Ecology - subject to the approval of funds – for the position of a

Doctoral Researcher (m/f/d)
(salary group EG 13 TV-L, 65 %)

for a limited period of 48 month to start at **01.05.2026.**

You will join the Vegetation Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation Group within the Institute of Ecology and work on the subproject "Understorey plants in space and time: Impact of enhanced forest structural heterogeneity on plant community dynamics and ecosystem stability", which is part of the research unit BETA-FOR (https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/for5375/about/). You will closely collaborate with the working groups of Prof. Dr. Goddert von Oheimb (TUD Dresden University of Technology) and Prof. Dr. Benjamin Delory (Utrecht University).

Project description:
Understorey plant communities represent a major component of plant diversity in temperate forests and are central to the regulation of key ecosystem processes. This subproject offers the opportunity to work with a long-term dataset to explore how structural heterogeneity among forest patches (enhancement of structural beta complexity, ESBC) shapes the diversity and functioning of understorey plant communities across spatial and temporal scales.
The subproject explores the effects of ESBC on multiple facets of plant diversity (taxonomic, functional, and phylogenetic) over time and links interannual variation in forest floor conditions to changes in plant communities across spatial scales. A further focus is to understand how changes in understorey plant diversity affect the temporal stability of above- and belowground productivity at the community level, as well as identifying the underlying mechanisms related to local and spatial insurance effects.

Tasks:
- Compile and manage long-term data on vegetation, forest structure, and microclimate
- Conduct vegetation surveys
- Collect and analyse above- and belowground traits of understorey plants in both field and laboratory settings
- Conduct field measurements, including light availability and aboveground understorey biomass sampling
- Install minirhizotron tubes and acquire and analyse root images
- Perform statistical analyses of ecological data using advanced methods

- Collaborate in an international research team
- Preparation and publication of scientific papers and submission of a PhD thesis

Your profile:

- Completed scientific university degree (Master's or equivalent) in a relevant field (e.g., biology, forest sciences, environmental sciences)
- Strong knowledge of forest ecology and a keen interest in biodiversity research
- Strong knowledge of temperate understorey plants, including species identification and an understanding of both species and community ecology
- High enthusiasm for fieldwork, with willingness to undertake extended stays (several weeks) in different regions of Germany
- Experience with functional traits of leaves and roots is an advantage
- Experience with minirhizotron techniques and root ecology is an advantage
- Strong skills and solid experience in statistical analysis using R
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Motivation to work proactively as part of a research team
- Valid driving licence recognized in Germany, with willingness to drive an institute vehicle

Our offer:

- an inspiring working environment as part of the university community of researchers, teachers, students and staff in technology and administration,
- a workplace at one of the most beautiful university locations in Germany in a true campus university with an internationally acclaimed central building by Daniel Libeskind and the directly adjacent Wilschenbruch nature reserve,
- a high level of job security as part of the public service,
- an additional company pension scheme through the Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder (VBL),
- flexible and family-friendly working hours within a flexitime framework from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.,
- flexible and family-friendly opportunities to alternate between presence work and mobile work,
- an extensive internal and external continuing education programme,
- a wide range of sporting activities sponsored by the university, which employees can take part in for one hour per week during working hours to promote their health,
- a university-sponsored catering service for lunch and dinner in the refectory,
- a Germany ticket sponsored by the university as a job ticket

Your application:

For questions regarding the content of the positions, please contact Prof. Dr. Andreas Fichtner (andreas.fichtner@leuphana.de) or Prof. Dr. von Oheimb (goddert_v_oheimb@tu-dresden.de).

Leuphana University of Lüneburg promotes professional gender equality and heterogeneity among its members. Applications from people with severe disabilities will be given preferential consideration if they have the same qualifications.

Please upload your application documents (consisting of a cover letter in English describing motivation for the project, research interest and relevant experience; CV, including a list of publications if applicable; digital copies of MA/BA/Diploma certificates; contact details of at least two scientific references; please without photo) by **25.02.2026** to our **application portal**. We are looking forward to receiving your application!