

Prepare to Learn

Internship time is upon us, and now is a better time than any to take advantage of it.

By Carrie Burns

Attention all advisers, students and greenhouse growers: Internship time is upon us. Plans are probably already written; tasks are most likely already planned out; and you — whether you're an adviser, student or greenhouse grower — are ready to get your hands dirty. If not, you should be.

I'm not sure I need to tell you how important and beneficial internships are for everyone — so important that many of our industry's associations and organizations offer internship programs, including:

- American Floral Endowment (AFE)
The Vic & Margaret Ball Internship
The Mosmiller Scholar Program
Harold F. Wilkins Scholarship
- Floriculture Industry Research and Scholarship Fund
Barbara Carlson Scholarship
- And many more

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), "Employers responding to NACE's 2004 Experiential Education Survey reported that, on average they extend offers for full-time employment to nearly 58 percent of the students who served internships with their organizations, and to more than 60 percent of those who have taken part in co-op assignments with them."

We here at *GPN* and the folks over at Nexus Corporation realized how important an internship is; that is why, for the last five years, we have been awarding two scholarships — one for \$3,000 and one for \$500 — to students completing internships at growing facilities.

Years ago, Nexus and *GPN* got together to give back to the industry and reward those students who worked hard to learn some things that they wouldn't be able to learn in the classroom. "Internships are such an important part of our industry," explained Bridget White, *GPN*'s editorial director. "They really show students what a career in greenhouse management will be like. We wanted to base our scholarship on successful completion of an internship for just this reason. The idea of a scholarship came because we wanted to support the industry and attract more students into floriculture, but we added the internship aspect because we

want those students to know what they are getting into and see how great this industry is."

OUR MOST RECENT WINNER

As you may have seen on the January 2005 cover of *GPN*, the most recent winner of the *GPN*/Nexus Intern Of the Year scholarship was Jessica Boldt from University of Florida, and also a recipient of the Vic & Margaret Ball Internship from AFE. Boldt was able to describe her internship — a six-month stint at White's Nursery & Greenhouse, Chesapeake, Va. — in a very clear and concise way, which helped but was not the reason she won. White's enabled Boldt to perform many tasks rather than just one, and she took advantage of it, initializing responsibility and going full-force into her tasks. This allowed Boldt to learn even more and decide what best fit her.

AFTER THE INTERNSHIP

After talking to our last few winners, it seems that the *GPN*/Nexus Intern of the Year award gave them wide recognition throughout the industry. When I spoke with Emily Stefanski, our 2004 winner, a few months ago, she informed me that she was working at Wojo's Greenhouse & Nursery, Ortonville, Mich., and loving it.

When working on Boldt's article, I received a few E-mails from some people on our Editorial Advisory Board interested in meeting her and talking to her about possible employment. After the article was published, I had readers contacting me for the same reason, but when I last talked to Boldt, she was still deciding what to do.

My favorite part about this program is telling the winner he/she won. Sometimes I hear, "Oh my, I can't wait to tell my mom," or even just giggles. It's nice to be able to bring that much joy to someone's day.

A CHALLENGE

Even in an industry filled with men, our winners dating back to 2000 have all been women. We've had quite a few male runners-up, but never a winner. No, you can't blame it on the all-female editorial staff at *GPN*, because our Editorial Advisory Board (made up of mostly men) chooses the winner!

So, this is a challenge to all you guys out there to be



Top: 2005 winner Jessica Boldt from the University of Florida on *GPN*'s January cover. **Bottom:** 2004 winner Emily Stefanski from Michigan State University with her adviser Art Cameron.

the first male winner and to all you gals out there to keep the winning streak going.

You are eligible to apply for the internship if you're enrolled in an accredited university during the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, working on an undergraduate degree in a branch of floriculture, and complete your internship during the summer of 2005.

If you or someone you know meets these requirements, send (or encourage them to send) a cover letter requesting consideration for the scholarship and identifying the school you attend; a letter from your academic advisor recommending you and attesting to enrollment; and an essay that describes your intern experience, including who you interned for, what your responsibilities were and what you learned. Materials may be submitted from August 1 through September 16, 2005. Essays will be judged by a panel of judges on the quality of the experience, knowledge gained and the applicant's ability to describe the experience. All applications should be mailed to: GPN/Nexus Intern Scholarship, c/o

Carrie Burns, 380 E. Northwest Hwy., Suite 200, Des Plaines, IL 60016. For further information, contact Carrie at (847) 391-1019 or cburns@sgcmail.com.

THE BENEFITS

Don't forget that an internship benefits everyone: The intern learns things that cannot be taught in a classroom; the advisor experiences the gratification of giving the intern the knowledge they'll need in their internship and in life; and the greenhouse is able to receive extra help during a busy time and may even be able to add a qualified employee to the employee list in the future. GPN

Carrie Burns is managing editor of GPN. She can be reached by phone at (847) 391-1019 or E-mail at cburns@sgcmail.com.



GPN's consulting editor and University of Florida professor Jim Barrett and 2005 winner Jessica Boldt.

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