

# Interview with a Technician

By Deborah Jones

Usually we get valuable information, inspiration and insights on how to improve our job skills from seasoned technicians or from personal experiences. I had the chance the other day to speak with a technician that has worked in the interiorscape industry, servicing her accounts for less than a year. Her youthful enthusiasm helped me see our profession with fresh eyes.

## First job

The previous June, Linda had graduated high school where she had been in their horticulture program. She had chosen to work with plants originally because she thought it would be an “easy” class for her. Her mother had always had houseplants and a garden and Linda soon realized she had inherited a love for growing things. When she landed her first job caring for plants, she was told it was a temporary position for summer help.

Linda quickly learned all the plant names and was terrific with the customers that came in to buy plants. She was helpful and always eager to learn more. She and her co-workers got along great. Her temporary summer job became a permanent part-time position for her as she continues her education. She has been a horticultural technician three days a week for seven months. Here’s what Linda told us AND what she thinks are some important tips to learning what being a horticultural service technician is all about.

## Shrewd information

- Once you learn how to water, all the rest can fall into place. When a plant receives the correct amount of water, there are no brown tips or yellow wilted ones to trim or remove. Your plants look great and you can use the extra time to clean and attend to the details.
- I hear other technicians debating whether small accounts are best to service or large ones, but in reality there isn’t any difference to the client. All our clients pay for horticultural service and they expect our best. I’ve learned to give every account my best and having a variety of account sizes keeps it interesting to me.
- Staying organized and having the right equipment handy is what works for me. I have a basket with a handle where I keep everything I need for weekly service. I keep a small pad of paper and a pen in my pocket for jotting down notes to myself. I always have a sponge and a small container of mild soap in the water bucket itself and my moisture meter rests in the spout.
- When I first started, using a moisture meter was awkward for me; I had always just used my finger. Now I don’t want to be without it! I learned the hard way that my fingers couldn’t tell me what was happening way down in the root ball of large plants. Meters really are more accurate. Meters and soil probes are now my favorite tools.

Linda’s enthusiasm, eagerness to learn something new each day and her outstanding attitude mark her for success. We can all learn something from her.

