
Title: Western Michigan Greenhouse and Metropolitan Detroit Flower Growers Joint Sponsored MSU Trial Garden Internship in 2016 – Paul Klein

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In the Michigan State University Annual Plant Trials, we display several hundred new introductions plus some old favorites in side-by-side comparisons. These ongoing trials are a highly visible component of our outreach to professionals and gardeners alike. The gardens are visited annually by tens of thousands of visitors. The side-by-side plant comparisons are great for advertising and educating gardeners about the best performing plants for Michigan.

In 2016, The Western Michigan Greenhouse Growers Association and the Metropolitan Detroit Flower Growers provided funding for an excellent intern, Paul Klein, who worked with Daedre McGrath (Annual Trial Manager) and Dr. Art Cameron (Trial Director) in the MSU Horticulture Gardens. Our original objectives were as follows:

- > Advertise the MSU Trial Garden Internship statewide and select the most competitive applicant.
- > Provide high quality hands-on experience for undergraduate students in the cultivation and evaluation of bedding plants.
- > Educate students during the entire trialing process including growing and maintaining plants in the landscape, data collection and summarization, and communication of the results to growers and gardeners.
- > Provide students with unique opportunities to communicate the results from these trials to gardeners and professionals.

We were fortunate to hire Paul Klein, an undergraduate student from CMU with a special interest in plant biology and botany. Paul worked with Daedre to plant, care for, and monitor over 600 annuals in the Annual Trial Gardens. He learned about plant evaluations and helped collect data on plant performance. The information was presented at [Plant Trial Field Day](#) (August 2016) and has since been published on our trial website (http://www.hrt.msu.edu/our_gardens/trial_garden). Paul participated in many professional development opportunities and was able to visit other trials gardens during the [Michigan Garden Plant Tour](#). Paul took particular interest in adding content to our trial website to help showcase this year's top performing varieties.

Experiential education is critical to the success of our students and their future productivity in the industry. Though we routinely hire students to work in our gardens, we appreciate this opportunity to attract the best horticulture students in the state and then help them contribute and learn from their experiences here in our gardens. The Western Michigan Greenhouse and Metropolitan Detroit Flower Growers Joint-Sponsored MSU Trial Garden Internship has been an excellent way for the industry to express their support of our trial gardens, while at the same time providing important education opportunities for students who will soon be garden plant professionals. Thank you for your support.