As an intern at Bob’s I started out learning about the cutting operation. I helped unpack and organize, stick, trim and ship cuttings. I then moved on to the seed sowing operation where I helped with filling flats with media. I also helped sowing, either sending flats through the seeders or catching flats and putting them on racks to go to the bench. I also helped pull seed, track what had and had not been sown and organize seed in the cooler after sowing. I spent a lot of time pulling plugs and finished flats. I started pulling plugs during the peak of shipping and helped make sure the orders were pulled properly and then organizing the trucks to be loaded. It is important the orders are pulled completely and the customers receive what they ordered. I also helped pull some finished product for wholesale and retail locations. As trucks were loaded, I would record the product and quantity a customer would receive for proper billing.

Once I started growing there were not very many plugs to be grown, so my focus shifted to growing finished product. I worked a lot specifically with vinea and zinnias. I helped with the daily watering and spraying of pesticides and growth regulators. I also conducted my own research project comparing name brand growth regulators to Fine Chemical Company’s line of growth regulators at two
different rates. This project was conducted so I could gain more experience with regulators and application rates while helping to improve the company’s method for growing zinnias. I also did a lot of work with hanging baskets. I watered, regulated, and cut baskets both indoors and outdoors. Growing baskets in two environments was definitely a great experience, especially when the outdoor weather was less than ideal.

Adjusting to a new atmosphere and work place helped me refine my communication skills. I learned how to communicate better with various types of people while working together. I definitely think this experience has made me a more outgoing, confident young adult. Many of the new skills I learned also came from hands on experience. From how important the depth of sticking cuttings, to spraying regulators. While growing I learned about the importance of water, feed and nutrient management. I gained a lot of knowledge specifically dealing with growth regulators and how important it is to apply them properly. I worked on my application technique with a pump sprayer and also a sprayett. I also learned about pest management and what insecticides work well with certain insects. I also gained knowledge about various foliar diseases and fungicides used to combat them. While learning about growing I also learned the importance of keeping accurate records, not only for the company’s purposes, but also for their customers.

I could not have asked for a better company to work for and with. Definitely felt like more than just an employee and was welcomed with open arms and minds. I also felt that there was a lot of encouragement for me to succeed as an intern and employee. Working with a family business was very interesting but also wonderful, I felt like a part of the family. There was a lot of diversity within the company, which gave me a great exposure to many different areas of the horticulture industry. I felt like there was always something for me to learn, do, or be a part of within the company. As an intern there was not a specific outline to what exactly I would be doing down to the last minute, which was nice because it gave me flexibility within an area to learn as much as I could. I am very proud to say I was an intern at Bob’s Market and Greenhouse and have made life long connections through this experience.

This experience has strengthened my career goals. I enjoyed getting exposure to working in the industry and what all is available out there. I also think it has helped me realize my career goals are very possible with a lot of hard work and knowledge. My education has only improved thru this experience. I realized there is a lot of hands on knowledge that cannot always be taught in the
classroom. It also allowed me to use some of the knowledge I have learned in the classroom and apply it to my experience.

My future plans include finishing school and finding a job in the industry. My short-term goals included working in a greenhouse as a grower. I would like to gain experience in the growing and production side of plugs and finished material. Eventually I would like to have enough experience, knowledge, and confidence to start my own greenhouse business. I would like to start on the small scale and make my business as successful as possible. I also want to be able to share my knowledge and love for horticulture with others.
Posing with the Zinnia Growth Regulator Trial I conducted.