

Melanie Rausch

### Vic and Margaret Ball Internship Report

This summer I completed a three month internship at Peace Tree Farm in Kintnersville, Pennsylvania. Peace Tree Farm is a small greenhouse operation that focuses on using technology to achieve sustainable crop production. One of the aspects of Peace Tree Farm that makes them unique is that there is a wide variety of plants that are grown in the greenhouses, so I was able to experience working with a wide range of crops. The crops that I gained the most experience with were herbs, in particular, lavender, thyme, oregano and mint, and begonias.



One area of production that I gained a great deal of experience in was propagation. I propagated a wide range of crops by multiple different methods. I was able to learn how to propagate from leaf

cuttings, tip cuttings, rhizome, division, and seeds. The two crops that I gained the most experience in are propagating heirloom begonias from leaf cuttings, and lavender from tip cuttings. I am really glad to have had the opportunity to work so much with propagation while I was completing the internship because I have not yet taken a propagation class. Working in propagation was such a huge learning experience for me that I would have to say that it has been one of the most valuable things I have gained from this internship.

At the beginning of my internship I was working primarily in propagation and transplanting from liners into quart pots. Peace Tree Farm has a production line set up for transplanting that includes a conveyor belt, a machine that puts pots into trays with a soil machine that fills the pots, and a station that waters in the newly transplanted plants. Working on that line was really phenomenal to see how quickly we could pot up these plants. Peace Tree has a propagation equivalent to the transplanting line, where cuttings can be stuck quickly. Towards the end of my internship I was working more with plant upkeep, such as watering, pinching, trimming, and cutting back plants, as well as helping with more of



the business side of the company. In the office I helped update catalogues for the next year, and did extensive work on updating the company website. This mainly entailed adding new plant pages to the website database. Out in the greenhouse, learning how to thoroughly water and decide which benches needed to be flooded and which benches did not need to be flooded was a useful skill I learned and have taken away with me.

This internship was very helpful for me deciding what my future plans will be. With the wide variety of plants, I was really able to learn which plants I would like to work with in the future and which plants I would prefer not to work with again. I have always really enjoyed working with succulents and I still would really like to continue working with cactus and succulents. I also learned that I have little interest working with Geraniums and Lantana in the future.

I think this internship has been especially helpful for me to learn more about the horticultural industry, as well as has taught me skills that I will not have the chance to learn in college. Being only a horticulture minor, I will not be able to take as

many horticulture classes as those majoring in the field. I really believe that this internship has effectively taught and made me really experienced in some of the material that I will not have the chance to learn about in school. As of now, I plan to continue working in horticulture, however I am not sure yet which section of the horticulture industry I will settle on.

