

2013 American Floral Endowment Internship

Welby Gardens

Welby, Colorado

By: Brittaney Nelson

Three days after graduating with my Bachelor's degree in Environmental Horticulture from Virginia Tech. I arrived in Denver, Colorado to complete the American Floral Endowment internship. Ambition, excitement and an early sunrise awakened me to new chapter on the first day of work at Welby Gardens. Hello my name is Brittaney Nelson and it is a great honor to have the opportunity of portraying my internship and my first impression of being a new professional in the field of horticulture. In light of this I would like to share a quote from C.S. Lewis, "What you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of person you are." In this essay I hope to convey the synergy of Welby Gardens which is as follows: work for the betterment of the company, plant disease prevention is a priority, and make profitable investments.

In the first few weeks at Welby I became informed on the trials and deadlines so that the plants would be ready for July 30th. My ongoing task was to eliminate plants that need to be taken off the list and assist in maintaining the young plants. I was involved in the organizing, transplanting, spacing, pinching, and watering throughout the summer. In accomplishing this I assisted David a fellow colleague from Colorado State University who was the main resource for spraying chemicals and problem solving. At Welby Gardens I learned very quickly that no matter what location or job title every employee works toward making the company as a whole more profitable. The growers are a key factor in this mindset. They encourage workers to stay focused on the task at hand and taking appropriate breaks. Yet also work closely with those who manage the business and make suggestions to enhance

efficiency. I expressed an interest in learning about being a grower at Welby and began watering in the potted plant area. The other growers encouraged my involvement and included me in the specifics on disease management.

At first my disease management experience consisted of putting up the yellow sticky cards on Monday mornings. Soon I was included on the information needed to make a spray list, specifically the quantity of chemical needed for the quantity of plants being treated. Welby Gardens practices prevention of disease and is fortunate to have a professional entomologist, Dan Gerace on site to answer questions as needed. Dan is also the internship and trials coordinator which allowed me to learn specifically the biological insect controls used in the organic greenhouses. Dan holds many responsibilities at Welby Gardens and it has been a great opportunity to meet someone who is an influential part of the Colorado Nursery and Landscape Association and Colorado Extension.

Welby prides itself in research and predicting future changes in market trends to supply the best plant material to their customers. This included acknowledging a drought issue for landscapers in Colorado and informing the community. Welby Gardens differentiated themselves from the other suppliers because they invested time into solving a problem that stressed the industry as a whole. Welby Garden invests into the employees in order to strengthen the companies trademark as a high end wholesaler. This company is the most informative and supportive company to begin my future career. My experience as a part of this family has been a memorable and enjoyable internship. Every day at Welby is a new and exciting adventure.

Welby Gardens has impacted my future plans to continue working in the industry instead of returning to graduate school. In August I will be taking a position at Strange's Greenhouse in Mechanicsville, Virginia as a greenhouse worker. I will never forget the amazing coworkers and the

experiences that have shaped me into an open minded horticulturist. It is my hope that I will be allowed to leave the door open at Welby as a resource, and future commerce with Strange's. I want to take this chance to say thank you to the Gerace family, AFE, and most importantly the growing team for opening their doors to me for a life changing summer. Thank you!