

MODERATOR LANNON: Our next speaker studied at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, where he graduated in 1971. Upon graduation he worked for Oki Nursery in Sacramento for a year and now he is branch manager of the Oki operation at Portland, Oregon. Paul Fukasawa.

WHAT THE HORTICULTURAL EMPLOYER CAN EXPECT FROM COLLEGE GRADUATES

PAUL FUKASAWA

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The rapidly growing ornamental horticulture industry is presently looking for mid-management personnel. The industry is hiring horticultural graduates to fill a wide diversity of positions. There is considerable value in hiring college graduates, rather than filling needed positions through an apprenticeship training system. A college graduate obtains the basic language of the industry. With the language and tools he has obtained in his schooling he is able to seek out new approaches from a varying number of sources. A college graduate may not have the technical background necessary in present job applications, but he does have the basis for understanding why, along with how, a task is performed. The nursery and floriculture industry is constantly undergoing change and progression. Future management must be able to be innovative and adaptable. A college graduate will be far more adaptable to change, and more innovative than a non-college graduate.

A common complaint amongst employers is that upon hiring a college graduate they have a person who understands theory, but not techniques. At Oki Nursery we have a saying, which I think describes the situation. The saying is "you must learn to walk before you can learn to run." However, the meaning of the saying is that a certain amount of time must be spent immediately learning the technical aspects of the industry to give the new trainee a solid foundation upon which to grow. My first period of training involved learning to drive a fork-lift and tractor, soil filling for potted plants, plant movement, irrigation, crew leadership, and other technical tasks. I think it is unfair to put the total burden of training on the employer. Labor is becoming a high enough priced expense without having college-educated pot fillers. It is partially up to young graduates entering the industry to be willing to pay a tuition for their training period. I remember being told by Mr. Kubo, as a student at Cal Poly, that a college graduate just starting out in the industry should be able to divide his salary

by the hours he works and, if it was higher than \$1.00/hr., he was being overpaid. Luckily I was being overpaid by that standard. Quite seriously, it took a lot of hours to learn to walk. The more the trainee is willing to sacrifice, the faster he can proceed in gaining technical knowledge. Depending on the individual and the employer, a graduate should be able to get on with the challenge of running by 6 to 12 months.

I think summer work programs, where students are given an opportunity to perform the technical tasks of nursery and floriculture work, are very valuable. My two summers with K-M Nursery, Inc. in Carpinteria, Calif., were very worthwhile to me. I have had the opportunity to help with and observe the summer programs offered by Oki Nursery and the University of California. The program gives the students a chance to be exposed to a broad spectrum of horticultural production. It gives them a solid foundation of practical experience and a head start on their peers.

To achieve the maximum growth from a young horticulturist, a constant transfer of responsibility must occur. Responsibility creates growth. An environment such as Oki Nursery is very conducive for personnel progress. New areas of responsibility are constantly being created, and new challenges are forever being presented. I believe the industry as a whole offers a great deal of opportunity to the aggressive college graduate, and that college graduates will be able to contribute much to industry of the future.

MODERATOR LANNON: Are there any questions for any of the four speakers?

RALPH PINKUS: I would like to ask Paul Fukasawa what he would tell a new student who is about to take over a management job at one of the nurseries.

PAUL FUKASAWA: A new student might not have all the answers necessary to take over the management responsibilities of an existing nursery. However, a new student should have at his hands all the tools to find his answers. He should know who to ask, what to ask, and when to ask.

Wednesday Evening, September 4, 1974

VICE-PRESIDENT BATCHELLER: For our evening session we will have Steve Fazio of the University of Arizona as moderator. Steve, will you take over now?

MODERATOR FAZIO: Our speakers tonight are going to talk about plant propagation in foreign countries. Our first speaker is Martin Reid who will tell us of his experiences in England. Martin.