

Your Next Employee May be in Your Back Yard

This presentation provides ideas for building a workforce pipeline

Presented by Seed Your Future



Meet the Panel



Christine Guenther - Wildflower

Maryland



Carma White - Four Seasons Flowers

California



Emily Eldridge - North Carolina State University

North Carolina

Operating a floristry business involves more than just artistic talent; it requires sound business strategies, financial management, and operational efficiency.

The Essential Role of Florists



Girl Scouts

- Children naturally love flowers
- “Low effort, high reward” outreach
- The goal isn’t necessarily hiring someone tomorrow
- The bigger goal is letting children know this career exists

01



Green Career Week Class Presentation

- Even if students don’t become florists, they become future customers and advocates.

02





Flowers for Life's Milestones

Girl Scouts badge



description is: "Introduce your girls to the world of flowers. Make bouquets at home with store bought flowers, invite a professional to present, visit a flower shop, or attend a class." So really, that leaves it wide open for whatever you'd want to do! (And FYI we can help pay for any materials.) Just let me know if you want to run any ideas by us, but I trust that you can come up with something fun!



The Future Workforce is a “Student” right now

- The floristry industry is continuously evolving, driven by technological advancements, changing consumer tastes, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and personalization.
- Students don't realize how many careers exist the floral industry
- Bring a wholesaler into your presentation will completely change the students perspective





Diverse Touch Points



01

FFA Classroom Partnership

- Find one outstanding agriculture teacher
- Has returned multiple years
- Partnered with wholesale florist
- Presentation alternated between wholesale and retail careers

02

Live Design Demo

- Designed a dozen roses while speaking
- Students stayed engaged because they could watch design happen live

03

Pocket Square Workshop

- Hands-on activity
- Students created something themselves

04

Monthly Classes

- Two high school girls attend regularly
- Started as beginners
- Now confidently create their own designs



Maximizing Your Reach

01

Girl Scouts

- Use leftover Valentine's flowers
- Very inexpensive
- Great sustainability message
- Children love creating arrangements

02

Girl Scout Shop Tour

- Created a scavenger hunt
- Badge activity
- Parents attended
- Offered parents 10% off purchase during event

03

Middle School Presentation

- Used Seed Your Future career infographic
- Asked "Does your dream career appear on this list?"
- Speaking to children is LESS intimidating than speaking to industry audiences



Hiring High School Students

01

High school students have become an important part of our workforce

- Summer Break
- Christmas break
- Mother's Day

02

The enjoyment of hiring high school students

- They genuinely want to work in a flower shop
- They're eager to learn
- They adapt quickly
- They're excited about wedding and event work

03

Where they begin

- Flower processing
- Customer Service
- Wrapping bouquets
- Cleaning and stocking
- Retail support

04

As they gain experience

- Corsages
- Event setup
- Wedding work
- Basic design





Student Testimonials

Reagan, 21-year-old college student, 3 years tenure (Summers)

The past three summers I've spent at WildFlower have taught me just as much, if not more, than the three years I've spent at college. I've learned how to communicate with all different types of people, handle challenges when things don't go as planned, and trust myself to take on new responsibilities. Those are lessons I don't think I could have learned from a classroom alone.

Skills/roles: processor, design assistant, event set up, retail clerk, social media content

Lucas, 20 yr old college student, 2.5 years tenure (Summers + Weekends)

This industry has the unique opportunity of celebrating with people, through birthdays, weddings, and simple gifts, but also to grieve and comfort with others during hard times. This job has been so impactful in my social growth as I can see each of these cases regularly, and as a delivery driver personally contact most people

Skills/roles: delivery, event set-up

Vincent, 19 years old, former employee, 5 year tenure (after school + breaks)

I found the floral industry a great way to enter the work force due to the diversity of work i was able to do, and the collaborative environment of my workplace. I believe the most beneficial thing for younger people going into the floral industry is the social skills you will develop working alongside your colleagues and with customers.

