

Summer Internship: Demonstration and Evaluation of an Organic Manure-Based Substrate/Fertilizer in Greenhouse Floriculture Production

Faculty Sponsors

Neil Mattson

Gary Harman

Lead County CCE Association

Cornell Cooperative Extension Monroe County

Extension Education Collaborator

Walt Nelson

Project Description

In the Rochester area and Western NY, several greenhouse operations are expressing interest in using organic components in their substrate and plant nutrition programs. A dry manure-based substrate along with organic nutrient components and Trichoderma has been developed by Cornell faculty. The material has not been tested for most flower crops. Based on other crops it provides long lasting fertility and improved biotic and abiotic stress tolerance.

A barrier to adoption by floriculture businesses is the lack of commercial scale demonstrations/trials on a broad number of floriculture species. This summer intern will work closely with identified greenhouse operations and Cooperative Extension staff implementing organic substrate/fertilizer demonstrations at their individual operations.

The intern will also cooperate with faculty planning demonstrations/trials specific to each operation. Rochester area mentoring is with Cooperative Extension. The intern will work with the operators implementing and monitoring the demonstration experiments. The intern will be an invited attendee at the annual Floriculture Field Day at Cornell, connecting with floriculture business members.

Near the conclusion of the project the intern will work with faculty and Extension staff developing a fact-sheet regarding use of organic substrates/fertilizers in floriculture. This will be available online at www.greenhouse.cornell.edu.

Successful Candidate Attributes

Major in Plant Science, Crop and Soil Science or closely related fields

Knowledge of containerized plant production systems (such as through HORT 3100 or through previous greenhouse/nursery work experience)

Interested in Organic/Sustainable agriculture

Worksite Location

Housed at Monroe County CCE Office, 249 Highland Avenue, Rochester, NY

Will travel throughout Monroe and neighboring counties and occasional travel to Geneva/Ithaca

Other Expectations

Intern is responsible for finding housing

Valid driver's license and reliable transportation needed (mileage reimbursed for work related driving)

Intern will follow typical work hours, such as: M-F 8:30 am – 4:00 pm (37.5 hr/wk)

Intern will work for 10-11 weeks beginning mid-late May as arranged with sponsors

If Interested Contact Neil Mattson at nsm47@cornell.edu or 607-255-0621