

Vic & Margret Ball Internship Report

I had the pleasure of carrying out my internship at Skagit Gardens. A leading wholesale production nursery out of Mount Vernon, Washington. Skagit has a broad range of plants from annuals, perennials, hanging baskets, herbs and more. In addition to finished products Skagit gardens offers Super start liners and stock plants. Skagit is known for their quality of finished products, attention to detail, teamwork, and their "delight the customer" attitude which accounts for their success.

I worked in a variety of different areas and was exposed to all areas of greenhouse production. Starting from propagation following through to liners and then finished production on into sales. I believe this gave me a great outlook on overall production. I experienced the bulking up stages of production in early part of the year. To the sales rush of May and Mothers Day. The wonderful colors stunning arrangement of the hanging baskets. Then the switch over to producing and the propagating of next year's crops. This was a very validating and worthwhile experience. I gained so much in the way of practical experience increasing my overall understanding of Horticulture.

Some objectives I would hope to and completed during my time as an intern were: Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a team environment as well as hold individual responsibilities. I accomplished and worked on this throughout my internship, but came to fruition when I was able to take care of my own greenhouse range. My time as crop care in charge of this area helped me accomplish many of my technical objectives at one time. From increasing proficiency in pest scouting, working with annuals and bedding plants, utilizing environmental controls, and understanding the importance of crop scheduling and their effects on production. The hands on experience with the plants and the growers were an invaluable opportunity for me.

In addition to these responsibilities I was given the opportunity to branch out with multiple projects. First of which was soil testing. Within that was monitoring Ph and E.C levels via pour through method and 2:1 dilution. I observed levels of multiple types of plants in all different stages of maturity, environmental conditions, and different soils types. I recorded the results for 22 weeks into the system. Entering the data and graphing the levels over time. Allowing for real time monitoring by the production manager. Also I was able to train all of the crop care employees on my methods to continue monitoring after I had completed my internship. With this project I was able to demonstrate my record keeping and organizational skills. Along with enhancing my communication and leadership skills.

Furthermore I carried out a further experiments the first was pinching experiment to overcome flowering of Iberis during liner production. We manipulated environmental factors along with cultural practices to promote vegetative growth. The result was so positive the best trials were incorporated into normal production and sold. Simultaneously I was given the responsibility of updating m.s.d.s sheets for the company. This allowed me to further familiarize myself with all the chemicals, PGR'S, herbicides, Fungicides, Etc used by the company. It gives you a deeper understanding of the variety of different Modes of action and chemical classes to maintain a healthy IPM plan.

By far though the project I am most proud of was installing an entrance garden to the intern house. I spent a considerable amount of time and effort along with the resources of Skagit gardens to make it possible. I designed with 2 basic idea's repetition and variation and the use of color echoing of cool colors. Along with the use of stunning masses of white as transitions. I installed all the plants and hardscapes in my free time. I had to be extremely resourceful in my acquiring most of my hardscapes. A lot of recycling of old materials was used as

a solution. With this project I hope to leave a lasting impression on Skagit as they have done on me.

Prominent plants used

- *Eryngium* 'Big blue'
- *Nepeta faassenii* 'Walker's low'
- *Astilbe chinensis* 'Visions in white'
- *Salvia superba*
- *Echinacea purpurea* 'little magnus'
- *Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Schneehurken'
- *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Duchesse de Nemours'
- *Achillea millefolium* 'Strawberry Seduction'
- *Lavandula x intermedia* 'Grosso'
- *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote superior'
- *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Apollo'
- *Iatris spicata* 'Kobold Seedling'
- *Artemisia schmidtiana* 'Nana'



Illustration 1: front view of house

*Illustration 3:
Before*



Illustration 2: side view