Skills / roles: plant care, retail, event, processor, design





A Different Experience



01

Challenges include:

- California's high minimum wage
- Transportation
- Stopping to learn the fundamentals

02

Managing expectation

- Flower processing
- Mechanics
- Product knowledge
- Customer service
- Shop operations

03

Alternative ways to engage

- Job shadowing
 - Store tours
- 

Seed Your Future

01

Green Career Week

- Field Trips & Class Presentations
- Social Media engagement
- Ready to use slides and assets

02

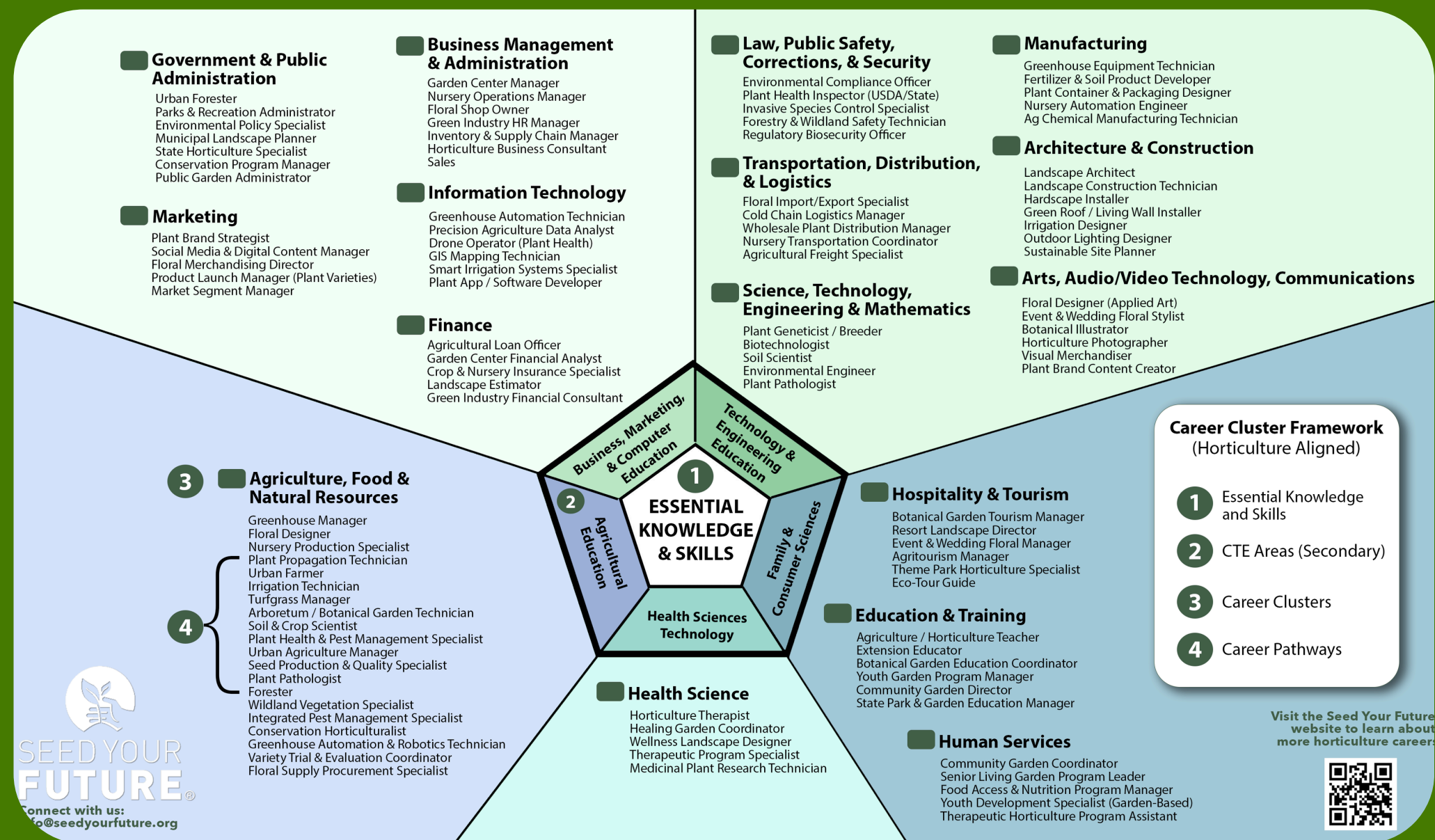
Organizations to contact

- 4-H Extension
- FFA Ag Teachers
- Girl & Boy Scouts
- STEAM Teachers
- Career Coaches
- School Gardens
- Career & Technical Education High Schools

