

September 30, 2024

Good morning,

I'm very excited to submit my application for the Ontario Rock Garden & Hardy Plant Society Scholarship! My name is Jesse and I'm a full-time 2nd year student in the Horticultural Technician (Co-op) program at Niagara College.

My educational experience so far has had the common denominator of plants and the environment. In 2013 I graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies, Urban and Regional Planning with an Urban Design Specialization. I originally had the plan to study landscape architecture after working in the "real world" for a few years, but with time I wasn't entirely sure if studying landscape architecture should be my next path. The focus of the programs I looked into felt more urban and structural, but I felt a longing to focus more on plants. To help me make this decision (and continue learning for interest!), I took continuing education courses at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) to achieve a Certificate in Landscape Design for Climate Resilience in 2022. This program was incredibly interesting and has aided me in landscape design as a hobby, but I realized I needed to make a change to be outside and interact more hands-on with the plant material.

I have felt for a while that I would like to work a more physical outdoor career but before making the decision study horticulture at Niagara College, but I had a lot of anxieties to work through about making a drastic career change and considering if it was actually a good fit for me. Now I know for sure that it is.

Upon graduating from this program, I hope to get into wholesale nursery growing, primarily for herbaceous perennials but I also have a love for shrubs and trees. A goal for my career is to give back to the environment and community, growing ecologically beneficial plants and helping to educate folks, whether it's just within my network or throughout a larger community, on choosing and growing native plants. My dream job at this point is to be a native plant nursery grower primarily for ecological restoration activities, continuing to provide landscape design for personal interest and added business value.

In my spare time I enjoy designing landscapes and gardens, and maintaining my own personal gardens. I currently have a fair-sized patio area that I've filled up with 6 large planters and many smaller pots, focusing mostly on native herbaceous perennials, shrubs, and some annuals. This season I have also rented a community garden allotment to grow vegetables and cut flowers for myself, and to share with friends and family. This was all on top of my full-time summer job of landscape/garden maintenance, so I had a wonderfully outdoor and plant-filled summer where I still learned lots.

This scholarship would help be an incredible help to my path in giving back to the environment and community. I really appreciate your support of horticulture education, which I feel is beyond value, and thank you for taking the time to review my application. All the best!

Sincerely,

Jesse Mc Linton