Nematologist

Studying tons of tiny roundworms.
Nematodes are found everywhere: in soil from both poles to the tropics, in bodies of insects, and in humans and all domesticated and wild animals. Teeming millions of these roundworms live on ocean bottoms and forest floors. Most are small and microscopic. Some have been model systems for the study of genetics and of breakthrough research in molecular biology and molecular mechanisms. Many nematologists who work with these roundworms are interested in plant and animal agriculture, or in soil or water ecology, but others specialize in basic research in molecular biology.

Nematologists are employed by universities as teachers, researchers, and extension specialists. Government agencies employ nematologists, as does private industry. Nematologists might work on basic or applied research in university, government, or commercial laboratories. They may work as agricultural scientists concerned with crop pest management, or in sales or as a consultant in the private sector.

A college degree in a biological science is good preparation for further training in nematology, which usually requires study at the graduate level, especially for a career in teaching or research. Alternatively, a college graduate might be trained by private industry for some specific job related to nematology. College courses in biology, molecular biology, mathematics, statistics, chemistry, physics, and English are often good preparation for a career as a nematologist.

In high school, take a broad college preparatory curriculum that includes English, math, physics, chemistry, and biology. Seize any opportunity to participate in lab and fieldwork to evaluate your aptitude and preferences.