

CT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2023-2024

UConn Recipients:

Kathryn Padua from Stratford, Connecticut received this year's CT Horticultural Society's award that honors the memory of Dr. Edwin "Pat" Carpenter, a Professor of Horticulture. Kathryn is a transfer student from Naugatuck Valley Community College who began at UConn in the spring of 2023. Kathryn is a senior majoring in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems (SPSS) with a concentration in Environmental Horticulture. She is expected to graduate in May of 2024.

To support a portion of her educational costs Kathryn has continued to work part-time while attending UConn full-time. She currently works as a Shift Leader for Plaskos Café, Creamery, and Farm in Trumbull, CT. Some of Kathryn's responsibilities include interacting with customers in a friendly manner, ensuring proper handling of the food, inspecting both the dining, and serving areas to ensure cleanliness and proper setup, checking the sanitation of utensils and containers. Kathryn has also worked for Hanson's Flower Shop assisting the customers, maintaining the cut and potted flowers/plants, making bows, keeping the shop tidy, and helping to prep flowers for storage.

Kathryn is currently undecided about what area she wants to focus on following graduation this May. The only thing she knows for certain is that she wants to work with plants. Kathryn enjoys educating people about plants, but also wants to learn more about the various options and classes offered such as greenhouse management or nursery management to expand on the knowledge she has already gained. Her hope is to obtain a part-time summer job at a nursery/garden center near her home, as she has a lot of ideas that she wants to explore.

Kathryn is also thinking about a possible opportunity to work for Disney. Apparently, Disney offers a behind the scenes option she thinks would be quite fun, like their attraction "Living off the Land" would honestly be her dream job. It would allow her to share her knowledge as well as still technically work with plants.

Education-wise, Kathryn is going for her bachelor's degree in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems. She is unsure at this time if she wants to go for her master's degree. However, if Kathryn were to go for her master's degree she would want to work for a while before beginning another year or more of education, so that she can really focus on a certain area in the plant science arena.

Samuel Bushka from Harwinton, Connecticut received this year's CT Horticultural Society's award that is given in memory of Ludwig Hoffman, a well-known Nurseryman. Samuel is a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture with a minor in Ornamental Horticulture.

Samuel has received the following recognitions while attending UConn, CT Nurserymen's Foundation Scholarship, UNILOCK Awards of Excellence Scholarship, and the CT Grounds Keepers Association Scholarship.

Samuel has volunteered his time serving as an emergency medical responder for the Town of Harwinton, CT.

Samuel is a member of the UConn Forestry Club and the UConn Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He is also the Team Coordinator for the UConn Woodsmen Club.

Samuel has worked for Innovative Lawn and Landscape installing landscape and masonry work; Kent Greenhouse planning design and some installation; White Flower Farm providing maintenance; and maintaining his own landscaping business. Each place of employment has provided Samuel with the knowledge and experience he will need to succeed.

Samuel is working hard to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture along with a minor in Ornamental Horticulture from UConn. He enjoys staying busy with his schoolwork as well as spending quite a bit of time practicing and organizing the Woodsmen team. Samuel has been fortunate to have been working in the landscape field for the past several years. He was recently offered an internship at a landscape architecture firm called Kent Greenhouse and has already been offered a full-time position after graduation as a Landscape Architect. If everything goes as planned Samuel's goal is to accept that position and work to get his Connecticut Landscape Architecture license. This is a 2+ year process where you must work in an office under another licensed landscape architect and pass a series of 4 licensing tests. Once Samuel has earned his license he could continue to work at a firm, or he has the option to go out on his own and start his own landscaping company/firm. He is very interested in residential landscape design and build companies and can see himself owning and operating his own business, sometime soon.

Matt Schillberg from Meriden, Connecticut is the recipient of this year's CT Horticultural Society's award in memory of David J.A. Smith, an Emeritus Society Member. Matthew transferred to UConn in Spring of 2022 from Gateway Community College, and he is currently a senior majoring in Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems with a concentration in Environmental Horticulture.

Matthew currently works for Atria, Inc. as a Horticultural Technician caring for plants, assisting with satellite technician work, preparing expense reports, and working with clients.

Matthew is undecided about what he wants to do following graduation, however, he is focusing all his efforts towards graduating and working to obtain his master's degree. For his master's degree he would like to focus on studying biotechnology and plant physiology and then work with an advisor on a research component. He would also like to incorporate a level of extension work aimed at learning to communicate to the public the science and application of various biotechnologies and genetically modified foods/organisms.

Over the next few years, Matthew plans to continue to dedicate his life to education and the pursuit of knowledge to advance his life and the quality of the lives of others around him. He feels he has learned an incredible amount in his short time at UConn and is eager to continue that journey wherever it may take him. The incredible abilities of plants are something that we still don't fully understand, and their capacity to enhance the quality of our lives is something that should be focused on. Matthew is excited to explore the potential possibilities of working with plants and the resources around us as sources of new technologies and innovations to improve our lives.

Naugatuck Valley Community College Recipients:

June Moulis graduated magna cum laude from Naugatuck Valley Community College in August with an associate degree in horticulture. This was a journey 18 years in the making. Back in 2005 June started to study horticulture at UConn but was unable to afford tuition. June is the mom of two girls, 6 and 8 years old, and she wanted to set an example not to give up on a dream just because life gets tough. June is the first person in her family to complete a degree and she is continuing on to UMass to pursue a bachelor's degree in urban forestry. She works full time as an arborist while attending school. Thanks to your generous support, June was able to pay for the last class to complete her first degree.

Miranda Crabb is currently studying horticulture at Naugatuck Valley Community College. She has always loved all things plants, so when she came across the NVCC horticulture program, she knew it was the right place for her. She started working at a garden center shortly after and that confirmed that she was in the right place.

She has great mentors she has met through work and school that continue to inspire her. Her favorite part about studying and working in the horticultural field is there's always something new to learn.

“I have a strong passion for native plants and the importance they have on the ecosystem. When I earn my degree, I will consider continuing my education at UConn! I plan on always looking for opportunities to learn and grow in the field either way.”

“In my free time, I enjoy kayaking, biking, reading, photography, and gardening! Thank you to everyone who supports and donates to the Connecticut Horticultural Society to make scholarships like this one possible, I am truly grateful!”