

Summer Field, Propagation Manger, Spring Meadow Nursery



Summer Field is the Propagation Manager at Spring Meadow Nursery in Grand Haven, MI. Born and raised in northern Illinois. Summer's passion for horticulture is a result of taking various high school agriculture related courses and being a member of The National FFA Organization. Summer earned an Associates of Science Degree from Rock Valley Community College. It is during this time that she gained experience working with plants in the landscape at Anderson Japanese Gardens, one of the top Japanese gardens in the United States. She originally wanted to become a landscape architect, but quickly realized while earning her Bachelor's Degree in Horticulture at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale that she wanted to pursue the horticulture production industry. After college, Summer joined the Spring Meadow Nursery team as an Assistant Propagation Manager and was then promoted to her current position. Summer has learned everything from deciding when it's the perfect time to take a cutting to production planning to make sure ornamental shrub liners are produced and finished within the correct time frame.

Dr. Celina Gomez, Purdue University



Celina Gómez is an Associate Professor at Purdue University. She leads a cross-commodity research and teaching program in Controlled Environment Horticulture. Her research centers on three subject areas: 1) urban gardening to support the increasing consumer interest in growing compact fruiting vegetables in residential spaces; 2) propagation of high-value crops using indoor farming technologies; and 3) lighting for indoor plant production, focused primarily on evaluating plant responses to light spectrum or quantity. She currently teaches courses related to plant production in controlled environments.

Sofia Gomez, MS Student



After obtaining a BS in Agricultural Sciences and Production from Zamorano University (Honduras), Sofia started an internship in controlled environment agriculture at the University of Florida, where she subsequently worked as a lab technician. She is interested in understanding how different environmental factors can be managed to optimize crop production and is particularly passionate about helping growers in the young plant industry solve production challenges. Sofia is currently pursuing a MS in horticulture at Purdue University, where she is evaluating how different environmental factors affect water loss of unrooted cuttings.

Aren Phillips, Greenhouse Systems Manager



Aren Phillips is the Greenhouse Systems Manager at Walters Gardens in Zeeland, Michigan. Aren has a bachelor's degree of Environmental Science from Calvin University and a Certificate of Greenhouse Management from Michigan State University.

Aren started at Spring Meadow Nursery in Grand Haven Michigan, as an Assistant Propagation Manager in 2012. He gained experience in propagation, automation, and tissue culture lab management. He received the GPN 40 under 40 award in 2017.

In 2018, Aren was hired by Walters Gardens as a Lead Grower and Inventory Manager of Hostas and succulents. In 2020, he became the Lead Grower for General Perennials and managed the internal stock department. During this time, Aren also lead teams on projects that included sales forecasting, LED installation, and automation. He also managed to fit in an around-the-world trip to TC suppliers.

In 2022, Aren moved into the new role of Greenhouse Systems Manager, continuing with automation installations, construction project management, and business analytics.