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SOS:ComAlt

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Final Self Evaluation

This quarter, I wanted to learn about running a small-scale cut flower operation. As an intern at August Farm, I was able to participate in greenhouse work such as seeding, up-potting, and taking cuttings for propagation; field work such as transplanting, weeding, high tunnel maintenance and harvesting; and setting up a small pop-up market in downtown Olympia.

Because I have worked on farms before, I had reservations about participating in a non-paid internship. At the end of the quarter, however, I can say that it was the right choice. As an intern, I felt as though I was able to ask more questions and had more time to learn and observe with a critical eye. As a result, I feel more confident in my abilities to farm independently and problem solve.

Specifically, I learned about what flowers grow well in the Pacific Northwest and when, how to plant a perennial rose garden, harvest and storage methods for various spring flowers including narcissus, tulips, ranunculus, and sweet peas, new trellising methods… and much more. Just as, or even more valuable, I was able to learn about the interpersonal workings of a small farm. Through personal observations and conversations with Marianne, I gained insight into what it’s like to manage interns and build relationships with community partners and customers.

Although not initial learning objectives, much of my thinking this quarter centered on the questions of ‘why does this matter?’ and ‘how can flowers be used to promote positive change’? I realized that one reason flower farming appeals to me is because it marries my interests in farming and art. Similar to art, flowers are able to convey feelings without words. They are very much a symbol of life. If I were to have my own flower farm in the future, figuring out how to make my product more accessible to everyone and potentially straying from the status quo of what the flower market currently is would be an important piece for me.

While I learned a lot this quarter, I am eager to further my understanding of agricultural science pertaining to flowers as well as explore the symbolism and cultural significance of flowers.

Through participation in Tuesday classes, I was able to think about the process of commodification in a more critical way and apply this thinking to the work I was doing in my internship. I tried to push myself to have more of a balance between listener and participant in class and think that I succeeded.

While I think I did a sufficient job in demonstrating what I learned this quarter through my e-portfolio and final presentation, I do think my weekly posts could have been more detailed. This quarter was rather difficult for me in my personal life, as it was for many. Although I could have been timelier with certain things, I do feel like a maintained a steady commitment to this program and my internship.