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RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTRE

# Research Spotlight!



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real-world  
impact.**

**Sarah Papp**

Research Scientist

## **Introducing Sarah Papp, Research Scientist, Plant Production**

**At Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, innovation grows in more ways than one, thanks to researchers like Sarah Papp, who bring curiosity, practical problem-solving, and a deep-rooted passion for plants to her role as Research Scientist, Plant Production.**

Sarah's work focuses on helping Canadian growers improve efficiency and sustainability. "My role centers on finding practical, science-based solutions to help Canadian growers produce crops more efficiently and sustainably," she says. That means everything from trialing berries and leafy greens to testing biostimulants and new substrate blends. "The work is incredibly diverse," she adds, "but always grounded in real-world impact."

Sarah's path to Vineland began during her undergraduate studies in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Toronto, where she became fascinated by plant ecology and applied research. In 2016, she joined Vineland as a summer research assistant. "I worked on projects to optimize container production for ornamental shrubs and develop organic fertilization strategies for blueberries," she recalls. "That experience showed me how rewarding it can be to translate research into practical solutions for growers and ultimately brought me back to Vineland."



**Sustainable Canadian  
Agricultural Partnership**

**Ontario**

**Canada**



Now part of the Plant Responses and the Environment team, Sarah is especially excited about the shift toward protected berry production. This growing method can extend the fruit season in Canada, offering a way to bring local berries to market earlier and later than ever before. Through the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AgriScience berry project, Sarah and her team are testing raspberry and blueberry production in diverse environments, from field shelters to greenhouses, and evaluating innovative substrates to determine which best support plant health and yield. “I’m excited to see how the plants perform across these environments and to provide growers with a production guide to support this shift,” she says.

Another area Sarah is helping to advance? Turning waste into value. “One of the challenges in our field is finding ways to turn waste into something that adds value rather than creating a disposal problem,” she explains. From transforming spent greenhouse vines into fertilizer via black soldier fly frass to enriching substrates with nutrient amendments derived from kitchen scraps, Sarah’s team is exploring solutions that support a circular, more sustainable model for plant production.

## So what keeps her inspired day after day?

“I find it rewarding to see projects progress from planning through to harvest and to know that our results can make a tangible difference for growers and industry partners,” she says. With each new crop and trial comes a new challenge and opportunity to learn.



## And outside the lab?

Sarah’s passion for plants continues to bloom. “I enjoy growing flowers and designing my garden is something I look forward to every year,” she says. Her favourite? Dahlias. “They’re beautiful, come in many varieties, and bloom later in the season, bringing colour when other flowers are fading.”

**With her scientific expertise and commitment to real-world impact, Sarah Papp is helping shape the future of sustainable crop production in Canada, one growing season at a time.**

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