



Career Spotlight

Forest Service
Career Pathways



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A horticulturist studies how to propagate and grow plants.

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What advice do you have for students interested in your job?

Courses in biology, agriculture, forestry, botany, and horticulture are a good foundation. Working or taking internships helps you learn what you like to do, and, sometimes more importantly, what you do not like to do.

What is an example of a question you have tried to answer in your job?

How do we germinate native plant seeds? How do we grow whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) efficiently on a large scale?

What is an example of technology or equipment that you use in your work?

To sow our crops, we use pneumatic seeders. These machines use compressed air to pick up a specific number of seeds and drop them into each cell of the containers we use to grow our seedlings. It means we do not have to sow each seed by hand!

What has been your most exciting project?

Each growing season is an opportunity to learn and try something new. We get to grow native plants from all over the United States. It is exciting and challenging to try new species, to learn how to grow seeds from new areas, and to produce plant material for so many different restoration projects.

When did you know this career would be a good fit for you?

I toured an iris farm when I was about 11 years old. The farm had rows and rows of different varieties of iris. There were so many different colors, shapes, and scents in the flowers. I thought it would be really fun to learn how to grow each variety and to work in such a pretty place.

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