

News Release

Making Connections through Horticulture: People, Plants, Professions, & Perspectives

By Karli Renney, senior, majoring in communication on Thursday, April 15, 2021



When you think of horticulture, does your mind directly think plants or profession? UMN Crookston has been delivering degrees in horticulture for more than 35 years. Not only is there a diverse group of people who fill many roles in this profession, but there are varying degrees of perspective in the industry.

Jacoby McConkey and Meghan (Messerschmidt) Arms share a passion for the horticulture industry. While they currently hold different positions in the same field, they both enjoy working with the people in their profession and were excited to share their passion for the industry, while describing their individual goals and accomplishments.

Jacoby McConkey, a senior at the University of Minnesota Crookston majoring in horticulture with an emphasis in production, currently works in the campus greenhouses. McConkey shared he simply enjoys "working with the plants." From growing the plants to providing a finished product, the most rewarding part of his job is seeing the joy on the customers face when they see the attractive plants and landscapes he creates.



In contrast, Meghan Arms works in the horticulture industry as the health and safety director at Bailey Nurseries in Elko New Market, Minnesota. Arms graduated from the University of Minnesota Crookston in 2002, with a degree in plant industries management with an emphasis in horticulture.

Jacoby and Meghan's passion for horticulture was apparent as they shared their goals and experiences of the industry, but as the saying goes: "every rose has its thorn." Like most professions, the horticulture industry provides its challenges.

While McConkey is no stranger to a challenge, he shared it was hard to get used to the work hours horticulture requires. He also stated the working conditions can be difficult as was learning how to manage the many tasks projects require in order to be done successfully.

Arms has also seen challenges first-hand in the horticulture industry and how they affect newcomers to the profession. She worries that in the future it may become more difficult to find people to work the general labor jobs due to more extreme working conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also posed some challenges for Arms. Though the past year has been great for the company, she explained new safety restrictions and protocol relative to the pandemic have increased the complexity of operations and how to keep employees safe.

Though years separate these two individuals, they are connected through their passion for plants and people, and forever bound by their likeness and path through the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Written by Karli Renney, senior, majoring in communication, Detroit Lakes, Minn., for the Alumni and Student Spotlight e-Newsletter.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716 800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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