

Volume 21, Number 4 Fall 2009

# *The* **Cut Flower**

Q U A R T E R L Y

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

**for growers of field and specialty greenhouse cuts**

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— Cover photo —

Uproar™ Rose Zinnia  
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## The Cut Flower

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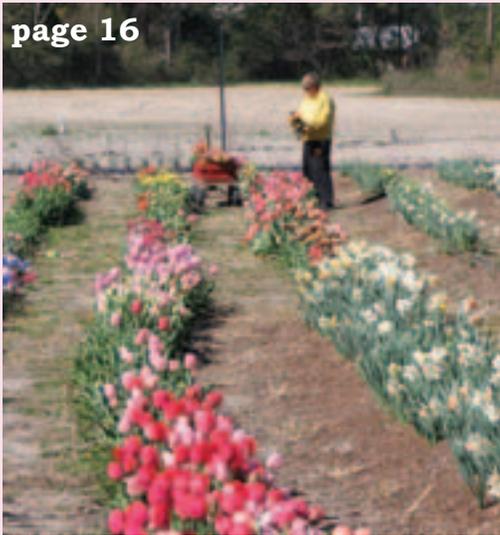
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# FROM *the President*

*Dave Dowling*

I keep hearing about how “the recession has hit bottom”, or “the economy is beginning to rebound”, or that “recovery will come in 2010”, or some other comment from yet another “economic consultant” on the evening news. Just like weather forecasters, they can tell you with certainty what happened yesterday and what *might* happen tomorrow, but beyond that, it’s anyone’s guess. All I know is that at some of my farmers’ markets, sales are up a little from last year, while others are down quite a bit from last year, and some are right in line with the previous year. At the established neighborhoods in the suburbs, the customers seem more willing to part with their cash and buy flowers on a regular basis than the customers at the more urban locations. Sales will vary widely from week to week at a particular market for no apparent reason at all. I’m sure there is some research firm or

government agency that has the data to explain the wild variations in cut flower sales this year, but for now, I’ll just keep selling to anyone who is willing to buy.

This is my final “From the President” letter. It’s been a great four years. Sometimes I wonder for days what I’ll write about and sometimes too many ideas fill my head. Either way, it’s always been a pleasure. I’ve have a great time meeting other growers at Regional Meetings and the National Conference and learning a little something from just about everyone. Just visiting another farm is a great educational experience. Nothing beats seeing a farm in operation. You’re able to see so many different ways to grow cut flowers, from planting, to irrigation, to coolers, to marketing and more.

It feels good when people thank *me* for the work I do with the ASCFG. But it’s what the collective ASCFG family has done for me that I’ll remember the most. Often I wonder what I’ve done to be thanked for. It’s Judy and Linda who do the *real* work. This organization wouldn’t be what it is without Judy Laushman and Linda Twining at the ASCFG Headquarters in Oberlin, Ohio. They are the ones that keep this machine running, putting in countless hours to make everything from *The Cut Flower Quarterly* to the National Conference to the web site and the Bulletin Board happen. They both deserve a grateful “thanks” for making it so easy to be President.

The next *Quarterly* will have someone else’s name at the top of this page. Be sure to give the next President your support and encouragement. Help keep the ASCFG a vibrant organization with great members who help each other in any way they can. And remember, any member can be ASCFG President, as long as you’ve already been on the Board of Directors in some other capacity first. Thanks and farewell!



*To recognize his many contributions to the organization, the ASCFG Scholarship will now be presented in Dave Dowling’s name.*

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49	Ranunculus						
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*December 2009*

Week	Sun day	Mon day	Tue day	Wednes day	Thurs day	Fri day	Satur day
49							
50							
51							
52							
53							

*January 2010*

Week	Sun day	Mon day	Tue day	Wednes day	Thurs day	Fri day	Satur day
53							
1							
2							
3							
4							

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# CULTURE *Profile*

*John Dole and Erin Regan*

## *Consider New Stock Options*

Stock (*Matthiola incana*) is an underappreciated workhorse of the cut flower industry. It lacks the panache of roses and lilies and the postharvest durability of chrysanthemums and carnations, but stock offers wonderful fragrance and a broad range of colors.

### *Production and Shipping Limitations*

Stock production in the United States is primarily outdoors and limited to areas with temperatures low enough to provide flower initiation and high-quality stems. These are areas where the temperatures are not so low as to damage plants, which usually means only light to moderate freezes.

Most commercial production has been in coastal California with flowers shipped nationwide. However, growers in parts of the Southeast can also produce high-quality stock during winter, and growers in the North can do the same in spring and early summer. Smaller amounts of stock are grown in spring across the United States and Canada.

The increased use of greenhouses and hoopouses for season extension of cut flower production presents another opportunity to grow stock for local markets.

While stock can handle cold storage well, its leaves are somewhat brittle and tend to crack when packed and shipped in boxes. The foliage also tends to yellow fairly quickly, especially when stored and shipped.

### *Production Options*

For many years, growers had two options regarding stock cultivars: traditional types and minimal-cold-requirement types.

**Traditional types** are tall, up to 3 feet, but require a cold treatment of 50-55F for at least 10 days for early-flowering cultivars, and three weeks for late-flowering cultivars. Many colors are available.

The cultivars in the traditional group can be divided into selectable and nonselectable plants. While double-flowered stock are more valuable commercially, no series available produces 100 percent double flowers. Most stock cultivars produce 50-60 percent doubles and 40-50 percent singles.



Cut stems ready for treatment

Seedlings of selectable types can be sorted into doubles and singles with some practice and the right environmental conditions. The single-flowered forms of selectable cultivars have darker green leaves, slower germination, and less vigorous growth than the double-flowered forms. Leaf color differences are to be more easily seen when seedlings are grown at 50F (10C) or lower. Consequently, reduce temperatures to 39 to 46F (4 to 8C) for 8 days after the cotyledons are fully developed. The culling process is tedious and a person with experience should be given this task because seedling differences are often not obvious. Selectable series include Glory and Goldcut. Nonselectable cultivars are a mixture of singles and doubles and include 'American Beauty,' 'Lilac Lavender,' 'Miracle Rose Pink' and 'Pacific Blue.'

**Minimal-cold-requirement types** are white or cream-colored cultivars that flower with little or no cold treatment and have a short crop time, 10-14 weeks from sowing to flower. These cultivars are almost all doubles (about 90 percent) and better adapted to greenhouse or hoopouse production. Cultivars include 'Cheerful White,' 'Cheerful Yellow' and 'Regal White.'

## *New Series Require Minimal Cold*

Both Sakata Seed's Vivas series and PanAmerican Seed's Katz series require little or no cold treatment. These series can initiate flowers at relatively mild temperatures (55-60F), eliminating the cold treatments necessary for most cultivars. This feature makes them suitable for greenhouse and season-extending hoophouse production. Hoopouses can be used to protect plants from the worst cold weather that can cause damage.

Plant quality is best under low temperatures (50-55F), but plants can grow well under higher temperatures (up to the low 80s during the day). They are available in more colors, including various shades of rose, pink and purple. Unfortunately, they produce only 60 percent doubles. Plants are not as tall (about 2½ feet) as traditional column types and as with all stock cultivars, they don't like high temperatures (above 62F at night or above 85F during the day) during production.

The Katz series was initially sold as Mambo, but the name was changed to honor deceased PanAmerican Seed breeder and cut flower specialist Philip Katz. He was also a well-respected and active ASCFG member.

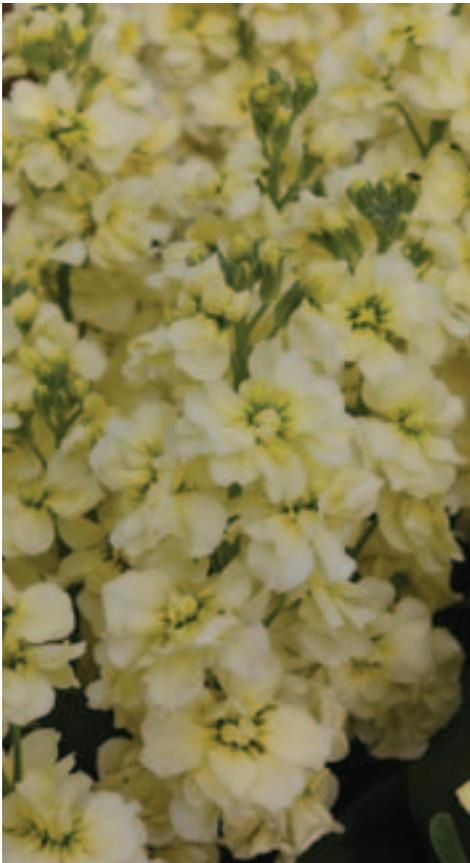
### *Producing 'Vivas Blue'*

'Vivas Blue' plants were grown from 392 plugs in a greenhouse at North Carolina State University. Large plastic flats (20 ¾ by 15 inches, 4 ½ inches deep) were filled with a commercial peat-based medium. Plugs were planted in a 4-by-6 pattern, 3-by-3 inches apart, resulting in 24 plants per tray. Bulb crates would work equally well. For part of the crop, standard shallow bedding plant flats (10 ½ by 21 inches, 2 ½ inches deep) were used. They worked well, but the growing medium dried out faster due to having less volume in the flat.

Plants were grown at minimum temperatures of 55F night and 65F day,



'Vivas Salmon Pink'



'Cheerful Yellow'

although many nights and days were warmer. Plants were irrigated with 150 parts per million nitrogen from either a 20-10-20 or 13-2-13 fertilizer, as needed. While the stems are quite stocky (no pun intended), one or two layers of support netting should be used in the greenhouse to hold up the heavy inflorescences.

Timing of the crop varied with the planting date. Plugs were planted on three dates: Jan. 13, Jan. 20 and Feb. 10. The finished crops started flowering March 14, March 22 and April 3, respectively. The crop schedule was 7 ½ to 9 weeks from plugs.

