

Megan Bontrager

Assistant Professor
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Research interests	I study the determinants of species' geographic ranges and the drivers of local adaptation. I conduct large-scale, rigorous field and greenhouse experiments, quantitative syntheses of the the literature, and analyses using herbarium collections.	
Academic positions	Assistant professor (started July 2022) Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology University of Toronto	2022–
	Postdoctoral fellow University of Toronto Advisor: John Stinchcombe <i>Includes 6 months maternity leave: September 2021–March 2022</i>	2021–2022
	Postdoctoral researcher University of California, Davis Advisors: Jennifer Gremer, Julin Maloof, Johanna Schmitt, Sharon Strauss	2018–2020
	Research associate University of California, Santa Cruz Supervisors: Ingrid Parker, Greg Gilbert	2011–2012
Education	University of British Columbia Ph.D. in Botany Advisor: Amy Angert Committee: Sally Aitken, Michael Whitlock, Jeannette Whitton Title: <i>Pollination, genetic structure, and adaptation to climate across the geographic range of Clarkia pulchella.</i>	2012–2018
	University of California, Santa Cruz B.Sc. in Plant Sciences B.Sc. in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology Undergraduate research advisors: Kathleen Kay, Ingrid Parker	2008–2011
	Cabrillo Community College Prerequisites for transfer to B.Sc.	2007–2008

Preprints

15. **M. Bontrager**, C. D. Muir, C. R. Mahony, D. E. Gamble*, R. M. Germain, A. L. Hargreaves, E. J. Kleynhans, K. A. Thompson, and A. L. Angert. Climate warming weakens local adaptation. *bioRxiv* 2020.11.01.364349.
14. **M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert. Genetic differentiation is determined by geographic distance in *Clarkia pulchella*. *bioRxiv* 374454.

Publications

13. D. S. Srivastava, L. Coristine, A. L. Angert, **M. Bontrager**, S. L. Amundrud, J. L. Williams, A. C. Y. Yeung, D.R. de Zwaan, P. L. Thompson, S. N. Aitken, J. M. Sunday, M. I. O'Connor, J. Whitton, N. E. M. Brown, C. D. MacLeod, L. Wegener Parfrey, J. R. Bernhardt, J. Carrillo, C. D. G. Harley, P. T. Martone, B. G. Freeman, M. Tseng, and S. D. Donner (2021). Wildcards in climate change biology. *Ecological Monographs* 91: e01471.
Maternity leave: September 2021-March 2022
12. **M. Bontrager**, J. A. Lee-Yaw, T. Usui, A. L. Hargreaves, D. Anstett, H. A. Branch, C. D. Muir, and A. L. Angert (2021). Adaptation across geographic ranges is consistent with strong selection in marginal climates and legacies of range expansion. *Evolution* 75: 1316-1333.
11. A. L. Angert, **M. Bontrager**, and J. Ågren (2020). What do we really know about adaptation at range edges? *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics* 51: 341-361.
10. J. R. Gremer, A. Chiono, E. Suglia, **M. Bontrager**, L. Okafor, and J. Schmitt (2020). Variation in the seasonal germination niche across an elevational gradient: the role of germination cueing in current and future climates. *American Journal of Botany*, 107(2): 350-363.
9. A. L. Hargreaves, R. M. Germain, **M. Bontrager**, J. Persi, and A. L. Angert (2020). Local adaptation to biotic interactions: a meta-analysis across latitudes. *The American Naturalist*, 195(3): 395-411.
8. **M. Bontrager**, C. D. Muir, and A. L. Angert (2019). Geographic variation in reproductive assurance of *Clarkia pulchella*. *Oecologia*, 190(1): 59-67.
7. **M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (2019). Gene flow improves fitness at a range edge under climate change. *Evolution Letters*, 3(1): 55-68.
6. D. E. Gamble*, **M. Bontrager**, and A. L. Angert (2016). Floral trait variation and links to climate in the mixed-mating annual *Clarkia pulchella*. *Botany*, 96(7): 425-435.
5. **M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (2016). Effects of range-wide variation in climate and isolation on floral traits and reproductive output of *Clarkia pulchella*. *American Journal of Botany*, 103(1): 10-21.
4. J. A. Lee-Yaw, H. M. Kharouba, **M. Bontrager**, C. Mahony, A. M. Csörgő, A. M. Noreen, Q. Li, R. Schuster, and A. L. Angert (2016). A synthesis of transplant experiments and ecological niche models suggests that range limits are often niche limits. *Ecology Letters*, 19(6): 710-722.
3. I. M. Parker, M. Saunders, **M. Bontrager**, A. P. Weitz, R. Hendricks, R. Magarey, K. Suiter, and G. S. Gilbert (2015). Phylogenetic structure and host abundance drive disease pressure in communities. *Nature*, 520(7548): 542-544.

