

Kaplan Award in Comparative Morphology

The Botanical Society of America is soliciting applications for the Kaplan Award in Comparative Morphology. Donald R. Kaplan was a leading researcher in the area of plant form, where he sought to deduce fundamental principles from comparative developmental morphology. He spent most of his professional career at the University of California, Berkeley. Through his own work and the work of the many graduate students he mentored, he had a profound effect on the fields of plant developmental morphology. Donald Kaplan always encouraged his students to work independently, often on projects unrelated to his own research. He also believed that students should publish their work independently, and rarely coauthored his students' papers.

To promote research in plant comparative morphology, the Kaplan family has established an endowed fund, administered through the Botanical Society of America, to support the Ph.D. research of graduate students in this area. Research proposals should have a strong focus on questions that address the evolution or generation of diversity in form and advance the field of **comparative plant structure**. Graduate students in other disciplines whose work may bring novel insights into developmental or morphological problems are also encouraged to apply.

The annual award of up to \$10,000 may be used to support equipment and supplies, travel for research and to attend meetings, and for summer support. Applicants and their advisors must be members of the Botanical Society of America and are advised to join the BSA if they are not already members, to facilitate the application process. International students are welcome to apply. Graduate students must have advanced to candidacy or be at a comparable stage in their doctoral program. Applications should be written in the form of a proposal that describes the motivation for the research, and how the proposed research is related to the student's overall dissertation project. The proposal should include a description of the methods (no longer than one page), and a clear statement of the significance of the possible outcomes. Proposals should be single-spaced, and three to five pages in length including figures and a budget. The page limit does not refer to references or abstract. The abstract should be 500 words or less. Two letters of reference are required, including a letter from the student's research supervisor. In keeping with the intent of the Kaplan family to promote the graduate student's research independence, applicants, as well as their advisors, must *indicate clearly how the proposed research differs in a substantial manner from the research program of the advisor*.

Applications will be evaluated by the Kaplan Dissertation Awards Committee. Evaluation criteria include the relevance to advancing research in plant comparative morphology, and evidence that the award will allow the graduate student to undertake an independent research project. They also include the motivation for the research, the clarity of the research hypothesis, the explanation of the methods to be used, and the connection between the objectives and design of the research. **Awards will be made through institutional offices of sponsored research and will not include overhead. All applicants or their advisors should verify with their institutions that this arrangement is possible before applying.** Funds should be spent within two years; any unused funds will revert to the Society at the end of three years. In accordance of the wishes of the Kaplan family, it is expected that some portion of the work will be published as a peer-reviewed paper in *American Journal of Botany*. As an extra benefit, the journal will cover Open Access publishing costs.

Applications will be due March 15, 2021 and should be sent to the Botanical Society of America awards portal.