### *Postharvest Handling*

Stems were harvested into water in the greenhouse when at least one floret per stem was open. The stems were sorted according to number of open flowers and stem caliper, recut to 18 inches, and placed in the appropriate treatments. Unless otherwise indicated, the floral solution used in all experiments was 72F deionized water (similar to distilled water). After treatment, stems were placed (one per vase) at 72F under approximately 100 footcandles for 12 hours per day at 40-60 percent relative humidity. Vase life was considered finished when open flowers were more than one-third dead or two-thirds wilted. There were usually a significant number of wilted flowers along with the minimum one-third dead flowers.

### *Postharvest Results*

Vase life of 'Vivas Blue' stems averaged 11-12 days without any treatments, and the cultivars had rather simple needs in terms of postharvest. Floral holding and hydrating solutions and sugar pulses had little effect. Interestingly, while stock is often thought to be sensitive to ethylene, exogenous ethylene had no effect and neither did either of the anti-ethylene agents, STS and 1-MCP.

'Vivas Blue' not only tolerated cold storage well, but storing stems dry at 36F for one or two weeks actually increased

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'Vivas Blue' at harvest

vase life by one to three days. This trend showed up in two experiments and is quite surprising, considering that storage reduces the vase life of most cut flower species.

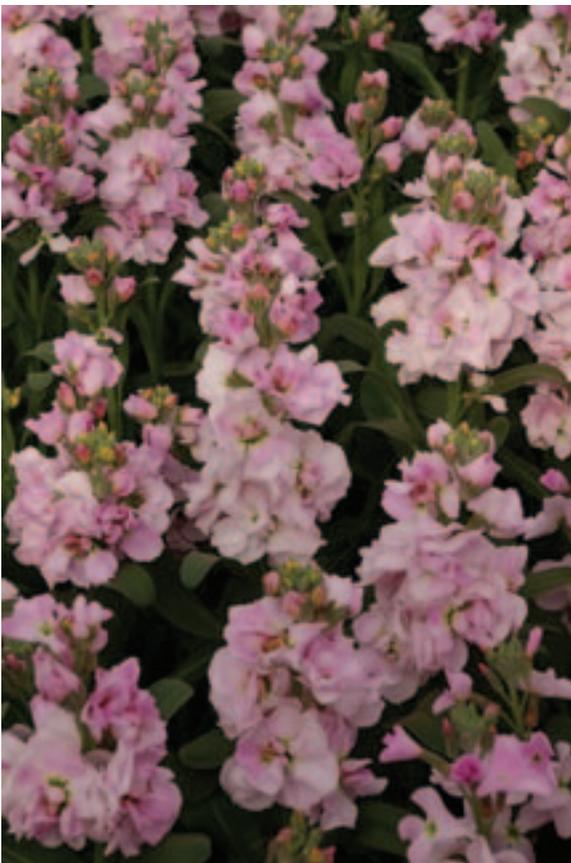
Another interesting finding was the effect of floral foam on cut stock stems. Many cut flower species are negatively affected by floral foam, which is why we include it in routine testing procedures. Vase life of 'Vivas Blue' was increased by up to several days when floral foam was used. One reason could be that the foam reduced the pH of the vase solution.

Using either 2 or 4 percent sucrose in the vase water caused the flowers to turn much darker purple. The longest vase life occurred when we used 2 percent sucrose with floral foam. No commercial floral preservatives were trialed with foam, but they are likely to have a similar effect.

*The authors thank Ingram McCall, Diane Mays, Emma Locke, Erin Possiel and Eric Olson for assisting in the production and harvest, and Roland Leatherwood for assisting in ethylene studies. We are very much appreciative of American Floral Endowment for funding the work and Sakata Seed America for providing the stock plugs.*

*John Dole is Professor of Horticulture  
at NCSU*

*Contact him at [john\\_dole@ncsu.edu](mailto:john_dole@ncsu.edu)*



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## Perennial Plugs

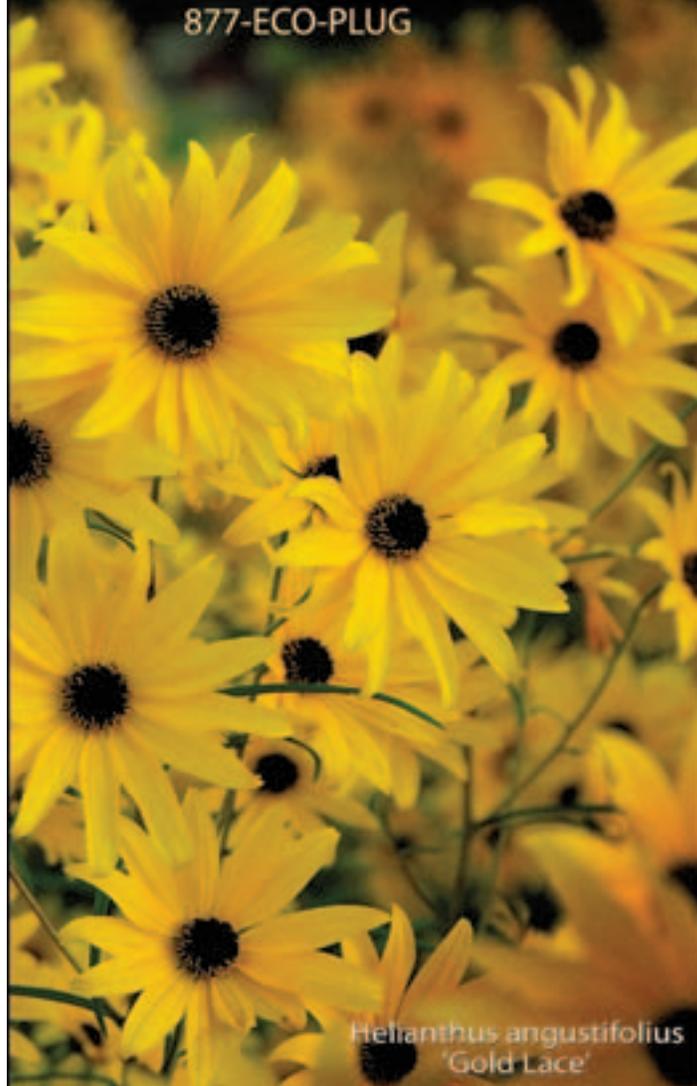
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# SMALL Things Considered

Gay Smith

## *The Essentials to Flower Longevity: Best Practices and Good Genetics*

As summer morphs into autumn, flower palettes change as well. Berries, sedum and cut poinsettias become available as annuals fade. Staycations and farmer's markets start winding down, but not so with weddings. September and October dates have become as popular as June. Lots of questions and queries about handling hydrangeas, dahlias and rose hips place the focus of this article on treatments specific to autumn blooms.

Zinnias, marigolds, sunflowers, asters and sedum are some September favorites sharing a few characteristics: blooms are cut when flowers are quite open and flowers are fully colored at harvest. The list also includes flowers prone to premature leaf yellowing, especially if sugar is introduced too early in the chain. So the best postharvest recommendation is a first drink of chlorinated water. Using chlorine in postharvest handling is all and only about killing bacteria and contaminants. Chlorine is an effective method of preventing the xylem cells of zinnias and marigolds from collapsing.

Dosage for chlorine is not written in stone. A little is good, but too much is not better. Stem damage results if the dose is too strong. The recommendation is between 10 ppm - 50 ppm (gerberas). Over 50 ppm can result in stem bleaching, and lower than 10 ppm does not provide good pollution control. Most flowers respond best with a moderate dose of 20-25 ppm. Both Chrysal and Floralife produce chlorine pills, but they are not the same formula. With Chrysal's chlorine pill, 20-25 ppm is achieved when 1 pill is mixed with 3-4 quarts of water. A few considerations when using chlorine pills: avoid mixing chlorine with acidic solutions

because a byproduct of the mix is chlorine gas, and never consolidate solutions when consolidating flowers. Household bleach also makes a chlorine solution for flowers, but there are a few minuses to consider; it can be messy, is tough on skin and has a short residual period of 4-24 hours. Slow-release chlorine pills are safer to use, longer lasting (2-4 days) and don't bleach clothing. Regardless of which formula you chose, once stems are full of clean water, transfer them to a low-sugar flower food solution.

Chlorine is a contact germicide. Once it attacks organic matter, it loses germicidal power so it's possible to dispose spent solutions into the drain. Just make sure there is no longer "active" chlorine. Google "chlorine kit" for many options of check kits to test for "active" chlorine. NOP stipulations require no more than 4 ppm when dumped into sewers or irrigation ditches.

What about dahlias and hydrangeas? A few years ago, I made an extended series of tests with Karma dahlias using a variety of treatments from chlorine, quaternary ammonium compounds, aluminum sulfate and cytokinins (commercial treatments available from Chrysal and Floralife). The best results happened when the first drink was a solution based on aluminum sulfate. Aluminum sulfate-based hydration solutions provide great results for hydrangeas, and are recommended for rose hips, woodies and berries, because they dissolve air bubbles in stems, boosting flow. Aluminum sulfate does double duty as a germicide. In fact,  $Al_2(SO_4)_3$  flocculates impurities from water as part of cleaning it before use in postharvest.

Whatever solution you use, it's critical to mix according to the manufacturer's directions because postharvest efficacy is all about getting adequate amount of the active ingredients into stems. If using a shipping solution (low-sugar flower food), the correct ratio between clarifiers, nutrients and acidifiers makes a difference. Overdosing wastes money, under-dosing results in a bacteria soup because there are not sufficient biocides to check pollution. Reusing hydration solutions (if they are not chlorine-based) is economically sustainable. Do skim out green bits between flower loads. Consider installing an injector as a means of eliminating mixing errors or wasting solution. Keep injectors in good shape by flushing regularly—every month or two. Flushing is as easy as moving the clear feeder tube from the concentrate container into a cleaner concentrate (the same cleaner solution used to sanitize buckets.) Fill the bell casing with cleaner concentrate and let solution sit overnight. Flush the system and replace the feeder hose into flower solution concentrate. Depress the rubber button on top to expel any air and reestablish the vacuum inside.

Have your water analyzed because the elements it contains affect postharvest success. Extension agents or the phone book provide info on the closest lab. The most important elements to analyze for production and postharvest treatments are pH, EC and alkalinity, but don't forget to include calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), chlorine (Cl), fluoride (F), boron (B). Boron is found in levels in some areas high enough to be toxic. Fluoride is an element that may be in your water (or in the air) and is generally very toxic for flowers.

