

Julia Christian  
Ball Internship  
Molbak's  
Woodinville, WA

I spent this summer interning at Molbak's Nursery in Woodinville, WA. I was excited for this internship. The majority of my horticultural experience I have gained from aiding my major professor in research at the University of Idaho and as a member of the Plant and Soil Science Club. Neither of these experiences allowed me to gain an accurate knowledge of the horticulture industry. I definitely learned a lot about the industry during my internship, and I also learned about team work, communication and about myself.

My first four weeks at Molbak's were kind of rough. I was performing a lot more physical labor than I was used to and I was trying to learn enough Spanish to talk to my co-workers. I spent a lot of time learning about body language and how to use the right body language and hand signals to communicate through the language barrier. I put these new communication skills to work when Kellie, the other intern, and I were in charge of the poinsettia sticking team. We figured out how to tell them when we had a new cultivar, how to stick the poinsettia cuttings, when breaks were, and even how to tell them to change their gloves after each break. This was a large accomplishment for me because I had never before been in a situation with so little verbal communication.

About six weeks into my internship, Molbak's made the decision to shut down production at the farm and half of the staff was let go. I was lucky that the owner of Molbak's decided to honor my internship and was kept as part of the transition team for the remainder of the summer. Kellie and I were now responsible for helping maintain the remaining plants in saleable condition for retail and wholesale. We were also responsible for pulling and cleaning the best plants when retail or wholesale made an order. When we moved from production to wholesale we were responsible for displaying the plants in an organized, consumer friendly manner. Due to the changes that occurred in the middle of the internship, Kellie and I were not able to work in the retail area because we were needed at the farm. However, I was glad to still be able to work in wholesale, because it allowed me to help and interact with customers, as well as set up sale tables.

Throughout the summer Kellie and I worked together on many projects. There were times where we were given separate responsibilities and jobs, but for the most part we worked together. At times it was frustrating to have two of us working on the same project, but in the end we learned how to work through our differences and work as team. I am very glad to have worked Kellie throughout the summer because we were able to demand the best from each other and learn from each other as well.

At the end this internship I can very confidently say that I learned a lot. There were times it was difficult, but I learned how to push through and continue to perform to the best of my ability. I learned better communication skills and how to use these skills as part of team. I also learned how to overcome adversity and that has made me a stronger and more knowledgeable person. I am very grateful to have been given this opportunity and I would not have changed any of my experiences.