

Call for Research and Outreach Proposals for Funding from the Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium

The Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium (SRSFC) requests proposals for calendar year 2026 to support pertinent applied research and outreach activities on small fruit crops in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The Consortium especially encourages outreach proposals that result in the development of web-based in-service agent training modules in areas such as marketing strategies, pest management, post-harvest / handling, and enterprise budgets.

The primary goal of research grants is for funding of applied research, which will be of value to small fruit producers. Although these grants can be considered as seed grants for larger grants, proposals should be for research that could be completed within a 1-2 year timeframe and for which results would have immediate utility for growers. Consortium grants are not intended to be a means of adding additional funds to an already-funded grant. Research areas within the Consortium mission include:

- applied cultural studies that investigate production and management issues with findings having potential direct impact on crop production and grower success.
- weed, disease and insect investigations that contribute to management and control of important small fruit pests and diseases including IPM studies.
- breeding methodology studies that focus on important industry crop traits that directly impact the efficiency of new cultivar development.
- postharvest and related studies that impact handling and processing of small fruit crops in addition to studies on health benefits or related investigations on small fruits.

Investigations outside the Consortium mission include:

- genomics or related investigations, particularly those that are part of larger grants with broad and expansive objectives.
- physiological research such as gene expression or related investigations that identify more basic knowledge to be gained without direct applied implications.

Funding requests are limited to no more than **\$5,000**. Proposals asking for over \$5,000 will automatically be reduced to \$5,000.

TWO proposals per Principal Investigator can be submitted this funding cycle (in either the research or the outreach category or one in each category). Additionally, anyone can

be co-P.I. on more than one proposal. Projects funded over the past few years can be seen on the SRSFC web site at <http://www.smallfruits.org/research/index.html> . Extension agents may be a P.I.

Funds cannot be used to cover tuition and fees for students.

Research and Outreach proposals must include the following information and must utilize the template given on the last page of this document (Proposals received that do not utilize the template or exceed the page limit will be returned).

The entire proposal is not to exceed five pages in length. Individuals outside Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia may be included in projects, but the principal investigator must be on the faculty at one of the member institutions.

Research and Outreach proposals will be evaluated and prioritized by the Steering Committee of the Consortium, and recommendations for funding will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for their concurrence.

The deadline for receiving proposals is October 15, 2025 and final decisions on proposals to be funded, along with notifications to awardees will be made in January, 2026. The funding period will run from March 1, 2026 to February 28, 2027. Funds must be expended during that timeframe. No-cost extensions can be granted if necessary to complete the proposed work. Progress and/or final reports from projects funded in 2024 will be posted on the SRSFC website.

If you received a SRSFC grant in 2025, a progress report or final report must be submitted along with a “public abstract” before December 1, 2025. Details on the progress / final report submission procedure will be sent to the 2025 grant recipients. Proposals submitted for 2026 by investigators previously funded who do not submit a progress or final report by December 1, 2025 will not be considered for 2026 funding.

Send proposals electronically to Dr. Desmond Layne (drl0021@auburn.edu) at Auburn University.

See next page for template instructions

TEMPLATE

Instructions for Completing Template

- Indicate whether Proposal is Research or Outreach
- Indicate whether this is a new project or if the project has been funded by SRSFC in the past; if it has been funded in the past, then indicate how many years of funding have been received
- Title
- Name, Mailing and Email Address of Principal Investigator(s)
- Objectives
- Justification and Description
- Budget (**The SRSFC does not pay indirect costs**)
- Maximum proposal length is 5 pages

Proposal Template. (Complete all sections)

Proposal Category: ___Research ___Outreach

Proposal Status: ___ New Proposal ___Previously funded by SRSFC; has been
previously funded for ___ years

Title:

Name, Mailing and Email Address of Principal Investigator(s):

Objectives:

Justification and Description:

Budget (**The SRSFC does not pay indirect costs; maximum funding is \$5,000**):