Fluoride causes problems with gerberas, tuberoses, lilies, glads and tulips. For lilies, as low as 4 ppm is already toxic. The PPO in Lisse, Netherlands, recommends using fertilizers with low amounts of fluoride in lily production. The most common symptom of fluoride damage is yellowing of leaf tips with dark blue-green borders.

The last consideration in good vase performance is the genetics of different varieties. Utilize the information available on the ASCFG Bulletin Board, from the *Quarterly* and presentations at ASCFG conferences when choosing specific varieties of flowers to produce. It makes no sense to fall in love with a variety that doesn't have good vase performance. Solutions in postharvest maximize the genetic potential of any flower, but it is common knowledge that no solution will make a bad flower better. Happy autumn!

*Gay Smith is Technical Consulting Manager for Chrysal USA  
Contact her at [gaysmith@earthlink.net](mailto:gaysmith@earthlink.net)*



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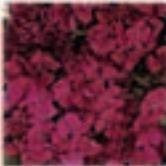
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# IPM Update

Stanton Gill

## Trap Plants: Can You Hear Them Sucking In the Insects?

Funded by the ASCFG Research Foundation

Can you lure insects from your cut flowers with sexier, better-smelling and better-looking plants? There is no doubt that certain plants appear to be magnets for insects. Whether it's the volatiles they emit or the color spectrum plants reflex or radiate there is strong preference of certain insect species for specific cut flower species. Can you use this magnetic draw to pull insects onto these crops and away from your cut flower production area?

For years we have had anecdotal reports from growers that if they planted a block of a certain cut flower away from their main growing area they could concentrate the insects on these lure or trap plants, then treat just this area with insecticide. The growers using this technique claim that they don't need to spray the whole cut flower plot, reducing the amount of pesticide used. We decided to test out this concept to see if it worked with three key insect pests of cut flowers. Adult Japanese beetles, cucumber beetle and harlequin bugs were ideal targets for this approach.

The major elements of this season-long project were: 1) Research and demonstration to document the efficacy of using trap plants highly attractive to key cut flower insect pests to draw pests to "kill zones" of trap plants treated with systemic insecticides, and 2) Education to extend results of beneficiaries, and increase adoption of sustainable practices. Lofty but obtainable goals.

### About the Insects

Japanese beetles, *Popillia japonica*, cause damage to several species of cut flowers including zinnias, roses, hydrangea, and willow stems. The beetles use their chewing mouthparts to feed on foliage and flowers causing a skeletonization of the plant part they feed on. In 2003 - 2006 we had large numbers of Japanese beetles feeding on cut flowers in Maryland. The large adult beetle populations numbers were influenced by conducive weather conditions for Japanese beetle larval survival in tuft areas. These large populations descended on cut flower fields throughout the state for 3 years in a row, causing major loss. Many growers had to make repeated applications of insecticides to reduce damage. The adult beetles are actively feeding on foliage from June through August. Two of the most frequency damaged popular cut flowers damaged by Japanese beetle are zinnias and dahlias.



Trap plants with no chemicals applied

Harlequin bugs, *Murganita histrionica*, damage plants by inserting a stylet mouthpart into plant parts and extracting plant sap. The plant tissue surrounding where the insect feeds discolors to a whitish color. When the insect feeds on new growth it causes distortion and twisting of growth. Harlequin bugs cause major injury on snapdragons, cut ornamental cabbage and kale, and cleome.

Spotted cucumber beetle, *Diabrotica undecimpunctata*, causes damage as the adults chew on flowers and foliage of host plants. Damage to cut flowers occurs when they feed on the flower petals, cutting holes and making flower unthrifty in appearance. Cucumber beetles commonly damage amaranth and sunflowers. Cucumber beetle adults are found in cut flower fields from May through frost. Eggs are laid in soil near host plants and larvae feed on roots for about 30 days. There can be up to 3 generations per season.

### About the Trap Plants

Roses and hibiscus plants are highly attractive to Japanese beetles. These plants have been used as trap plants in vineyards to concentrate Japanese beetle feeding into specific sites where insecticide is applied to kill the insects.

Harlequin bugs are highly attracted to cleome. Candytuft and amaranth are reported by several growers to be highly

attractive to cucumber beetles. We chose to use candytuft as the trap plant for cucumber beetles.

The idea of using trap plants is to attract feeding insects to a specific area where they can be treated for control. Reducing a population in an area has potential to reduce injury to desired cut flower species. By treating the trap plants (rose, cleome and candytuft) and reducing population in the area, growers may be able to reduce damage to desired cut flowers. This avoids expensive applications to large planting areas and is a more environmentally sound method of managing pests with pesticides.

In previous studies, several systemic insecticides have proved effective in controlling Japanese beetles and should work on harlequin bugs. These systemic insecticides available to growers are in the class of neonicotinoids including Safari (dinotefuran) and Marathon/Merit (imidacloprid). These systemic insecticides are long lasting in plants when applied as soil applications, providing control for several weeks. These new classes of pesticides are effective but expensive, making applications to large field planting cost restrictive. By treating the trap plants, insecticide treatments are confined to a small area separate from where workers will be cutting flower stems, risking exposure to pesticide applications.

We evaluated this method for efficacy in controlling pests and reducing or eliminating damage to cut flowers that are highly susceptible to damage from these two pests.

At each site were 20-foot rows of zinnia, snapdragons, and sunflowers. Three separate plots were set up at each site. No trap plants were planted at one. This tested the amount of damage that could be expected on a typical cut flower plot. The second plot had trap plants 10 feet from the test plot, but they were not treated with any chemicals. At this plot we wanted to test if the insects would feed first on the trap plants, or remain just on the trap plants since they were so attractive as a feeding site. The third plots had trap plants 10 feet from the test plot, treated with the systemic imidacloprid. Here we wanted to attract the insects to the trap plants and kill them before they had a chance to damage the cut flowers in the test plots. Each of the plots was at least 100 meters apart at each of the sites.

The three Maryland sites were the Central Maryland Research and Education Center in Clarksville; the Extension office in Clinton; and the Montgomery County Extension office in Derwood. We used three sites to increase the chance that we would experience insect pressure at least one site. The main Japanese beetle pressure was at the CMREC site but there was no activity of Japanese beetles at the Prince George's County or Montgomery County sites. We had harlequin bug activity and *Cosmopepla bimaculata* activity at all three sites. The spotted cucumber beetle populations were very low at all three sites and no damage was noted on any of the sunflowers.

### Discussion

It appears at least with light population pressure of Japanese beetles, trap rose plants may have the potential to attract adult Japanese beetles, if the trap plants are planted 10 foot away from the plants you want to protect. Rose plants treated with imidacloprid appear to kill beetles and there was no damage to zinnias plants growing within 10 ft of the trap plants.

Cleome is highly attractive to harlequin bugs and pulled harlequin bugs onto the trap plant. Cleome treated with imidacloprid at the CMREC site effectively killed harlequin bugs. The harlequin bugs never became a real



Suzanne Klick and Shannon Wadkins taking data



Snapdragons with *Cosmopepla bimaculata* damage



Trap cleome with *Cosmopepla bimaculata* damage

problem on the snapdragon plants. Another insect, *Cosmopepla bimaculata*, was found on both the cleome plants and the snapdragon plants. In the snapdragon plot with untreated trap plants the *C. bimaculata* reached such high levels at CMREC that plant tips died back and plants did not flower. In the plots without trap plants the *C. bimaculata* were present on the snapdragons in fairly heavy numbers but did not keep the plants from flowering. In the plot with trap plants treated with imidacloprid the *C. bimaculata* were present in moderate numbers but no plant injury was observed and flowering was good.

The spotted cucumber beetle just did not become a problem in any of the plots at CMREC or at the other two sites and we did not record any injury to the flower petals on the sunflowers. Candytuft plants

took a long time establish, and we did not observe cucumber beetle feeding on the plants. Several grower have suggested that amaranth would be a better choice of a trap plant for spotted cucumber beetle adults.

### Conclusion

Roses have a potential for being used as a trap plant for Japanese beetles, and treating them with the systemic imidacloprid can give fairly effective control, when pest populations are low. It would be interesting to continue this work and test roses' effectiveness as trap plants when populations were medium to high levels.

Cleome is effective at attracting harlequin bugs, but the major pest of snapdragons, at least in Maryland, is *Cosmopepla bimaculata*. Cleome is attractive to this pest, but snapdragons are more attractive in comparison. If you used

the snapdragons as a trap plant to protect Cleome from *C. bimaculata*. it might be a feasible approach.

For future work in controlling spotted cucumber beetle we would suggest trying amaranth plants as the trap plants.

A special thanks for the ASCFG grant that enabled us to conduct this trial.

---

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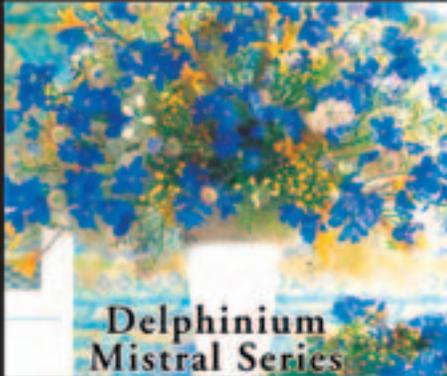
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## The Importance of Timely Transplanting

Cut flower growers transplant most of the flowers they grow. Seeds are small, seedlings are vulnerable until older, and conditions in the field are stressful for germinating seeds. Seedlings spend the first few weeks in the sheltered environment of a greenhouse, but then the decision must be made on when to transplant. Do it too early, and the seedlings suffer, do it too late, and the plants become stressed in the seedling trays. Delays may be caused by bad weather, pressure of other work or lack of a suitable field. What is the penalty of waiting too long? To get a better understanding of how plants react to planting delays, we worked with a genus that is rather sensitive: *Godetia*. This fast-growing annual and native American has a delicate, showy flower that lasts long in the vase.

