



**eXtreme
plant ecology
research team**



Royal
Botanic
Gardens
Victoria



PhD position in alpine plant regeneration and snow ecology
commencing mid-2026, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia
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The [eXtreme Plant Ecology Research Team](#) in the [School of Life and Environmental Sciences](#) at Deakin University, in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and the [Victorian Conservation Seed Bank](#), invites applications for a fully-funded 3 year PhD position in alpine plant ecology, to contribute to an Australian Research Council funded research project aimed at understanding, improving and maintaining plant regeneration processes in alpine ecosystems of the future.

The research project aims to determine how declines in snow will drive the unseasonal growth and development of alpine plants by linking snowpack parameters (depth, density and duration) with the environmental drivers of light, soil water availability and soil temperatures throughout the year. This will help to fill an important knowledge gap about what makes a suitable microsite for seed germination and how early snowmelt affects these processes later in summer. Potential topics to focus on under the broad theme of alpine plant regeneration and recruitment include: studies in phenology, germination, seed biology, seedling ecology, snow science, GIS and mapping and making use of the living and preserved collection at the National Herbarium of Victoria. The PhD project will involve a substantial amount of fieldwork, glasshouse and laboratory work, as well as data analysis and writing throughout. The project could also make use of the [Australian Mountain Research Facility's](#) field-based experimental infrastructure.

The candidate will join the [eXtreme Plant Ecology Research Team](#) at Deakin Burwood (Melbourne) and will be primarily supervised by Assoc Prof Susanna Venn and co-supervised by Dr Meg Hirst at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Applicants must have an excellent grade (>85% H1 or High Distinction) in an Honours or a MSc research program in botany or ecology, be highly motivated and have strong organisational skills. The candidate will have well-developed scientific writing skills in English, a proven publication record and be a proficient and independent user of R for ecological data analysis. The candidate must also hold a current driver's license, be competent in driving for long distances and on mountain roads. They will also be able and willing to conduct mountain-based fieldwork in all seasons with a team of researchers, often in challenging conditions and in remote locations with occasional camping.

The position is a 3-year (with possible 6-month extension) PhD scholarship (~AU\$34,400 p.a. tax free) and candidature through the [School of Life and Environmental Sciences](#) at Deakin University, Burwood campus, with opportunities to work from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The School provides excellent research infrastructure and is a diverse, dynamic, inclusive, collegial and supportive workplace made up of world-class academics, teaching and professional staff. Undergraduate teaching opportunities and may also be available throughout the course of candidature and the School and Faculty both offer many career progression and development programs. An anticipated commencement date is mid-2026, by negotiation.

Please apply via the [online form](#) with your google account and include: 1) a motivation letter which includes a brief background about your research experience, including the research projects that you have contributed to in the past (2 pages); 2) your ideas for a PhD project under the broad theme of alpine plant regeneration as outlined above, which includes 3-4 separate studies; 3) your CV, and 4) a copy of your academic transcript and Masters or Honours degree. Women and people underrepresented in research are encouraged to apply. Applications will begin to be assessed in mid-October 2025 and will continue until the position is filled. Please contact susanna.venn@deakin.edu.au for more information or if you have any questions.