

CT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2022-2023

UConn

Nicole Molloy from Manchester, Connecticut received this year's CT Horticultural Society's award that honors the memory of Dr. Edwin "Pat" Carpenter a Professor of Horticulture. Nicole is a senior majoring in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems (SPSS) with a concentration in Environmental Horticulture.

Nicole has been wanting to pursue a SPSS (horticulture) degree at UConn ever since she graduated from high school in 2015, however in the end she decided to attend a community college instead.

Last year, Nicole was living in Providence and was unhappy and discouraged with her career, so one day she ended her apartment lease and immediately applied to UConn. To her surprise Nicole was accepted into the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. She is a little nervous, but mainly excited about going back to school at the age of 25. Nicole hopes to gain as much knowledge as possible about her passion of organic farming, so that she can make a difference in the world.

Nicole had been studying no-till and organic farming systems for the last few years, specifically on small scales (less than an acre). It has been a huge passion of hers to change the agricultural system. She feels the system needs to change as much as possible within the next 60 years due to desertification of soils. Nicole knows that even though she is just one person and will only change farming on one piece of land, she wants her message to be heard and accepted.

Nicole's immediate goal after graduating from UConn is to lease land and start her own farm on a very small scale (less than an acre). She wants to work her way up to feed as many families as possible healthy produce and help those that are not in the position to buy food from local farms. Buying healthy food from a farm can be very expensive, and some are at a disadvantage and need to be taken care of. While maintaining this small farm, Nicole will be taking care of the soil health/surrounding ecosystem with the upmost respect. She has also thought of specializing in growing only a few crops in a greenhouse setting but is not set on that idea yet because of the costs associated with greenhouse systems and carbon footprint.

Nicole's goals for the next 3 years are to create a solid business plan and help contribute to and improve her community.

Carlie Ritchie from Ansonia, Connecticut received this year's CT Horticultural Society's award that is given in memory of Ludwig Hoffman, a well-known Nurseryman. Carlie is a senior majoring in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems with a concentration in Environmental Horticulture.

Carlie is currently a member of the UConn Horticulture Club and the Ecogarden Club.

From the time Carlie was young, she always wanted to do something related to plants and when she learned about UConn's SPSS degree, she knew it was the program for her. Carlie has not always had an easy education path, when she was in middle school and high school, she battled with severe health issues. Therefore, Carlie dropped out of high school and decided to get her G.E.D. After receiving her G.E.D. she decided to go to Gateway Community College and then from there she transferred to UConn as a junior via the G.A.P program. In her short time at UConn Carlie feels that her goals are more within her reach and that she is headed down the right path. Carlie especially enjoys her studies and learning from her knowledgeable professors.

Carlie has found a new fascination that she never had before with growing her own food. She feels that learning to grow your own food is not only important to her, but it should be for everyone. Carlie says that plants are very grounding, healing, and comforting and that is something we need more of in the world today. She feels that by working with plants she will be able to make a small difference or contribute to the world and that means a lot to her.

Carlie participated in an internship at Monrovia Nurseries in Granby, Connecticut to help narrow down what she is passionate about in the world of horticulture. Her goals are to work in a greenhouse growing and selling ornamental plants. In addition, she also plans to have a small farm on her own property using some of the acquired knowledge she has gained so far.

Ana DiMauro from Manchester, Connecticut is the recipient of this year's CT Horticultural Society's award in memory of David J.A. Smith, an Emeritus Society Member. She is a junior majoring in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems with a concentration in Environmental Horticulture. Ana is also an additional degree student majoring in English.

Ana is an active member in the horticulture club on campus as well as eco huskies.

Ana studied abroad this past summer with the Paideia Greece program. She was there for three weeks studying modern Greek language and culture. She is also planning on studying abroad for the summer of 2023 while participating in a three month program in Sorrento, Italy.

Ana plans to spend the next two years at the University of Connecticut, working hard towards the Dean's List. She likes to invest a lot of time each week in her studies and feels a great sense of accomplishment when she sees the results. Ana currently makes great use of the Q Center in the library and tutoring hours in the chemistry building. She says the reason she puts so much time in, is so that she will get that much more out of every course, and building knowledge is essential to understanding larger topics, and moving forward, and advancing in her course work.

