

Lori Baratta

Greenhouse Technician

Career Description

A greenhouse technician plans and carries out a wide range of tasks to do with growing, maintaining and harvesting greenhouse crops.

Interview

If you like working with your hands and spending time outdoors, you'd probably enjoy working with Lori Baratta.

"I have an art background and I also really like plants," says Lori, who grew up in Burnaby and now grows sweet bell peppers at a large greenhouse in Delta. "Working in a greenhouse is perfect because it gives me the opportunity to be creative."

"I spend most of my time coordinating our Integrated Pest Management program, or IPM for short," explains Lori. "Basically, I'm responsible for monitoring and controlling greenhouse pests such as insects, weeds and plant diseases, mainly without the use of chemicals. IPM isn't like math—there's more than one way to solve a problem—so you get to use your imagination and try many different things."

One of the things Lori enjoys most about her job is the flexibility. Some days she might concentrate on a specific area, but she's not bound by a rigid schedule. "It's definitely not your typical nine-to-five office job," she assures. "When the sun is up, we're in the greenhouse."

"I love the feeling of being in the greenhouse because you feel like you're working outside all day. Plus, you spend the whole year growing a crop, so you can literally see how your daily decisions make a difference in the crop. I find that very rewarding."

To be successful, Lori says it's important to have a keen eye for detail, along with good organization and problem-solving skills. You also need to keep up with the rapid advances in greenhouse technology.

"You're always learning," she assures. "Even the growers that have been doing it for 30 years are still learning. There's always something you can do better next year."

Key Quote

"I love working in a greenhouse because it allows you to be creative. You get to use your imagination to solve problems."

Ask Lori: How did you get started?

"I took a two-year horticulture technician diploma program, specializing in greenhouse production. Before I went to college, I worked at a greenhouse for about a year and that was a really good experience."

Primary Location

- Lower Mainland

Interest/Skills

- Hands on
- Eye for detail
- Always learning
- Problem solving
- Record keeping

Suggested Qualifications

- Diploma, Certificate or Apprenticeship in Horticulture

Education and Training Options

- Camosun College, Victoria
- Kwantlen University College, Langley
- Malaspina University College, Nanaimo
- North Island College, Comox Valley
- Okanagan College, Kelowna
- Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops
- University College of the Fraser Valley, Chilliwack

Related High School Subjects

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Business Education

Related Careers

- Grower/Assistant Grower
- Integrated Pest Management Specialist
- Nursery Manager
- Landscape Designer

Did you know?

- One red sweet bell pepper provides 100% of your daily requirement for Vitamins A, C and E. (Source: BC Greenhouse Growers' Association)