

Cultivate 2021 Experience

2021 Paul Thomas Floriculture Production Intern of the Year, Sherman Hartman, shares his experience attending Cultivate 2021



Having attended the ProGreen Expo in Denver in 2020, I felt prepared for my first experience at Cultivate in 2021. That being said, I still didn't know how I'd spend my time there. Overall, I enjoyed Cultivate. I'm grateful for the [American Floral Endowment](#) making this opportunity possible. I enjoyed spending my time in seminars reviewing topics like the importance of water quality, new PGR combinations, pest and pathogen control tactics, and new industry trends. I also spent time on the show floor, stopping at booths to inquiring about new products and innovations, chatting with people along the way. Attending [Cultivate '21](#) was fun and engaging for several reasons, and I hope to return in the future.

I was introduced to John Erwin on my first day and ended up attending three or four of his seminars. Not only was it neat to meet someone who does so much research in my work field of horticulture, but it was great to meet the scholar that my greenhouse professor studied under years ago. John was quite knowledgeable and a pleasant speaker. I attended his talks on greenhouse efficiency trends, foliage plants, and PGR efficiency in greenhouse production. Between these three, I walked away with loads of new ideas I can potentially apply to my current position as Assistant Head Grower at Tagawa Greenhouses, as well as a thorough refresher on things like standard PGR rates and greenhouse photoperiodic lighting.

In attending Al Zylstra's talk on water quality, I got back to basics. He reminded me of the barriers to producing quality crops when poor quality water is used, and monitoring is neglected. He stressed points like understanding the water you use, constant tracking, overall water use efficiency, and reducing waste. These are points I will bring back to the workplace for the crops and help conserve water where I can since I grow in a place that doesn't have a drop to spare.

Another of my favorite seminars at this conference was the Poinsettia Disease and Prevention talk because I am currently dealing with some of these issues in poinsettia propagation. This session gave me a better idea of what fungicides work best for each disease



and the details like ideal application time and method. One thing that surprised me was the suggestion to mix pageant fungicide with IBA sprays to cuttings on day two after being stuck, and I'm excited to try this myself. Further, I attended a talk by Ann Chase on foliar diseases of common greenhouse ornamentals. She is a pioneer of sorts with her private extension company and a leading expert in pathology. Several months ago, she lent us some advice on a bacterial issue on salvia, so seeing her speak in person was very engaging.



There were many great seminars, speakers, and conversations with individuals in many areas of horticulture. Besides the information retrieved or the contacts made, one of the most beneficial aspects of this event for me personally was the boosted excitement I feel for my industry after spending several days with like-minded horticulturalists. I got to see my greenhouse professor and several people I studied with at ISU. **I have expanded my grower's toolbox and cannot wait to get back to work with it.** AFE deserves a huge thanks for all they do for students and the industry as a whole. I greatly enjoyed my time at Cultivate 2021 and exploring Columbus. Thank you, AFE for this opportunity. I hope to return to Cultivate in the future.

Written by Sherman Hartman, AFE's 2021 Paul Thomas Floriculture Production Intern of the Year. As part of this award, recipients report on their experience at Cultivate to inform AFE and the industry of its value and impact. AFE provides recipients with paid hotel and airfare to Cultivate conference, free registration to Cultivate from AmericanHort, a \$500 stipend, networking opportunities and photo op with AFE Representatives at Cultivate, and a feature article in AFE publications. To learn more about this award, click [here](#).