To test the reaction of godetia to varying durations in the seedbox, we sowed the seed in late March (2008) or late April (2009), and transplanted either at an optimum time (41 and 27 days after sowing in 2008 and 2009, respectively) or with a 2-week delay. Since the size of the seedling cell in which the plants are grown could have an effect, we used either a 72-cell or a 200-cell tray for the seedlings. In a fifth treatment, we transferred seedlings from a 200-cell tray to a 72-cell tray, and planted these out to the field with the delayed transplants. The variety 'Apple Blossom' (Thompson and Morgan) was used in both years, and is reported here; 'Flamenco Salmon' (Takii) was also planted in 2008, but since it reacted the same way, is not discussed. The plants were grown in the field at 9 x 9 in. spacing with 4 rows per bed, using black plastic mulch and irrigation.

As expected, delaying transplanting two weeks reduced vigor and stem length of the godetia at flowering. Stunting in the seedbox carried over into the field, especially for transplants grown in small cells (Table 1). In 2008, the early transplant date was 41 days after sowing, long enough to already stunt the seedlings in the 200-cell trays. In 2009, transplanting at 27 days allowed the plants in the 200-cell trays to grow well in the field.

Sowing into a larger cell provides more space for the seedlings, so that stunting due to transplant delay is lessened. Although the plants attained a smaller fresh weight, stem length was not as much affected.



Fig. 1. 'Apple Blossom' (foreground) and 'Flamenco Salmon' godetia in the 2008 trial.

Transferring from the small to the larger cells before crowding becomes acute had a similar effect to starting the seed in the larger cells.

Our results indicate that performance of a species sensitive to stunting in the seedling tray can be improved by providing more space, either initially, or at the time that crowding becomes evident. Not all cut flower species are as sensitive as godetia, but we need more information to identify crowding-sensitive flowers, so we can provide the care they need to perform at their best.

Table 1. The influence of the time of transplanting from greenhouse to field, and seedling cell size on stem length at flowering in the two growing seasons, and on plant fresh weight at flowering in 2009.

Treatments		Stem length, cm		Plant fresh weight, (2009) g
Transplant time	Cells/tray	2008	2009	
Optimum	72	81az	89a	266a
Optimum	200	65c	86a	237b
2 weeks delay	72	74ab	74b	58c
2 weeks delay	200	50d	50c	19d
2 weeks delay	200, then 72	69bc	69b	59c
Statistical significance		***	***	***

<sup>2</sup>Data in a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 5% level using Duncan's Multiple Range Test.



Fig. 2. 'Apple Blossom' godetia grown in a 200-cell tray and transplanted 27 days after sowing (left), or at 42 days in 2009.

Acknowledgements: I am grateful for the competent assistance of Liza White, and her helpers Andrew Hoffman, Molly Futterman and James Langley. I also appreciate the donation of 'Flamenco Salmon' godetia seed by Takii Seed Co.

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Chris has posted results of his 2008 cut flower variety and cultural practice trials on cut flowers at

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/hightunnel/about/research/cutflowers/2008cutflowertrials.pdf>

# GROWER *Profile*

*Megan Bame*

## *Dorothy Heath Morris Blooms to Your Door*

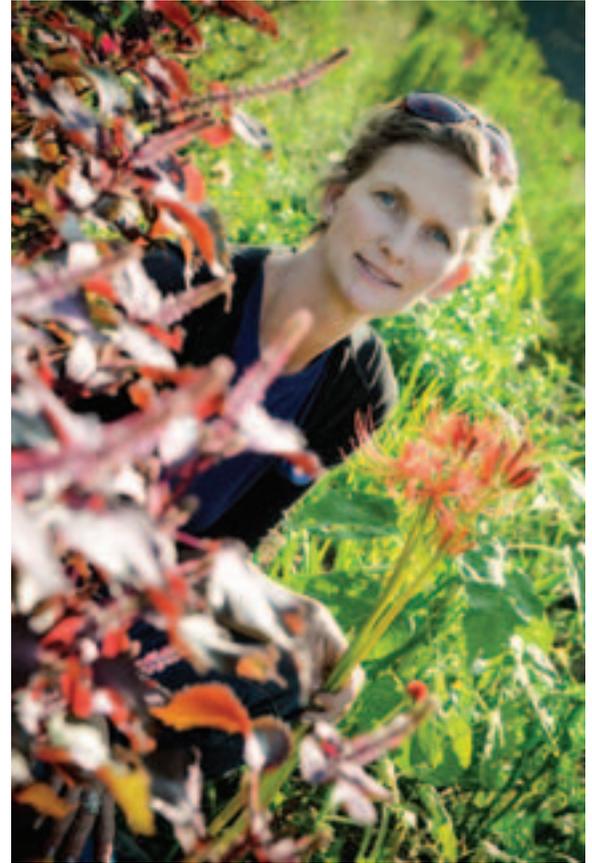
Dorothy Heath Morris attended her first ASCFG conference in 2007 in Raleigh, North Carolina. At that time, her flower subscription service was a fledgling business. Two short years later, the company, Blooms to Your Door, has blossomed into three distinct market identities. In addition to the subscription service, Dorothy has launched Bells and Whistles, which primarily serves brides hosting a destination wedding on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, and The Flower Field, a storefront shop in the town of Kill Devil Hills, which provides occasion floral services to the local market.

This young mom wasn't looking to start a flower business when she completed her degree in fine arts, but some might say the business is just in her genes. As a child, she spent many days on the back of a bulb digger harvesting daffodils and had no intention of following in her father's footsteps. "Dad" is Brent Heath, third-generation daffodil breeder and hybridizer, known in the horticulture industry for his business, Brent and Becky's Bulbs. It was nearly five years ago when she went to meet her dad at a local strawberry field for the pick-your-own experience. Her dad had beat her there and was talking to the farmer when she walked up. The two men were discussing what flowers might grow in the coastal region.

There was certainly market potential. Fresh flowers were virtually non-existent on the islands. Even if the grocery store

had flowers in stock, quality and freshness were questionable. But growing flowers in the sandy "soil" of the Outer Banks would not be without challenges. Dorothy decided to start small, leasing a half-acre of land from a local farm family. She added a substantial amount of compost from Biocomp to increase the organic matter content. Her parents helped her get started by giving her 40,000 leftover bulbs and a large quantity of larkspur seed that hadn't sold by the end of their season.

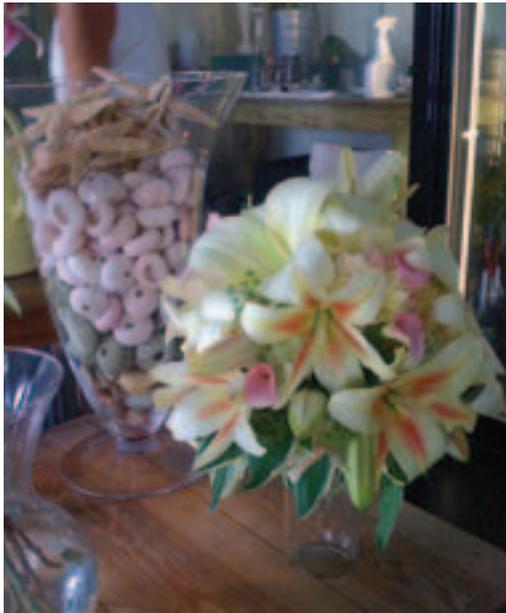
Her initial marketing plan was to offer a subscription service and sell ready-made bouquets from farm stands in the areas that are popular tourist stops. As it turned out, the farm stands weren't the best fit for Dorothy. She worried about the effect of the weather on the flowers and was concerned that the quality deterioration after a couple days at the farm stand would reflect poorly on her commitment



to fresh product. While the business has diversified, she continues to offer subscriptions. Some are weekly deliveries, while others are once a month or every other week.

From the beginning she received lots of requests for weddings. She resisted for two years before giving in to a friend. With the help of another friend, Blooms to Your Door provided floral services for its first wedding. In January of 2008, the two launched Bells and Whistles ([www.bellsandwhistlesobx.com](http://www.bellsandwhistlesobx.com)). At the time, Dorothy didn't realize the Outer Banks was the second most popular destination wedding spot in the United States. After providing floral services for 60 weddings in the first year, she has





In addition to daffodils, Dorothy grows allium, tulips, iris, lilies, dahlias, calla lilies, anemone, sweet William, cornflower, sweet pea, sunflowers and cosmos, among others. She's still managing only a half-acre of field area in addition to a 12-foot x 12-foot greenhouse in her backyard. The field is designed as a layered garden to maximize space. She strives to use organic practices, relying on fish emulsion for supplemental nutrients and adding compost every two years. While her oldest daughter, Zoe, never enjoyed helping Mom in the field, 3-year-old Talulah loves being a field assistant. Zoe, it seems, inherited the art gene instead. Dorothy marvels at how a 6-year-old's floral design can inspire her own creativity.

a new appreciation for the allure of a beach wedding and the market potential of locally available floral services.

While destination weddings can provide a unique challenge when it comes to consultations and discerning style, this artist by training has a penchant for identifying the bride's style and floral tastes. Many of her clients initiate contact through the website and Dorothy follows up with a phone consultation. She believes that seeing the wedding dress, the bridesmaid dresses and the invitation is a window into the style preferences for the event. Not only are Dorothy's parents thrilled that she's found a love of flower farming, they rejoice that the design theory courses from college have been given relevance and practical application.

She's even coming around to the daffodil. She recalls that in her younger days, she realized the daffodil was a favorite, not only of her dad, but really, the whole family. She had sheepishly told him that her favorite flower was actually the tulip. Having now grown quite a wide variety of daffodils, Dorothy has gained new appreciation for their diversity of shapes, sizes, color combinations and fragrances. She experimented with daffodils in floral designs this year, creating visuals to entice brides to share her newfound love of this spring beauty. Her goal for next year is to make daffodils a high-demand, and ultimately more profitable crop.



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In the greenhouse, Dorothy grows orchids above and below the benches, saving the bench space for forcing. She forces narcissus for the holidays and tulips for Valentine's Day. She direct sows most field annuals, but is looking forward to trying more plugs next year. Her season starts in mid-March and, depending on the frost, can easily stretch through Thanksgiving. The flower field is Dorothy's "little piece of heaven on earth." Those less enamored with the joy of cultivation are often surprised when they ask Dorothy, "What are you going to do on your day off?" and she enthusiastically replies, "I'm going to weed!"