2. **M. Bontrager**, K. Webster, M. Elvin, and I. M. Parker (2014). The effects of habitat and competitive/facilitative interactions on reintroduction success of the endangered wetland herb, *Arenaria paludicola*. *Plant Ecology*, 215(4): 467-478.
1. J. M. Yost, **M. Bontrager**, S. W. McCabe, D. Burton, M. G. Simpson, K. M. Kay, and M. Ritter (2013). Phylogenetic relationships and evolution in *Dudleya* (Crassulaceae). *Systematic Botany*, 38(4): 1096-1104.

* Undergraduate trainee

Non-refereed contributions

3. K. R. Acierto, R. S. Hendricks, **M. Bontrager**, and I. M. Parker (12 December 2012). Transplant success for the endangered herb *Arenaria paludicola* at Golden Gate National Recreation Area: effects of site, propagation type, and competition. Technical report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game.
2. I. M. Parker and **M. Bontrager** (29 February 2012). Propagation and establishment of new populations of marsh sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*) in Santa Cruz County. Technical report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game.
1. **M. Bontrager** and I. M. Parker (26 September 2011). Effects of serpentine soil on plant community composition in natural populations and seedling growth in a bioassay. Technical report to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Invited seminars

University of Colorado Denver, Integrative Biology Seminar Series, 17 February 2022.

University of Toronto Mississauga, Biology Seminar Series, 4 November 2022.

Queens University, Biology Seminar Series, 20 September 2022.

Duke University, PopBio Seminar Series, 15 October 2020.

University of Utah, Frontiers in Plant Biology Symposium, 19 February 2020.

Hamilton Symposium at Evolution, Providence, Rhode Island, 28 June 2019. Video link.

University of California, Davis, Population Biology Seminar Series, 26 February 2019.

Maladaptation Symposium at the American Society of Naturalists Asilomar Meeting, 6 January 2018.

Selected presentations

M. Bontrager, E. Suglia, J. Davis, J. Schmitt, J. Maloof and J. R. Gremer (17 August 2021). Divergent vernalization requirements across an elevational cline. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, online.

M. Bontrager, E. Suglia, J. Davis, J. Schmitt, J. Maloof and J. R. Gremer (20 July 2021). Evolution of vernalization requirements across an elevational cline in *Streptanthus tortuosus*. Presentation at the Annual Botany Meeting, online.

M. Bontrager, J. Maloof, J. R. Gremer, and S. Y. Strauss (4 January 2020). Climatic drivers of the flowering niche in the *Streptanthus* clade. Poster presentation at the American Society of Naturalists meeting. Asilomar, California.

- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (4 April 2018). Effects of gene flow on performance at the northern range margin of *Clarkia pulchella*. Presentation at Evo-Wibo. Port Townsend, Washington.
- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (24 June 2017). Effects of gene flow on the performance of *Clarkia pulchella* at the species' northern range margin. Presentation at Evolution. Portland, Oregon. Video link.
- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (9 May 2017). Effects of gene flow on the performance of *Clarkia pulchella* at the species' northern range margin. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution. Victoria, British Columbia.
- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (5 November 2016). Effects of gene flow on the performance of *Clarkia pulchella* at the species' northern range margin. Presentation at Ecology and Evolution Retreat. Brackendale, British Columbia.
- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (16 April 2016). Effects of gene flow on the performance of *Clarkia pulchella* at the species' northern range margin. Poster presentation at Evo-Wibo. Port Townsend, Washington.
- M. Bontrager** and A. L. Angert (22 May 2015). Effects of range-wide variation in climate and isolation on floral traits and reproductive output of *Clarkia pulchella*. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- M. Bontrager**, K. Webster, M. Elvin, and I. M. Parker (12 January 2012). Factors influencing growth and survival of a critically endangered plant, *Arenaria paludicola*. Presentation at the California Native Plant Society 2012 Conservation Conference. San Diego, California.
- J. Yost, **M. Bontrager** (co-presented), S. McCabe, K. M. Kay, and M. Ritter (11 July 2011). A classification of California's diploid *Dudleya* species based on molecular phylogenetic data. Poster presentation at Botany 2011 Conference. St. Louis, Missouri.

