

Cultivate in review

By Holly Barrus

This last year has been a very eventful year for me, and not because of politics or world wide conflicts. This year I found out that I was a co-recipient of the 2022 Paul Thomas Intern of the Year award, and as such, I was given the most amazing opportunity to go to Cultivate! I don't know how to tell you how much I learned, grew, and got to experience in a very short four (4) days. But first, I need to thank the AFE and the Vic & Margaret Ball committee for enabling Will and myself to have such a wonderful experience. I

was able to sit in many lectures, learning from experts on topics like shading in greenhouses, watering strategies, and how to be the difference in my team and career. These education sessions weren't half of the



things to do because the trade show was huge! The trade show was awesome, though I would be lying if I said it wasn't intimidating. It was beautiful to see the



diversity of the Horticulture Industry. There was literally everything to see: lots of plants of every kind, everything you can think of to grow or landscape with, and then more than I imagined there would be. The networking that was happening before my very eyes and sharing with them my first exposure to the world that they live in was a sweet experience. I met so many

amazing people, each with unique talents and abilities which will be part of my amazing future.

I got to listen to the results from other students who have been researching industry needs and what their findings mean for us now. Finding out about concerns that are pressing issues and possibly the issues of the future and what we are doing now to impact the future in a positive way gave me more hope than I thought it would.



Touring different gardens and conservatories, greenhouses, nurseries, and participating in hands-on workshops were also a possibility which would have been wonderful to be a part of more, except there just wasn't enough time. Which makes now the time to cultivate.



Cultivate is amazing, and now it's up to me to take the spring that I have been given and use it to bound into my future. It is now more clear to me than ever before that I want to be a grower, producing plants or flowers that people will enjoy, if not love. I wasn't sure what Cultivate would do for me. When I found out I was going back in March, I was excited and nervous. I got the chance to



create a network of hardworking, crazy smart, and motivated people to give me what I need to succeed in the Horticulture Industry.

Again, I couldn't have been part of this year's Cultivate if it wasn't for the AFE and the Vic & Margaret Ball committee and all of their hard work to support me and other motivated people like me to succeed in their dreams. Thank you so much for a wonderful adventure and all of the support that comes with being part of AFE

and the Horticulture Industry.