Though lacking any formal horticultural education, Dorothy says that growing bulbs and perennials seems to "come naturally." Annuals, on the other hand, have been trial and error, Dorothy largely learning from year to year as the weather creates different challenges. Dorothy also considers the discussions on the ASCFG Bulletin Board a valuable resource. The shared interest has generated a special camaraderie among her family. Since her dad travels and searches for new items, he's a tremendous reference for suggesting new items, and her stepmom is a sound businesswoman she can count on for advice.

While gaining additional field space may be in the near future, the focus this year was on the opening of The Flower Field, a 600 square-foot retail location in the downtown area of Kill Devil Hills. While serving as the base of operations for Bells and Whistles, the flower shop offers special occasion arrangements, mainly for locals. Dorothy loves to hear the stories of folks who've had a special flower-giving experience. It's a rewarding affirmation that the flowers she grows and the arrangements she designs touch someone's life. And then there are



the statements of awe that often follow, to the effect, "I can't believe these flowers lasted for over two weeks!"

Dorothy relies on six additional staff members—two full-time, four seasonal—to make it all happen. The staff are fully integrated between the field, the storefront and the wedding service, though each has demonstrated special talent in a given area and often takes the lead in his or her specialty to enhance the overall services. Dorothy handles most of the initial design work, but trusts her staff to fulfill her vision in completing a set of bridesmaid bouquets, for example.

As wedding parties are keeping a closer eye on their budgets these days, Dorothy has started offering a Make-Your-Own-Bouquet bridal luncheon. The bridal party purchases flowers from Bells and Whistles and Dorothy offers a tutorial and design tips for the luncheon activity.

The website is a self-marketing tool, but additionally Dorothy is a member of the Outer Banks Wedding Association. The business gets referrals from wedding coordinators, coverage in local publications and benefit recognition for donations of flowers to local arts and culture events.

Dorothy embraces the tourism industry which adds a unique element to her cut flower business. She loves the sentimental aspect of being part of her customers' vacation. Her joy of sharing a beautiful thing is reflected in the joy her customers share with her by recounting their flower receiving experiences.

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## Evaluating Ornamental Plants as Cut Flowers

**Larry Johnson**

**Fair Field Flowers, Brooklyn, Wisconsin**

A challenge in the cut flower business is to provide our customers with something “new” or “different”. This trial includes five perennials (20 plants each) sold at a local specialty perennial nursery for use in a home garden or landscape setting. The trial will determine whether they can be used as “new” cut flowers in this area (southern Wisconsin – the new zone 5).

Perennials, by nature, take time to develop and so the results of the trial during this first year are limited. A short summary of each variety is provided below.

*Origanum rotkugel* (showy oregano)

This species has great promise as a cut flower. In fact, my wife liked them so well that she “snatched” several stems from the test plot for the house. The pink/purple flowers are on 18-inch stems with an average of four stems per plant (first year). They bloomed in late to mid July. Vase life was at least a week.

Part of the trial is to evaluate the longevity of the plant relative to harvest intensity: will the plant come back strong next year after it has been cut? To test this factor the twenty plants were divided into four groups of 5 plants each. Group 1 – all stems were cut to the base. Group 2 – all stems were cut at 6 inches from the base. Group 3 – half of the stems from each plant were cut to the base, the other stems were left uncut. Group 4 – no stems were harvested, the plant will be allowed to regrow with no cutting. The plants are marked with flags to identify them next year. We’ll see what happens.

*Vernonia latissima* (tall ironweed)

Tall ironweed is just now starting to bloom. The purple flowers are on stems averaging 36 inches long with about three saleable stems per plant. The plants were partially shaded and received limited water. They’ll be moved to a better location next year.

*Persicaria virginiana* (Compton’s form)

The green and purple foliage has done well this year. The red whips are beginning to form. Some of the leaves will be cut to test as a foliage product. The stems with leaf damage will be saved to evaluate the flowering whips.

*Gaura lindheimeri* ‘Summer Breeze’

Gaura takes a while to develop as a viable cut flower. The first-year airy stems are unusual and appealing; however, it would take stems from all 20 plants to make one decent bunch. The plants should continue to develop and the stems should become more numerous in coming years.

*Lespedeza thunbergii* ‘Gibraltar’ (bush clover)

So far, this plant has been slow to develop, maybe because it was planted in partial shade, - the only “dry” place ready when the plants were ready. Critters dug/pulled out some of the plugs, too. A better location next year will likely provide better results.

## Exploring Low-Tech Possibilities for Heating Hoophouses with Compost

**Diane Szukovathy**

**Jello Mold Farm, Mount Vernon, Washington**

Every fall and winter we make loads of 160-degree hot compost using fish scrap, alder sawdust and farm debris. Last fall I applied for an ASCFG Grower Grant because we were constructing our first hoop house and I’ve always wondered if there might be a low tech and practical way to harness the heat from the compost piles to help boost shoulder season crops.

My objective was to build a system which would circulate water through tubing in the compost pile where it would gather heat and then disperse it in pipes laid at ground level next to crops in the hoop house. Crops chosen for study were sweet peas, ranunculus and anemones. I wanted to see if I could measure differences in crop timing, quality and yields by taking heat from the compost pile and releasing it at the root zones of the crops.

The part of this experiment I thought would be difficult - building a pump system - turned out to be fairly straightforward. I purchased a rain barrel, a 2600 gph submersible inline pond pump, and laid 300’ of 1/2” PVC piping at ground level in my hoop house beds. I plugged in the pump and the recirculating system worked like a charm, sending water first through tubing in the compost pile, then through the PVC pipes and returning water to the barrel with a reassuring gentle stream. Sweet music!

Everything to do with harnessing heat from the compost pile, however, has tried my undaunted farmer optimism. Initially I thought to use copper tubing in the pile because it would facilitate quick heat exchange. So I buried a very snazzy contraption made from about 450’ of 1/4” copper tubing into a two-yard pile of fish scrap and sawdust and dead dahlia foliage. Every morning I eagerly checked my compost thermometer and waited and waited and waited but my pile simply would not heat. Cursing did not help. So I rebuilt the pile using more nitrogen and still it didn’t help. It would heat to about 82 degrees and stop. Hard not to take this personally.

After a few more tries at making the pile go, I noticed that the edges of the pile were heating, but not the center, stuck a thermometer in the corner and read that it was 50 degrees hotter than the center of the pile. I can only guess that either the mass of my contraption or the fact that it was made from copper, or both factors were keeping the pile from heating properly. So I



First try, pretty to look at, but didn't work at all...



Second try, rubber hot water hose works much better!



Inside the hoophouse compost heated water is distributed through PVC piping at the root zone

rebuilt the pile larger using 250' of 3/4" rubber hot water hose. Within three days the pile had heated to 158 degrees. It was a highlight of my geek life to switch on the system and see that the water in the pipes had heated to 105 degrees!

The water stayed hot for about two minutes and then dropped down into the eighties. The compost pile temperature dropped from 158 degrees to 132 degrees in four hours of continuously running the pump and was in danger of shutting the pile down entirely. So I purchased a percentage timer that would run the pump for a couple of minutes to circulate the warm water, then shut the pump off to give the pile a break for about eight minutes. I believe with a five-yard pile this system will work well.

By this time it was March and I didn't have time to collect data from my crops this year. Meanwhile I took a look at a latitude map of northern Washington State and realized we are farther north than much of the state of Maine, meaning that we have very short days in fall, winter and early spring. Since many shoulder season crops are daylight sensitive as well as responsive to soil temperature, I plan to add daylight hours using supplemental fluorescent lighting on a timer as well as heating the soil with the compost pile. I also plan to expand the crops I study to include lupine, stock, sunflowers, and campanula.

As I write it is late August. Flowers are abundant everywhere and demand isn't that high. If we can get even a few weeks of crop acceleration during the time of year when there are hardly any locally grown flowers available, especially Easter and Mother's Day, it could make all the difference for us in profitability for our farm.

## Use of Gibberellic Acid for Extending Stem Length, Increasing Stem Count and Cold Substitution in Various Cut Flower Crops

Becky Devlin

Back Bay Flower Co., , Virginia Beach, Virginia

In November 2007, I submitted an application for an ASCFG Grower Grant. In my southern coastal zone 8 climate of Virginia Beach, our brief springs days morph quickly into 90 degree summer weather, and by the time we start pulling out our sweaters and embracing fall, winter seems to have arrived. Because these seasonal changes are so fleeting, fall-planted plugs have a brief window in which it's cool enough to be planted and still leave enough time to be well established before a frost hits. Likewise, spring flowers need to be timed well: planted only after the temperatures are warm enough, but soon enough to bloom before the heat takes over and snuffs them out. These factors make it tough to get nice, long stems and big blooms on many spring-planted or even some spring-blooming crops.

So, in search of magic, I applied for a grant to support research that would test the use of gibberellic acid - a substance derived from naturally-occurring plant growth hormones - on various cut flower crops to increase stem length and/or stem count, and vernalization substitution. I had used GA<sub>3</sub> successfully in the past to increase stem length in *sinuata statica* after reading about its use for substitution of vernalization, or cold period. I also wondered why it isn't used more, since it's a natural substance and easy to use.

I ordered my GA<sub>3</sub> from Peaceful Valley Farm Supply, as I had in the past, for about \$80 for a small jar (about 1 cup, maybe). The white powder is so concentrated I had to dig deep in my math skills to convert the large numbers on the dilution charts I found in order for dilution to be correct for my 5-gallon sprayer.

Here is the conversion information I found: "The basic stock solution of 1000ppm is prepared by dissolving GA<sub>3</sub> in water at a rate of 1mg in 1 ml. Therefore, a 100mg packet is dissolved in 100ml of water or a little less than 1/2 cup (0.42 cup), a 500mg packet in 500ml (2.1 cups),

or a 1000mg in 1000ml water. Ummm....yeah. Sure.

Believe it or not, I eventually figured it out for my research. And wrote it down. With a Sharpie.

According to JL Hudson Seeds, gibberellins are regularly used in agriculture to decrease or increase fruit set, delay fruit aging, and aid in seed germination. These effects are highly dependent on concentration and stage of plant growth. For example, ten micrograms of GA<sub>3</sub> applied to pea seedlings nearly doubled shoot length if applied at 3 days old, but barely affected 9- day-old seedlings. GA<sub>3</sub> is also used to trigger flowering of sweet potatoes in breeding programs and to help tomatoes set fruit at high temperatures in the tropics.

