



SHAUN LANGENHOVEN

RESEARCH SCIENTIST

AT TESSARA (PTY) LTD

BSc (Molecular Biology and Biotechnology)

BScHons (Plant Pathology)

MSc (Plant Pathology)

MY STORY

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS CAREER PATH?

I've always had a passion for science and microorganisms and thought I would end up becoming a microbiologist. **Instead, I discovered and became interested in the applied sciences field of plant pathology, which is the study of plant diseases and its diagnosis and management.**

WHAT DO YOU DO?

I conceptualize and research new products for the post-harvest preservation of fruit and vegetables. Every day is different and involves conducting trials, laboratory experiments, writing reports and technical documents, and interacting with clients.



WHAT PARTICULAR SKILLS, TALENTS AND QUALITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO BE EFFECTIVE IN YOUR POSITION / CAREER?

Love for science, perseverance, inquisitiveness, effective communication skills and being able to work in a high-pressure environment.

SOME ADVICE

1. **Plant pathology is a versatile discipline** and is regarded as a scarce skill in South Africa.
2. There are numerous postgraduate bursary opportunities available to study plant pathology.



HIGHLIGHTS

1. Travelled to various countries.
2. Published scientific articles in international peer-reviewed journals and agricultural magazines.
3. Part of a team that launched several products for post-harvest fruit preservation at Tessara.

What part of this career do you personally find most satisfying?

After a long challenging process, a new product is finally developed and launched, and also, when I am able to assist clients (farmers and packhouse managers) with any problems (pre- & post-harvest plant diseases) they might be experiencing on farms and in packhouses.

What type of person would enjoy this kind of career?

A person who has a passion for agriculture, loves problem solving and enjoys being challenged.

IS THERE A FUTURE in this career?

For as long as we have agriculture, there will always be a worldwide demand for persons trained in **plant pathology**. Plant pathologists are trained to work in various settings such as academia, research institutes, sales and marketing, government departments and the private sector (testing laboratories, farming, nurseries, chemical, seed & fertilizer companies).

CHALLENGES

The path to obtaining all my qualifications was long and very challenging in different ways (emotionally, financially and academically). My focus on the end goal carried me through.