

An Inspiring Meeting – The National Floriculture Forum

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The National Floriculture Forum is a wonderful meeting. The informal nature of it allows for great discussions and networking opportunities making the meeting a pleasure to attend. It started off at the Philadelphia Flower Show. What a site it was! I had heard stories about the event, but I did not expect amazing displays on such a grand scale! It was definitely worth catching a bus leaving Lansing at 2:30am to attend. We arrived at the show as a group, but with all of the breathtaking displays and picture-taking, we soon dispersed, bumping into each other as we meandered around the show. After a flower-filled day, we gathered for a networking dinner at the hotel. Though I love flowers, the best part was talking to the wonderful people attending the meeting. It's nice to see my fellow graduate students from other universities to catch up on how our research and lives are going. It's great to meet people who you have only spoken to through email. It is so much nicer having conversations in person!

The second day of the meeting was filled with tours. We started off at a hydroponic cut flower facility, Flowers by Bauers. They have a pretty interesting history, evolving from a wholesale snapdragon grower, to expanding their selection and selling retail. I'm interested to see how their roses will grow. Later that day we arrived at Longwood Gardens for lunch. What an amazing place! The research and breeding they conduct is just as amazing as their popular public gardens. Longwood is the kind of garden that takes days to explore. I think a trip this fall to see the chrysanthemum displays would be nice. For supper, the AFE Young Professionals Council met to network and discuss ideas. If you are a young person reading this, you should join! It's exciting to brainstorm ideas about how to attract and retain young people in floriculture and to discuss of career opportunities for ourselves. The final day of the meeting consisted mainly of research updates. It is interesting to see what researchers from around the country are working on and to get feedback about your own research.

The National Floriculture Forum is an inspiring meeting. Going into it, you may be weary from the long winter, but it gives you the jolt you need to be excited about your work and the future of floriculture. So many of the members are working on such interesting topics that will help move our industry forward! When I arrived home, my head was teeming with ideas.

I would like to thank Krystal Snyder for organizing the meeting. She is such a wonderful person, and she did an amazing job! I would also like to thank AFE for providing travel assistance. To the AFE board, owners, and staff, thank you for everything you do for this industry! Your efforts are apparent. Without your help, I would not have been able to attend this meeting. From seeing beautiful flowers, to meeting new and old friends, to sharing ideas, the National Floriculture Forum was an amazing experience. Thank you!