So, with all this fabulous scientific mumbo-jumbo dancing in my head, I planned on planting:

- Spring-flowering sweet peas and hoophouse-grown late winter/early spring flowering sweet peas, summer field-grown Karma dahlias and fall hoophouse-grown Karma dahlias, early spring-planted *elatum* and *belladonna delphinium*, 'Foxy' foxglove, 'Champion' campanula, and *lisianthus* (early-, mid- and late- blooming varieties). All were to be sprayed with various concentrations (400, 600 & 800 ppm, 1 and 2 applications each) of gibberellic acid once well established.

- I also planned to use two different control groups of all but the sweet peas and the dahlias: one spring-planted with no GA<sub>3</sub> applications, and one fall-planted (vernalized) with no GA<sub>3</sub> applications. Stem length, bloom size, number of stems and bloom time would be recorded for all groups.

Of course, "planned" is the key word. I submitted my grant application in November. I received my approval - and check - in December. So excited about actually receiving a grant and anxious to deliver results, I made some calls to order plugs asap. I ordered everything except the foxgloves, which weren't available,

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only to find it too cold to plant the plugs when they arrived. I bumped them up to larger cells and kept them in the hoop until I could get them planted. In hindsight, I should have waited until the following fall to get started since it ended up being March before they could go in the ground safely.

In addition, I was having a massive rodent problem in my greenhouse. Mice were digging up and eating both seeds and seedlings as fast as I could plant them. I reordered seed 2-3 times from September to March and gave up on a few crops that needed to go in the ground in fall or early spring, with sweet peas being one of them. At my wits' end, I finally direct-seeded some sweet peas to make a last-ditch effort to have a crop that spring. They came up, but by the time they started to flower, our temps shot up to 92 and stayed for a few days. It was just enough to send them to seed after only one application of GA<sub>3</sub>.

I have since gotten cats on the recommendation of other growers on the Bulletin Board and have no mice on my entire 7 acres!

I had a similar situation with campanula and delphinium; both were planted too late, and bloomed short when temperatures shot up. Karma dahlias also went in late, as plugs weren't available until June, which was just the right time for the beetles to start snacking. Needless to say, my research did not go as planned.

The following year I had planned to start from square one, but was up to my knees in the organic certification application process for the first time. When fall rolled around, I was afraid to order and plant any plugs for fear of not qualifying for organic certification (annual plugs have to be certified organic and perennials have to be grown for one year to be considered organic). Another grower had told me that if non-organic plugs were planted in a field that some certifiers may not consider that entire field for certification for 3 years. Until I had straight answers from my certifying agency, I was afraid to plant anything I had not grown from seed. By the time my certification was complete and I had answers, it was again too late to order or plant any plugs.

While the whole plan sounded fabulous to me on paper and in theory, it hasn't exactly been smooth sailing. We had moved our hoophouse in the summer of 2007, so the rodent problem was new and not something I could have foreseen. My enthusiasm about the project itself caused me to jump the gun a bit on getting started and the organic certification process threw off all of our systems a bit last year. But, now that I'm back on track, the cats are at play and we have a year of being certified (and I know the rules) under our belt, I'm ready to roll. Plugs are already being planted to (finally) repeat the research study now, and hopefully I'll have solid results to report by next spring and fall.



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# REGIONAL *Reports*



## **NORTHEAST**

*Polly Hutchison*

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This year, we participated in five main-season markets and a winter market—we will likely be part of two winter markets for the holiday season at least.

In our area, farmers' markets have had a huge boom, and the flip side is that there are almost too many. A Saturday market started up at a garden center, for instance, even though there are two farmers' markets within about five miles of the garden center. In the Newport area, we've gone from two per week to four, and that in a year when Newport is significantly less busy. Does this really hurt the main markets? Not too much, so far. I think the markets I've chosen are on the best locations and days for flower purchases.

Frequently, your fellow farmers are your best source of information about whether a market is worth your time. I try to visit the market myself, but getting the opinion of my friends in the veggie and fruit worlds makes all the difference. We have a list of criteria for choosing a market:

- Is it an established market that has room for a flower grower (or another flower grower?)
- Is it in a high-traffic location, but not just people rushing past?
- Is there enough real buying at the market, and it's not just a social scene?
- Is the market well run, and do farmers have a say in the market operation?

In addition to the good markets that we have been lucky enough to get into (some after three years of applying), we have each year tried out a new market or one with potential that isn't a destination yet, especially if it is well run. We tried a Monday afternoon market this year in an affluent town that has great fellow vendors and an enthusiastic market manager, for example. Even her efforts didn't make Monday a great day for folks to buy flowers, however, and we won't be returning next year.

For us, a market needs to be financially sound on its own, but we also use the farmers' market as a platform to promote our events and other parts of our business, such as plant and holiday sales. We have no farm stand, so this is our main interaction with the public. Every market display is as pretty as we can make it, and a small "We Do Events" works wonders at making our initial contact. I also use the farmers' market as

a place to build our email list, which then gives me a wonderful off-season way to keep Robin Hollow Farm in my customers' minds. I also give a couple of "mention this email" specials each summer, just to see the response. It's cheaper than regular advertising, and folks like being 'special'.

Personal update: As of late August this year, my husband and I are finally farming full-time together again. He went forth and worked "out" while we capitalized our move to the new farm, and we are overjoyed to have him around more often. Wish us luck!



## **MID-ATLANTIC**

*Andrea Gagnon*

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Growing by Numbers

Each year we have happily ordered plants and supplies, hired employees when needed, dreamed about future plans and tried to maintain focus on growing our business. With a lagging economy, reduced florist sales and an uncooperative spring—thunderstorms every Wednesday in April dampened sales considerably—we took on two new markets. This meant four afternoon markets and two weekend morning markets, in addition to promoting our wedding/event business and keeping our few busy florists happy. Luckily, my husband Lou enjoyed a very busy and lucrative spring teaching corporate workshops at the farm. Early on it was clear it would be a hectic year for both of us, making communication between us paramount to our success.

Lou is the "big-picture" guy in our operation. I can appreciate the big picture, marvel at it, long for it, grow toward it but when the chaos of peak season reigns you'll often find me hiding from it somewhere in the zinnia beds, or lately amongst the tallest dahlias. I appreciate his infinite patience as he urges me to "manage" and to delegate, as opposed to micro-manage in the field. I've heard him time and again say that I could actually make time for myself and the business if I just got organized.

Resplendent in my blooming camouflage I heard but didn't actually listen. I remained doubtful, often distracted, too focused on the immediate task at hand, the latest emergency, rather than face the realities of the business we had created and needed to foster. I mean, even if I wrote everything down, prioritized, pasted the to-do lists to my forehead. I still had to do it? Right?

We began with our biggest challenge, getting a handle on where we are each week and where we are going or need to go. Where we were was relatively easy. I manage all the books and am comfortable with Quickbooks as a record-keeping program. Unfortunately I could never easily extract necessary information quickly and in a graphically acceptable format to facilitate clear communication relative to our future goals. I struggled and we debated and I spent much time hiding before we found a truly invaluable tool.

"Numbers" is a spreadsheet program for Mac computers. This elegantly simple spreadsheet program is a godsend to our business. Its ease of use and pre-formulated templates are immediately accessible. Among many user-friendly attributes it allows you to cut and paste multiple spreadsheets on a single page. For instance, using the "household budget" template I was able create a single-page document with a mini-spreadsheet that tracked our recurring monthly expenses, an additional mini-spreadsheet with planned expenses like tax payments, etc. that occurred only during certain months, and ultimately another mini-spreadsheet that showed by the monthly bottom line and our annual reality. What did we need to earn in our business to support ourselves and our new home? Voila, the "big picture" on one page. It took only a few more hours to create a "LynnVale Business Budget" page that tracked our income and expenditures and again revealed the big "bottom line".

The information in this document made it crystal clear early in the season that we needed to take on new retail markets in order to survive. Just how we would manage that and still have a life with two children remained to be seen. Back into the weeds I went until the reality of a beach vacation forced my back to the wall. With only Monday off in our market schedule and me "needing to be there" how could I go on vacation? The smiling expectant looks on my children's faces hardened my resolve. I turned to "Numbers" again to develop the simplest of documents, a daily cutting chart. I'm sure most of our members have made this type of document, very simply organizing what needs to be cut, by whom? how? how processed?, etc. It was very rough and didn't look that much different than any of the Excel spreadsheets I had made in the past. It did the job, my experienced crew rose to the challenge and I was able to spend a few days that week luxuriating on the beach with my family, content that all was being handled on the farm.

When I returned I made these lists a habit. Prior to the arrival of my crew each morning I would adjust them, mostly just varying who was cutting what at what time and for what reason. The wonderful interface in the program allows you to sort, categorize, hide, etc. at the touch of a button at the head of column or row. No cumbersome entering in of column and

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row numbers, no filtering by x or y. Simple, elegant, easy and efficient. I can remember the feeling I had the first day I walked into the barn, handed my crew "the list" and watched as they happily went about their personalized tasks. It was truly an "Aha!" moment. My crew seemed happy, obviously empowered and thrilled that I wasn't micro-managing between rows. The work got done, it got done well, it got done faster, and I had more time!

Each subsequent day I simply fine-tuned the existing list, it took maybe a half hour at most. No reinventing the wheel. One day I felt I didn't have time to generate the list and so we returned to the old way. Hindsight being what it is I should have spent the extra fifteen minutes or so—our old way of operating was incredibly inefficient.

I realize that I have just sown a seed here and that the proof is in the saleable bloom that results. To date our overall payroll costs have been reduced by 35%. We are not working harder, we are working smarter. Suddenly the "big hairy goals" don't seem so big and hairy.

So if you visit our farm, you may indeed find me crouched down amongst the dahlias but more often than not it's for the right reasons, appreciating the infinite beauty that mother nature provides us each season. Thanks to my great crew for all their support and hard work!



## **SOUTHEAST**

*Susan Wright*

Shady Grove Gardens & Nursery

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Report unavailable.