Ana plans on exploring as many internship opportunities as possible for the next two years. She feels this type of exposure will help provide her with a better idea of the ideal job she hopes to find following graduation from UConn. Ana also hopes to gain valuable experience and skills to use in her chosen career path, as she will be graduating in May 2024 with a degree in English as well as a degree in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems.

With Ana's dual degrees, her future interests are currently in becoming an editor since she is an avid reader and writer and finds a great interest in assisting others with their writing, or she would love working at a greenhouse or field production operation. She is also passionate about climate and environmental action work.

Naugatuck Valley Community College

Mya Julian

I seize every opportunity that comes in my direction. In high school, I would sign up for clubs, apply for scholarships, and try out for sports. My high school had an agricultural program. Even though I was zoned for the school anyway, I decided to apply to the vo-ag program because, well, why not? It was an opportunity I knew not everyone would get or take in their lives, and I wanted to expand my horizons. Not for nothing, it's exactly how I discovered what I wanted to do in my life; I found my love for horticulture.

I believe that these opportunities find their way to the people who deserve them and will use them to their entire capacity. I competed in a state-wide competition for floriculture in my junior year of high school, and I won with my three teammates to the national level. I competed this fall at the FFA (Future Farmers of America/Future For Agriculture) National Convention and Expo. in Indianapolis, Indiana. Through hard work and dedication, we placed 11th in the country. That all started from an opportunity that I almost passed up. The memories and education I received through that journey is a part of my life I'll never regret, and that's how I came to be a student here, dedicated once again to become a landscape architect and create sustainable gardens on all scales to combat the climate crisis and protect the environment.

In addition to the silver plaque and gold award I received at National Convention, I'm also proud to say that I've received the President's award of Educational Excellence my senior year of high school, and that I'm currently on the Dean's list here at NVCC. I've also received several scholarships for my academics, and even one earlier last semester. I worked hard to get where I am, and I would like to continue to work for my education in college.

Aiden Usher

My name is Aiden Usher, I am in my 4th semester at Naugatuck Valley Community College in the Horticulture program. I will continue to be enrolled for the summer semester while I do my internship. I believe I should be awarded this scholarship because I am an extremely hard worker with a strong commitment to my education. I strive to consistently get the best grades I can while also managing my personal life. I am the manager/co-owner of a small business, Soulbury, in Woodbury, CT. This is a retail gift store that is owned by my mother. I manage employees, schedules, paperwork, inventories, business trips, and many other things. I am expected to be able to go to the store at any moment's time if there is an emergency. It is my #1 priority, with school being a close second.

When I am not working at my store or doing schoolwork, I am likely working my part-time job at a Chinese food restaurant!

I have been surrounded by plants my entire life, seeing as my mom also went to NVCC for Horticulture. When I was very little I often found helping my mom with our gardens and landscapes. We would start seeds together that I was able to watch grow and take care of, most eventually ending up in a salad. I went to Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, and was part of the agriculture program. I specialized in horticulture which allowed me to get a much wider view of the industry.

My high school experience is what made me realize what I really wanted to do with my life- be surrounded by plants.

My aspirations in the field of horticulture mainly revolve around the business I am currently managing. We have a large selection of houseplants and tillandsias which I take great interest in. I am responsible for the purchase and care of the plants. We recently installed a 6'x6' greenhouse outside of the store as well. I hope to be able to expand our business with more focus on horticulture and educating the public on the plants they have in their home. What is important to me is that plants must always be a part of my life, and having more control in this business allows me to focus on this goal.

Awards/Honors:

Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust Scholarship - 2020

Ruth Wheeler Travers Memorial Scholarship - 2020

Woodbury Scholarship Fund Dollars for Scholars Scholarship - 2020

Pomperaug Valley Garden Club Scholarship - 2020

Cushman Family Fund Scholarship - 2021

Ron Yarusavage Scholarship - 2021

Ruth Wheeler Travers Memorial Scholarship - 2021

Woodbury Scholarship Fund Dollars for Scholars Scholarship - 2021

NVCC Foundation Scholarship - 2021

Dean's List - 2021