

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

The Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster includes careers that involve the science and mechanics of improving the quality and safety of food, cultivating and preserving our natural resources, and caring for livestock and other animals. Further, you can learn about the business aspects involved in this broad field [careertech.org].

As horticulturalist of Primland Resort, Brandy Puckett oversees the grounds of a serene 12-thousand-acre resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Brandy uses knowledge and skills she learned in the many agriculture-related courses she took in high school. "As far as pruning plants and proper spray techniques, all those things I learned when I was in high school," she says of the hands-on high school courses.

Her high school Greenhouse Management and Floral Design classes also have been vital to her job because she's in charge of the resort's greenhouse and interior plants.

One aspect Brandy loves about her job is hearing guests compliment the landscaping. "It just makes you feel good whenever you hear people talking about how beautiful it is," she says.

Her favorite part of her job is trying to identify plants—something she enjoyed doing in FFA career development events. "There's always something new and challenging. It's not the same mundane thing every day."

by Jessica Sabbath



Photo by Mark Rhodes

What they make

Occupation	Employed in Va. ¹	Median wage ²	Predominant level of education
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	32,489	\$23,190	High school diploma
Farmworkers and laborers, crops	24,131	\$21,130	High school diploma
Landscaping supervisors	6,452	\$43,650	High school diploma
Veterinary assistants	3,531	\$25,660	Associate degree
Environmental scientists and specialists	3,416	\$73,780	Bachelor's degree
Farmworkers, animals	3,912	\$25,170	High school diploma
Water treatment plant operators	3,179	\$37,810	High school diploma, certification
Veterinarians	2,406	\$89,550	Bachelor's degree
Environmental engineers	2,482	\$96,350	Bachelor's degree
Veterinary technologists and technicians	1,424	\$36,940	Associate degree
Farming, fishing, and forestry supervisors	1,991	\$41,700	High school diploma
Biological technicians	1,086	\$38,450	Bachelor's degree
Natural sciences managers	1,279	\$126,240	Bachelor's degree
Environmental science technicians	693	\$43,230	Bachelor's degree, certification
Geoscientists	545	\$89,450	Bachelor's degree
Environmental engineering technicians	440	\$42,130	Associate degree
Conservation scientists	432	\$60,340	Bachelor's degree
Forest and conservation technicians	359	\$36,710	Bachelor's degree
Agricultural and food science technicians	237	\$34,380	Bachelor's degree
Soil and plant scientists	193	\$53,910	Bachelor's degree

¹2012 ²2013

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Virginia Employment Commission, Trailblazers

Brandy Puckett

**Horticulturalist, Primland Resort,
Meadows of Dan**

High school: Patrick County High School

CTE studies: Introduction to Plant Systems;
Horticulture Sciences; Floral Design I and II;
Floriculture; Greenhouse Plant Production
and Management; Landscaping



For more information about career planning, visit the CTE Resource Center's Web site.