## MIDWEST

### Quinton Tschetter

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Well, we now know a bit about growing flowers, have some good equipment and a vehicle for transporting the flowers, but what if no one buys? Then all of our labor is wasted. So this time, let's think about presentation. I see a lot of flowers at the market that are just set out in buckets, baskets and other containers, and buyers walk by and hardly notice them at all. If you want to attract bees, you need some honey, and if you want to attract buyers in this tight market, you need some "people honey", or an "eye attractor". Having a neat display is a great first step in catching the eye of potential buyers. But surely there is more that we can do.

Showmanship. Most of us are black dirt farmers and don't consider ourselves in that category. Maybe we need to get over it! How about making a show, but making the flowers the center of the attention. Standing in front of the your stand with a handful of lilies or other showy blooms while arranging them is a great way to attract attention. People who see those flowers cannot avert their eyes from those beautiful blooms, and the desire to see them in their own homes will become very strong. They will also be attracted to the scene of you taking a mess of flowers and transforming it into a bouquet. And try to look professional! It makes a difference if people think that you know what you are doing.

Signage. Have your prices clearly displayed! Make sure that your name is visible and any information that will answer general questions is also clearly displayed, i.e. is "tax included", where the flowers are grown, and any kind of specials that you may be offering. Customers love to see where their flowers come from, so display pictures of your gardens, workers in the fields, and any other relevant scene that will give them a feeling of your operation. Even some biographical information would be appropriate.

Generosity. People really appreciate getting a little something extra, even if it has little value. When people have picked out their own flowers, add a few stems of grass or other accompaniment to make them feel that you really do care about them and the flowers that they will be taking home. The returns to your business will be outstanding!

Be picky. A bad flower will leave a bad impression. It is a good idea to test any flower that you are unsure of to determine the vase life for your customers. People will appreciate the information if you tell them that a particular flower will last only for a few days rather than having them find out when they get it home. Give good instructions to your customers on the care of various flowers so that they can get the longest life out of them.

Friendliness. Get to know your repeat customers. Try to call them by name after they've been to your stand a few times. Try to remember details about them: what kind of flowers they like, do they have children, do they have health problems, what type of work do they do, etc. People who are just watching or overhearing will get the impression that you care about them and their satisfaction.

Warranty. Give after-the-sale service. If someone has a problem with flowers they've bought, try to give some satisfaction. Try to define the problem, give a solution and replace the flowers if at all possible. A few extra stems here and there will bring in greater results. Do not be defensive or seem to blame the customer for the problems with the flowers, even if you think that it was their negligence that caused the problem.

Smile and be positive. It is contagious and happy people will be more receptive to buying things that are sparkly and happy. The same things could be said for selling to florists. My best 'sales tool' is to get them into the truck. Oohs and aahs follow. Many times I have heard "Things are slow and I really don't need anything, but I would like to look." and then they end up spending \$50 plus. Let them know you understand that they have to make money in order for them to be able to buy your product.

Introductions are important when you are meeting new florists! I usually walk into a new floral shop with a handful of my most showy flowers. That not only tells them immediately who I am, but also that I am a serious supplier. I also give them the flowers that I have carried into the shop and always give a bit extra when they buy. Throw in a few stems of something else that they didn't buy so that they can see how it enhances their arrangements. Try to be patient when you are dealing with the florists. Many times I have to wait while the florist is helping a customer. Remember, it is the customer who is ultimately paying for your flowers. Call your florists by name! Really work at remembering who is who and if you can remember details about them, ask questions about their life, business or family. It helps to build a relationship with them. You'll know you've been successful when you hear "I was just thinking about you.", or "I was wondering when you were going to get here." Guarantee your product. Be quick to replace product if there is ever a problem. Florists can buy your product only if they can make money with it. A bad product, not made right, will cost sales in the future.

One of the best compliments that I have received was when a florist said, "the arrangements that have your flowers in them are the first ones to sell."



## SOUTH-CENTRAL

*Josie Crowson*

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The trick to getting desperately needed summer rain in East Texas apparently was to hold a Regional Meeting here. After almost two months with no rain at all, the heavens opened up the night before our July 6 meeting. By the time everyone left late that day, Nacogdoches had received 3 inches of rain. Hallelujah! We all got wet, but no one seemed to mind, and it was blessedly cool (well, at least below 100 degrees). Despite some worries—such as a fallen tree blocking our road the night before the meeting—all went well and it was wonderful to see our growers again. We had a good turnout with representatives from four states—Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana.

The day began with a tour of my farm, where the biggest attraction was George's weed-killer creation, which we have named Wiley (see picture). Wiley is made from scrap plywood, half a plastic barrel, angle-iron runners, tarpaulin scraps for curtains at the entrance and exit, and two five-gallon Coke cans. One Coke can is filled with weed-killer mixture and the other contains five gallons of air compressed to 60psi. A pressure regulator between the cans maintains the liquid pressure going to two spray nozzles located inside the blue barrel at 15psig. George uses a garden tractor to pull Wiley between the rows and along the fence. Wiley requires 10 gallons of liquid to cover one acre. Besides being a work-saver, the great beauty of this contraption is that you can kill weeds within inches of the flowers because the vapor spray stays inside Wiley. If you want to know more, give George a call at (936) 615-6292.



Next, the group headed to Stephen F. Austin State University for a tour of the Arboretum led by research associate Dawn Stover, and then indoors to dry off and get some great tips on soil management, bugs and the latest cut flower varieties. During our breaks and lunch, we enjoyed the floral creations of Dr. Michael Maurer, assistant professor in the horticulture department, who did some amazing things with the few flowers that I gave him. At Kim Haven's suggestion, many growers brought samples of flowers from their farms, which generated a lot of interest. Vicki Stamback's stunning lisianthus made us all green with envy.

The most important function of our Regional Meetings and National Conferences is, of course, the networking that we do. We learn so much from each other. But Vicki Stamback is encouraging another form of networking—buying and selling

from each other. For example, Vicki expands her product mix with cut peonies from Dual Venture Farm in North Carolina and cut hydrangeas from Flora Pacifica in Oregon. A few years ago, she bought her first tuberose tubers from Tom Wikstrom (Happy Trowels Farm in Utah). Now that they have multiplied many time over, Vicki sells her excess tuberose bulbs to other growers (including me). The benefits of this type of networking are obvious—

you know the grower, you can order exactly what you want and you know it will be quality product.

Buying from another grower may protect me from a big potential problem this fall. I agreed to do the flowers for a small wedding in early November. The bride wants mainly sunflowers, which should not be a problem—unless we have an early frost. Ordering from a wholesaler in case of a freeze is not a good option, because the wholesaler wants the order a couple of weeks before the wedding. So I asked Kim Haven, whose Billabong Farm is in a bit warmer climate, if she might be able to sell me some sunflowers if a frost destroys mine. She agreed and even made the very generous offer to seed some extra trays for me, just in case I need them. This is networking at its best.



## WEST

### Brenda Smith

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Okay, all you hard-working and uniquely essential flowers farmers: I received an email through our Nevada Grown Marketing Association and it seemed like a good topic to take up for the *Quarterly*. There are a lot of good things happening out there in the country even though it's not what you hear on the news. I hope some of us flower farmers can figure out how to capitalize on them to the fullest extent. As a group, I find flower farmers in the ASCFG are extremely innovative and more willing to embrace change than any other farmer group I have been a part of. I know you will continue to push the envelope and consider this opportunity.

The announcement I received (and I hope you did too) was the Value-added Producer Grant funded through USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service. Eighteen million dollars are available in competitive grants to help independent agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. This is how the program was described: "USDA Rural Development welcomes projects that highlight innovative uses of agricultural products. As with all value-added products generating new products, creating expanded marketing opportunities and increasing producer income are the end goal. Awards may be made for planning activities or working capital but not both. Grants for planning can be up to \$100,000 and for working capital up to \$300,000. Examples of acceptable planning activities include...conducting a feasibility study of a proposed value-added venture, developing a business plan that provides comprehensive details on management, planning and other operational aspects of a proposed venture, developing a marketing plan for the value-added product, including...a possible promotional plan. Examples of acceptable working capital uses include paying for salaries, utilities, and rental of office space, purchasing inventory, and conducting a marketing campaign."

If flower growers don't take advantage of these funds, someone else will. Check out this website if you are at all interested in the details: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>. I would be more than willing to help out any way I can if anyone wants to work on such a grant. Applications are due November 30, 2009.

What kind of grant could you apply for? This seems to be a time to take full advantage of being an established flower grower and asking yourself "How far can I take my business and what do I want from growing flowers?". Think about how you might partner with a fellow ASCFG member to provide better service to your customers.

I've read and heard multiple times in the last months that now is not the time to be scaling back - entrepreneurs need to be gearing up and taking the leap. I believe our customers and

potential customers are taking a reflective look at their buying habits and are recognizing the importance of buying local. The ideas are out there and a good brainstorming session with some ASCFG members might be just the ticket to get those creative ideas flowing.

Maybe applying for a grant is not quite right for you now, but fall is the perfect time to be doing long-range planning. Do you want to put up another season extension structure? You know that if you wait, spring and planting season will be here before you know it. If you want to grow different flowers, you need to do your homework so those seeds or stock can be ordered now.

I know we are looking to change our configurations for our beds next year. We need to get a better handle on weeds and make it easier to get in and harvest our flowers. We think this change will enhance the quality of our flowers and increase our productivity, so we are not so spread out. It is going to entail equipment modifications and new materials, so it is important to start working on these changes now. When I look back on why we were growing the way we were growing, I couldn't really remember the reasons for setting up the way we did. I was kind of shocked I hadn't examined my growing practices for some time.

Maybe now is the time to review your growing practices. Can you be more efficient or more productive or lower costs or cut down on weeding or improve the quality of your flowers?

Rejoice at all your choices and opportunities to be able to grow flowers for your livelihood and see if this is the time for you to take a leap and submit an value-added producer grant or just do some planning to improve your growing.