Research grants and funding

- Bontrager, M. 2023. Canadian Foundation for Innovation and Ontario Research Fund John R Evans Leaders' Fund. "Assessing plant responses to environmental change" \$840K.
- Bontrager M. 2022. NSERC Discovery Grant. "Geographic range limits and adaptation to changing climates: the effects of phenotypic lag, selection, and genetic variance" \$145K over 5 years.
- Bontrager M. 2022. NSERC Discovery Launch Supplement. "Geographic range limits and adaptation to changing climates: the effects of phenotypic lag, selection, and genetic variance" \$12.5K.
- Bontrager, M. 2021. Postdoc research funds from the University of Toronto. \$30K over 2 years.

Fellowships and awards

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| Society for the Study of Evolution Hamilton Finalist (500 USD) | 2019 |
| Grand Challenges Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Minnesota (declined; 107,000 USD) | 2018 |
| UBC Biology teaching award (500 CAD) | 2018 |
| Student talk award, Evo-Wibo, Port Townsend, Washington | 2018 |
| Best research presentation, Brackendale Ecology and Evolution Retreat | 2016 |
| Li Tze Fong Memorial Fellowship (25,000 CAD) | 2016 |
| Botanical Society of America Genetics Section Grad Research Award (500 USD) | 2016 |
| Botanical Society of America Graduate Student Research Award (500 USD) | 2016 |

Washington Native Plant Society Research Grant (1,200 USD)	2016
Vladimir J. Krajina Prize in Plant Ecology (2,000 CAD)	2013
UBC Four Year Doctoral Fellowship (102,400 CAD)	2012

Teaching

At the University of Toronto

Temperate Field Biology (EEB405; 15 undergrads; co-taught)	Summer 2023
Evolutionary Ecology (EEB324; 60 undergrads; co-taught)	Fall 2022
Temperate Field Biology (EEB405; 15 undergrads; co-taught)	Summer 2022

As a graduate student at UBC

Lead teaching assistant, Biostatistics (BIO300, 2 terms)	2017–2018
<i>Received UBC Biology Teaching Award for outstanding work in this role</i>	
Teaching assistant, Plant Ecology (BIO406)	2017
Teaching assistant and guest lecturer, Phytogeography (BIO412)	2016

Mentoring

Graduate student supervision

PhD. Louisa Bartkovich	2022–
PhD. Katie Maunder (co-advised)	2022–

Graduate student supervisory committees

MSc x 2; PhD x 3

Examination committees

MSc defence x 1; PhD appraisal x 1; PhD defence x 2

External examiner

PhD defense x 1

Undergraduate trainees

Eleanor Hector (work-study '22-23)

Jo Fletcher (work-study '22-23)

Prior to starting faculty position

Advisor to undergraduate students (UC Davis; 5 project students and 8 research assistants)	2018–2020
Supervisor and mentor to post-baccalaureate lab technicians (UC Davis, 2 technicians)	2018–2020
Co-advisor of undergraduate honours thesis students (UBC, 2 students)	2016–2017
Supervisor of undergraduate research assistants (UBC, 4 students)	2014–2017
Supervisor of undergraduate research assistants (UC Santa Cruz, 3 students)	2011–2012

Workshops given

Leader and developer, Data management workshop (for colleagues at UC Davis)	2020
Leader and developer, Intro to R workshop (for undergraduate researchers at UC Davis)	2018

Pedagogical training

Participant, Center for Educational Effectiveness Accelerate Program, UC Davis	2020
Participant, Education Research and Evidence-based Teaching, UC Davis	2020

Service, outreach, and professional development

Mentor, Evolution and Ecology Graduate School Preview, UC Davis	2020
Participant, Anti-Racism reading group	2020
Administrative member, Women in Life Sciences at UC Davis	2019–2020
Mentor, Evolution and Ecology Graduate Admissions Pathways, UC Davis	2019
Grad representative, Biodiversity Research Centre postdoc search committee, UBC	2018
Co-organizer, Biodiversity Centre Women in STEM Workshop, UBC	2017
Coordinator of Florum, a weekly meeting of plant ecologists, UBC	2013–2016
Curriculum developer, Modules in Ecology and Evolution Development, UBC	2013–2015
Visiting scientist in primary school classrooms, Let's Talk Science, UBC	2012–2014
Science fair mentor, Let's Talk Science, UBC	2012–2013
Volunteer, Beaty Biodiversity Museum Nature Club, UBC	2012–2013

Professional engagement

Reviews since 2019: American Journal of Botany (1), Ecology (1), Ecology Letters (1), Evolution (3), Evolution Letters (1), Global Change Biology (2), Global Ecology and Biogeography (1), Journal of Ecology (2), Journal of Systematics and Evolution (1), New Phytologist (2), Oikos (1), PeerJ (2), Trends in Ecology and Evolution (1).

Member: American Society of Naturalists, Botanical Society of America, Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, Society for the Study of Evolution