

focus on Careers at Niab

TECHNICAL MANAGER – BEN TEA

Your role at Niab

My day-to-day role is in agronomy for protected environments, looking at how to best grow a wide variety of crops in controlled environment agricultural (CEA) facilities. The second part of my role is around business development; working with commercial customers to develop trials for their products, from growing media to biostimulants as well as other novel products for the agricultural/horticultural industry. An area of my role I'm perhaps most proud of is the CEA training we now provide, something the containerised commercial horticultural sector especially, is lacking.

Your previous experience

I spent a long time working as a commercial grower, but there wasn't really any chance of progression and I wanted to expand my knowledge. I joined Niab as part of the Ornamentals team; it was my first taste of working in a research environment. Now, eight years later I am working in a much wider technical role. I feel the work and projects I'm involved in have a real-world impact as I get to assist growers improve processes and transfer research into usable skills and knowledge; it's much more fulfilling for me.

Your qualifications

- BASIS Hort
- Facts Hort

I have come from a practical, commercial background into research rather than the route of formal academic qualifications.

Your future

The horticultural industry has a huge gap in its knowledge exchange since the loss of AHDB Horticulture. The research and the expertise we have at Niab places us in a good position to support this. I think we need to develop that even further and provide better support for the grower, especially new entrants into the industry who may struggle to find or access the information they need to succeed and innovate. That's my goal - to provide back to the industry that gave a lot to me, especially as a young grower.

