

# I Am A Landscaper: Megan McDugald



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As the manager of horticulture at [Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center](#) in Nashville, Tennessee, Megan McDugald oversees both the interior and exterior grounds crews as well as the floral department and pest control. In total she manages the team of 40 horticulturists who are the workforce behind 9 acres of interior gardens and meticulously kept exterior grounds.

Whether she's doing her daily tour of the property to spot-check all of the plant material or she's out with the crews doing a seasonal color change-out, McDugald stays busy with a very eclectic, multifaceted set of job duties. With so much to do, the days go fast and McDugald says she is passionate about the field she came to love while growing up on a farm and tending to the family garden.

She went on to attend [Kansas State University](#) and major in landscape design with a specialty in horticulture. Two internships – one at the [Missouri Botanical Garden](#) and another at [The Roaring Fork Golf Course](#) in Basalt, Colorado – only reinforced her passion. After graduating she moved to Nashville to work for a commercial landscape company as part of the maintenance crew and ultimately made her way to Opryland, where she says she “landed her dream job.”



**I had the opportunity to work with Hollis Malone**, who is a horticulture legend. That remains a favorite memory from working here. It's just an honor to be part of this wonderful place. I love meeting the guests and seeing the looks on their faces as they see all the plant material, particularly at the holidays when we have 15,000 poinsettias on display.

**I love spending time outdoors.** Boating on the lake is one of my favorite ways to spend a weekend. I also have two young children – ages 1 and 4 – and I enjoy introducing them to horticulture, getting their hands dirty and just having fun teaching them about what I love.



**My motto to my crews is, "Work hard, have fun and no drama."** I think those are good words for anyone to live by.

**Hydrangeas are my favorite flower.** We have them outside, but on Mother's Day we bring in florist's hydrangeas in blues and pinks and they're just beautiful.

**One of the biggest challenges of working in the hotel industry is that we're open 365 days a year.** We always have guests to work around. Because of that, we really put an emphasis on safety in everything that we do. There are always going to be people around but we do any major changes during lower occupancy days.



**My best advice to young professionals** is to get as much experience as you can in the field. Understanding what your workers are going through will make you a better manager and make it easier for them to respect you.