Vic & Margaret Ball Internship
Student Report

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University Arizona State University Internship Employer Altman Plants

REPORT and EVALUATION

The final written report and program evaluation represent your final requirements for this internship. The report requirements are listed below. This report is provided to the American Floral Endowment Board of Trustees and the selection committee members. It may also be used in promotional material for the program and shared with the host employer (unless you request otherwise).

CONTENT/DEADLINES

The Final Report should consist of the following:

* 500 words (minimum)
* summary of your overall experience including
  - work performed
  - skills learned
  - company as host
  - impact on career/education
  - future plans
  - photos of student engaged in internship activity AND photo by the company sign/truck (object displaying company name)

The Program Evaluation Form – This is a short questionnaire to help us evaluated the program from the student’s perspective. Provide feedback where necessary to assist us in making necessary adjustments to the program to ensure a successful and meaningful intern experience. This information is shared with the selection committee only.

BOTH ITEMS MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 30 DAYS OF INTERNSHIP COMPLETION.

Please return all information to:
American Floral Endowment, 610 Madison Street Ste 101, PMB 803, Alexandria, VA 22314 Fax: 703-822-7145 / E-mail: cmusgrove@afeendowment.org
Before I entered this internship I was really questioning my degree and if I should change it to something else because I wasn’t feeling the love of horticulture like I did back in Highschool. But this summer internship confirmed my love and passion for horticulture and that I actually want to stick with it and be a grower. My favorite parts of the day were in the mornings when I got to walk with the growers and learn how to examine a bed of crops. They taught me how to propagate and examine the moisture in the soil. I got to identify actual plant diseases and pests personally and learn which types of chemicals effectively treat them. I also learned about growing weeks and how fast-pace plant production is. I could see how growers really loved their plants and how worried they were when they would see a bed with pests.

Some other things I learned about my stay in Altman Plants is Propagation, but I want to go a bit more in depth about it. While I was there we were propagating hydrangeas, poinsettias, and proteas. We would use a fog system and sprinklers but I learned about how to cut the water from these plants as they mature and how to keep the humidity up. An example of keeping the humidity up is watering the sidewalk and walkways of the greenhouse to help the poinsettias. Another technique I learned is when you check the roots of plants you use your finger to see if they have produced roots. When plants mature you break the soil to check the roots and smell the soil to check for bacteria. I also learned when to apply fertilizer and why it is so important to rotate fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicide. Some fertilizers are calcium rich but we had to be careful not to introduce too much calcium. Pesticides like Decree or Donsain were also very interesting, so were fungicides like Medallions and growth regulators like Fascination.

I loved learning about sustainable practices with Altman. 70% of their water is recycled, which at first introduced many issues. They solved their problem by adding Cannas to filter out chemicals. Owls on the property keep rodent populations in check instead of poisons which keeps plants and employees safe. One way we recycle soil at Altman we heat it up to clean it from pests and harmful bacteria before reintroducing it to the workspace.

Altman’s many locations are also very interesting. They have a tissue culture facility which I visited to learn about how they make succulents and why a controlled environment for tissue culture is important. Another interesting fact I learned is every location owned by Altman Plants is important and unique. For example, Edgehill has all of the succulents, Lake Matthews has most of the drought tolerant plants, and other colored plants are found at Fallbrook due to a more cooler climate. Every location is then divided into departments which is essential to deliver the best quality of plant to our customers. Availability team has their cycle counts, the dock team organizes everything, mechanics help with the machines
and shading structures, and the irrigators help the growers with the plants! It's a huge team but with great communication everything works out. Lastly, other Altman specifics I touched on during my time at Lake Matthews were rose production, plant varieties, pH test, greenhouse management, plant advertisement importance, pruning, customer differences, and bug scans.

Contrary to ASU’s virtual classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, Altman plants really cared that I learned everything hands on. One project I assigned was seeing why soil mixtures have a specific recipe. My project had to do with soil mixtures and the absence of perlite and how it affected drought tolerant plants. I had 2 types of soil that didn't have perlite and a control which is the soil they used that did have perlite. I also had 3 different plant species (Caryopteris Blue Empire, Alyogyne Huegeili Elektra Blue, and Prostanthera ovalifolia Variegata). And by the end of my internship my conclusion was that the soil they used was in fact the best due to the right amount of hydrofiber, bark, and most important of all perlite. Another project was to record the plant height of the Mums. This taught me Mums can be a tricky plant with a fast growth rate, but certain chemicals slow down their growth or abort their buds leading to them being unsellable.

I loved my fellow coworkers at Altman plants! I could honestly say that I found long-lasting friendships during my stay who taught me so much about agriculture! One of my co-workers had a beehive on the property and he would harvest from it from time to time and he showed me how every bee hive can only have one bee queen and how some ants are predators of bees so he always has to be on the lookout. Another co-worker of mine was likely the best identifier of roses I’ve ever seen. They all made me feel like I had a place in the company.

By the end of this Internship, Altman Plants told me to please consider them for the future and that I have a spot secured. I am 100% going back when I am finished with my degree. I love the company and the direction they are heading. I told them that I am going back with more experience and knowledge that I will gain from ASU and I am going to get certified in Integrated Pest Management (I.P.M.). I can’t wait to go back and apply this knowledge on a greater scale and become a head grower.

Thank you to the Vic and Margaret Ball Internship program for giving me a wonderful opportunity that has changed my life.
(A cute selfie of me and the Mums)
A hate crime towards snails... damn

IF YOU SEE A SNAIL:
1. Destroy it immediately
2. Report it to your supervisor immediately

ZERO SNAILS - ZERO TOLERANCE

SI VES UN CARACOL MARRÓN...
1. Destruyelo
2. Comunícárselo a tu supervisor inmediatamente.

CERO CARACOLES - CERO TOLERANCIA