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Final Internship Report

For 6 months of last year, I lived in Southern California working as an intern for Olive Hill Greenhouses. Not a single day looked the same. Of course, plenty of activities repeated or involved similar skills, but every day a new situation occurred, and plans shifted by the hour. It sounds more hectic than it



Above: I'm dumping plugs we received with rot issues.



Above: The process of unboxing Aglaonema cuttings to prevent rot and await inspection and planting.

was, and honestly, I loved it. In the morning, I reviewed pending projects and tasks to get the day started. My options generally included, watering benches, updating records, or finishing something from the previous

day. Some days, I finished a job before moving onto the next, but usually, I needed to switch focus part-way through to start on something more time-sensitive. Most times this meant new plants or cuttings arrived and they needed to be unboxed for planting and inspection. For plugs, I needed to know which greenhouse to take

each variety to and then plan accordingly while unboxing to make moving and unloading them in the correct houses easy. Cuttings however were either given to a planting crew immediately or, placed into web flats on trailers until a planting crew became available. In addition, I worked on a couple projects that coincided with my goals. The first was an audit of the irrigation system. Over the course of a few months, I updated our paper copy of the schedule to the actual computer schedule, compared our log of valves

to what was working in the greenhouse, and performed quality tests with the help of a University Extension Irrigation Specialist. The other was to continue and expand their scouting program.

Each week, I recorded the pests present on each sticky card into a computerized record-keeping



Above: I'm opening a valve to test a section of hanging irrigation.

system. I would then discuss this information with the head grower to determine which greenhouses were under heavier pest pressures and if they needed conventional pesticides or bio-controls. Eventually, I applied beneficial nematodes to our newest plants. While this is not a comprehensive list of every task I completed over the internship, the above are my personal favorites and most memorable.



Above: One of many sticky cards I checked weekly, hanging among some gorgeous bromeliads.

Olive Hill Greenhouses proved to be an excellent host for me. Their facilities and operations allowed me to apply knowledge from classes as well as learn and develop new skills. Throughout the internship, they were able to utilize my help to their advantage while simultaneously pushing me forward. They expanded my knowledge and skills related to pest management, tropical plant growth, irrigation systems, labor organization, and government rules and regulations. My understanding of Spanish is still limited, but my vocabulary now includes more horticultural and business terms. I developed personal skills as well. My organizational and time management skills improved while I found a work-life balance. All the employees made me feel welcome and showed me patience during my stay. On a few occasions they even helped me pursue other career interests by pairing me up with the San Diego Botanic Garden. I appreciate everything this company and its people did for me. While I would not change my internship for the world, it has shifted my career plans to focus on botanic and public gardens. It is my hope to curate and maintain gardens that anyone can visit to learn and connect with plants from their area and around the world.

Below: I'm in the middle of drenching our new plants with beneficial nematodes.