03

Resources

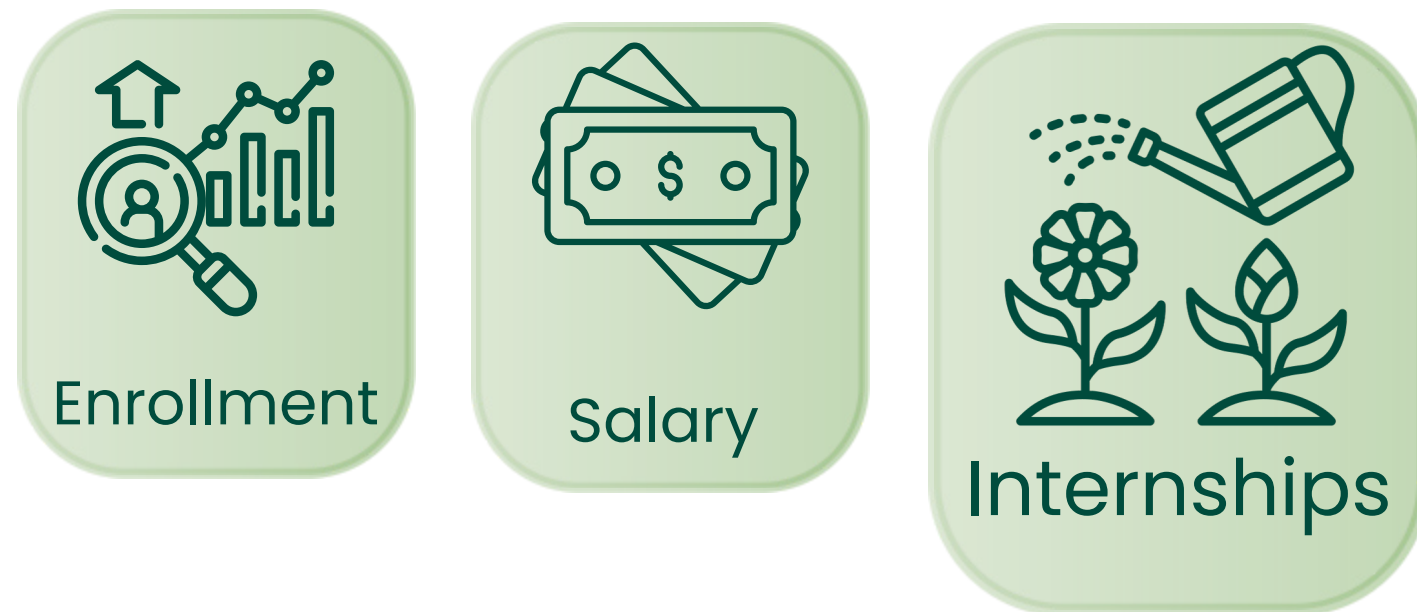
- Green Career Week Toolkit
- Horticulture Careers infographic
- Retial Florist High School Student Pathways
- Videos
- Career Quiz



Seed Your Future: Internship Research → Practical Tools

Research-Based Tools for Students, Employers, and Educators

Research and Key Findings

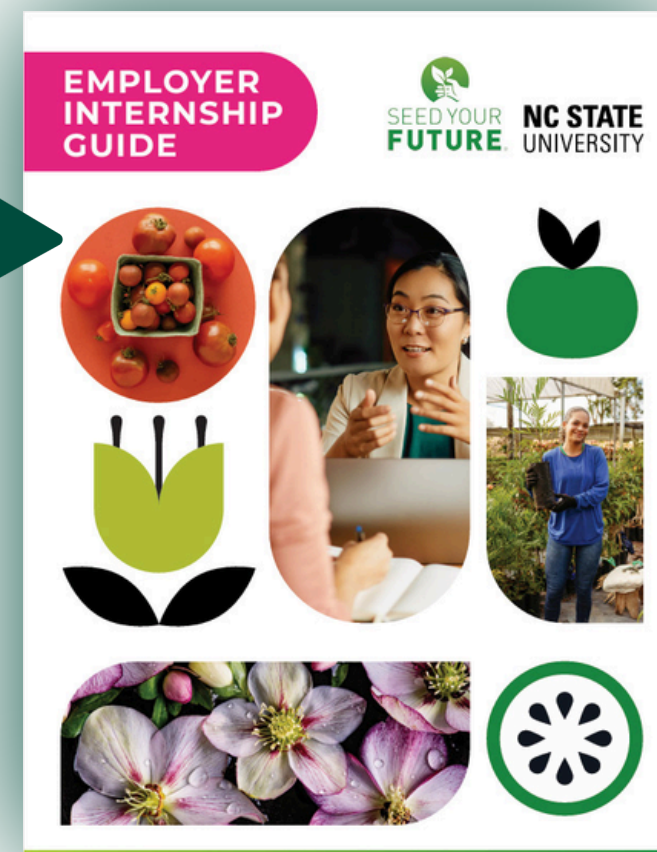


Internship Research Takeaways

- Students need clear pathways
- Employers lack time & structure
- Internships need consistency & support

Internship Resource Toolkit

Designed for: Students, Faculty, and Employers



 Best Practices Employer Guide for Creating and Managing Horticultural Internships

 Internship Weekly Planning Worksheets and Samples

 Employer Evaluation Forms and Student Evaluation Forms

Scan the QR Code to access the Seed Your Future Employer tools.



Why are internships valuable for students?



01

- Students discover what they enjoy
- They also discover what they don't enjoy

02

- Networking is one of the biggest benefits
- Students build relationships before graduation

What makes a great internship?



01

Best Internships

- Start with fundamentals
- Gradually increase responsibility
- Give students ownership
- End with meaningful projects

02

Examples

- Wedding setup
- Event work
- Customer interaction
- Merchandising





From Information to Action





Building High-Impact Horticulture Internships

Research-Based Tools for Students, Employers, and Educators

Why Internships Matter

Hosting an intern connects your business with **emerging talent** ready to contribute, learn, and grow. Gain fresh energy and **innovative ideas**, **build your future workforce**, and **support hands-on learning** of the newest members of the industry.

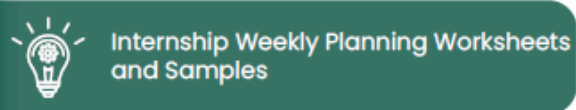
Internship Resource Toolkit



EMPLOYER INTERNSHIP GUIDE



Best Practices Employer Guide for Creating and Managing Horticultural Internships



Internship Weekly Planning Worksheets and Samples



Employer Evaluation Forms and Student Evaluation Forms

How These Tools Support Your Business

- Save time with ready-to-use planning tools
- Create consistent onboarding and training
- Streamline logistics for productive internships.

Seed Your Future Internship resources are designed to help you plan, host, and mentor interns effectively to create a mutually beneficial experience for both your business and your intern.



Scan the QR Code to access the Seed Your Future Employer tools.



Internship Weekly Planning Worksheet

This template is designed to help you plan a structured, mutually beneficial internships experience. Every business is unique, and this guide will help you map out a plan that balances your company's needs with the intern's learning goals.

Remember, the hardest part is simply getting started. Treat this as a foundation that you can adjust and improve as your internship program evolves over time.

This guide was developed for 8-week or 10-week internships. Each week's plan includes objectives, activities, learning goals, and evaluation checkpoints.

STEP 1: PRE-INTERNSHIP PLANNING AND BRAINSTORMING

A. Logistical Preparation

(Complete at least 3 weeks before the intern's start date.)

- Confirm all required I-9 paperwork, background checks, and agreements are completed.
- Send housing, location, and travel details as early as possible.
- Develop an onboarding plan including safety, orientation, overview of company culture, etc.
- Schedule a start-date meeting with key supervisors.
- Other preparation tasks: _____

B. Intern Goals

Ask the intern to begin brainstorming before the start date, as these goals can be discussed during the onboarding process!

Ask the intern to identify 2-3 personal or professional goals for the internship. Then discuss how these can align with the company's objectives.

Intern's Goals:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How these goals align with company objectives/how they might be incorporated:

Internship Weekly Planning Worksheet

1



Evaluation of Intern by Employer

(Use for Mid-Point evaluations and Final Evaluation)

Date: _____ Start Date of Internship: _____

Intern's Name: _____

Supervisor/Title: _____

Company: _____

This evaluation can be used both midway through the internship and at the end. It provides an objective evaluation of the intern's ability, character, and growth, and identifies areas requiring improvement. A mid-point rating by the supervisor is useful to the intern and the department intern coordinator and allows time for the intern to make improvements, if needed.

Please indicate the intern's top three strengths during the course of his/her internship, with examples:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Please indicate at least two opportunities for improvement for the intern:

- _____
- _____

Please rate the intern in each of the following categories (1=needs/developing, 3=average, 5=outstanding). Also write the intern met/is meeting the specified learning objectives in the internships.

	1	2	3	4	5
Intern's willingness and motivation to learn, take on new projects, and develop skills:					
Comment: _____					
Career readiness of intern:					
Comment: _____					

Adapted from the North Carolina State University Approved Horticulture Internship Handbook for Employers (2019). Copyright 2019.

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Connecting with a College or University

- Reach out
- Contact Horticulture departments
- Extension offices
- Community Colleges
- University near you





Audience Q & A

Reactions

- What are your take aways?
- Where will you start?



Thank You For Joining Us



Floristry is a dynamic blend of art, science, and business. It enriches lives through beauty and connection, offering endless creative opportunities.

But we must act now!



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