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## NORTHWEST

Jerianne Sabin

Bindweed Farm  
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Okay, I'll admit it—I came slowly and reluctantly to the green revolution. I'm not talking about green as in eco-friendly, I'm talking about the profitable world of foliage-based greens. I was late to the green party for many reasons but firstly because when we started growing flowers for market we grew FLOWERS. I didn't use any greens in our bouquets because we didn't grow any. I had my first green epiphany with our first harvest of Bells of Ireland—wow! A handful of flowers, a few stalks of Bells and presto—insta-bouquet! The Bells made bouquets easy to assemble, miraculously transforming a small amount of bright flowers into a beautifully balanced bouquet that swelled up large enough to fill our biggest sleeve. Duh!

This should have triggered a winter of research resulting in a good list of greens ready for the next season but it did not. We live and farm in the small-town rural west but our market is small-town/up-town western chic and one of the first things I discovered was that my clients don't use "fillers". Whoops! I made the mistake of considering greens as merely fillers and it took a special request from a client for my head to pop out of the box. During an order a designer wished aloud for something green to complete her order. Eager to please, I casually mentioned some sage (I grew it in small amounts for an herbal class I taught each fall). She jumped on it and bought up every stem we could scavenge. Our cutting-edge designers may not use filler, but they know how to complement their designs with perfectly placed greens and are hungry for greens that are way outside the box.

The following year we planted three succession crops of bells of Ireland, extending them throughout the season and invested heavily in herbs. We planted several mints, oregano, dill, bronze fennel, basil and long rows of sage. The first sage we grew was *Salvia officinalis* which has beautiful silver-green narrow ovate leaves—but its early bloom makes its sale window very narrow, unless you trick it into a late bloom by severe pruning in spring. Then a few years ago I found a beautiful sage, 'Berggarten', at our local nursery that I planted just outside the kitchen door for handy cooking access. We were enchanted with its large round leaves and I

suggested we try some in the field. As the year wore on we discovered that it did not bolt into flower at all, affording a longer cutting time (though it is so appetizing to grasshoppers that it is our "marker" plant to determine insect pressure). It has taken two years for all of our clients to discover this gorgeous green, but it was a must on everyone's order last week.

We have grown several varieties of mint but have stuck with spearmint and applemint. The spearmint is very traditionally shaped, harvests early and is a rich deep green with a subtle minty but not overpowering scent. About the time it goes to flower the applemint is ready. It is a lighter mint, variegated white and lime green, resembling leaves tipped in frost, emitting a sweet apple/mint fragrance. (Applemint is my favorite for designing, spearmint is my favorite for making mojitos!)

If greens are the gravy in the cut flower world, perennial greens are the lemon meringue pie—once established they are high yield and low maintenance. Some of our favorite work-horse greens have been surprise revelations—viburnum and sedum. We planted 1 viburnum *opulus* for the lacy flowers in early spring but just as soon as the berries are set and of any size we begin to harvest and sell it again. I have been delivering viburnum for months! Double bonus, last week a client requested viburnum foliage, he did not care if it had berries or not, he just wanted the foliage because it is almost indestructible.

Sedum "Autumn Joy" was another surprise money maker. We decided to phase out our sedum last year (because it takes up so much room on the truck) so we "reused" most of it as

landscape material around the house. Naturally we started getting requests for it early this spring. The requests continued so we put it on our weekly availability list and have sold a ton. Consequently, we will be replacing our field plants so our landscaping can remain unmolested.

Describing the look she wanted for a wedding a good friend/client asked for sweet pea vines, not necessarily with flowers. She wanted something unusual for a long, low, head table piece but we were between sweet pea crops and my vines were not long enough. Ping—an image of clematis popped into my head and out of my mouth! She ordered 100 stems, loved it and has continued to order it. The first cutting was mostly vines with large pearl-like buds, for the next few weeks the vines were covered with buds and blossoms (we use the late, white blooming clematis, a very vigorous

grower). For this week's order the vines are a mix of blooms with star like seed heads. Everyone that has seen it on the truck has asked for it so we included it on the availability list as a cut to order.



*Lysimachia* 'Golden Alexander'

Defining green has been the latest lesson in my out of the box seminar. As an artist anything with the slightest whiff of green is green—this includes the faintest silver whisper of green (Artemisia), dusky gray greens (Salvia), luscious limes (Applemint), screaming chartreuse (“Golden Alexander”), new grass green (Alchemilla), olive green (Dill), deep forest (Spearmint), dark blue-green hunter (Rue), rust/red green (Persicaria) and almost black/purple green (Eupatorium ‘Chocolate’). This year’s R&D green is heuchera ‘Palace Purple’. It is dynamite, seriously—it’s a little short, even under shade cloth, but the huge sculptural leaves are glossy green/black on top, like diamond tuck leather and a deep sexy purple underneath—wow! (Imagine blue phlox accented by a collar of these black beauties and all the various shades of blue, green and violet bouncing around and you get it!!)

Lesson learned. I am a card-carrying member of the green party and thinking outside the green box—greens are not fillers, they are accents, greens can be anything that doesn’t wilt and is green-ish, greens are low maintenance and offer huge return. Now I wander the fields with scissors in hand cutting bits of everything growing and checking vase life. Okay, so my “green trepidation” still stymies me in the studio but never again will I leave the farm without a good supply of greens.

#### Jeriann’s Favorite Greens

*Artemisia* ‘Silver King’

Bells of Ireland

*Bupleurum*

*Eupatorium* ‘Chocolate’

*Clematis* - Paul Farges

Dill

*Euphorbia marginata*

Horehound

*Heuchera* ‘Palace Purple’

*Hypericum*

Lemon balm

*Alchemilla mollis* - lady’s mantle

*Lysimachia* ‘Firecracker’

*Lysimachia* ‘Golden Alexander’

*Menthe*

Variegated mint/applemint

Wooly mint

*Nepeta* ‘Walker’s Low’

*Physocarpus* ‘Diabolo’

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*Persicaria* ‘Red Dragon’

*Pycnanthemum* - mountain mint

*Salvia officinalis*

*Salvia* ‘Berggarten’

*Sedum* - ‘Autumn Joy’, ‘Mohrchen’ red/chocolate foliage

*Sedum* - ‘Matrona’ coppery foliage

Sweet pea - vine

*Viburnum opulus*

**SELLING LOCALLY?**



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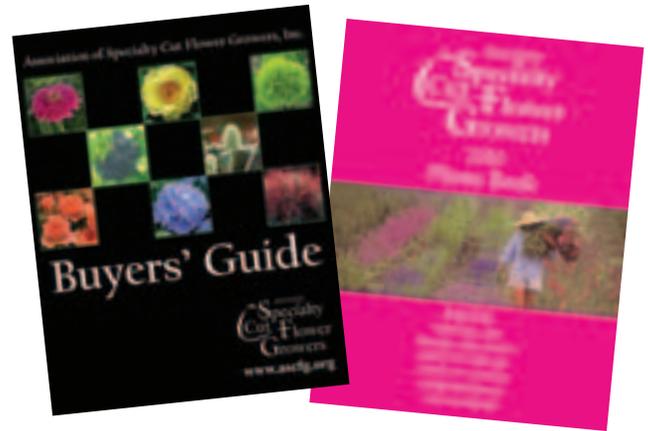


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Scott Edwards, Fertile Crescent Farms and Gardens, Comer, GA  
Sandy Evaniuck, Styers Peonies, Webster, NY  
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Megan Shoenfelt, OARDC, Wooster, OH  
Kay Studer, Elida, OH  
Jennifer Tidwell, Backyard Grown Gardens, Batesville, MS



## *2010 Buyers' Guide & Phone Book*

Preparation of both the ASCFG Buyers' Guide and Phone Book will begin shortly. Watch your mail for a packet of information including your own Member Profile (please update and return), the display ad rate sheet, and instructions for inclusion in the Buyers' Guide.

Remember, the Phone Book is simply that—a directory containing current members' contact information. The Phone Book is sent only to ASCFG members. The Buyers' Guide is a tool for buyers of specialty cut flowers, and for growers who want to sell to them. It is distributed to thousands of buyers across the country. **All members are included in the Phone Book; only those growers who indicate they want to be listed in the Buyers' Guide will be.**

The more growers who participate in the Buyers' Guide, the better it will be. Each year, we receive an increasing number of requests for copies of the book from florists, wholesalers and designers who have used earlier issues. Regardless of your current market, a Buyers' Guide listing is a great way to get your company's name in front of buyers you never dreamed of.



## *Are You Connected?*

**The ASCFG offers these online services. If you're not receiving them,  
or you're unsure of your username and password, contact Judy at [ascfg@oberlin.net](mailto:ascfg@oberlin.net).**

# FROM *the Director*

Judy M. Laushman

This issue of *The Cut Flower Quarterly* has been woefully neglected. It was begun in the weeks before the National Conference, when bits and pieces of it were pulled together, ignored during the final preparation for Long Island, and then hastily resurrected during the wrap-ups of the Conference when we returned. Any errors should be chalked up to sleep deprivation.

The good thing about publishing a magazine in 2009 is that once the final proof is approved, pdfs of the pages can immediately be posted online for members to read as immediately. No need to wait for the printer to produce it, or the postal service to deliver it. We wish we could afford the snappy online programs which present the image as an actual *magazine*, one for which you turn the page when you've read it, and hear a nifty *page-turning sound effect* when you do. For now, those processes are out of our budget. We'll stick with the pdfs.

We know that many of you are still using dial-up connections, or must visit the public library to access your server. But the fact is that online communication is overtaking print publications on all fronts, and the ASCFG is doing all it can do adapt, while still serving members who may seem not able to embrace all things electronic. Those members not subscribed to the Bulletin Board are sorely lacking a huge connection to other growers, and an immense collection of archived information. If we lose a member to non-renewal, I frequently find that the person never once looked at the Bulletin Board, or logged on to the Members Only site. No wonder he didn't feel he was getting the most from his membership!

John Friel writes an excellent piece on social networking in the October issue of *GreenProfit*. Check it out on page 38. Or online, of course.

Some of the Association's best communicators are leaving the ASCFG Board at the end of this year. Brenda Smith has been the West Regional Director for six years, two heroic consecutive terms serving a huge area, including California, one of the most important flower-producing regions of the country. Brenda worked tirelessly to unite her members, especially by chairing the 2006 National Conference in San Jose, and establishing a cut flower tour day at the California Spring Pack Trials. I envision more members making this trip every year, and thank Brenda for her commitment. Jeriann Sabin represented the Northwest Region for three years, and brought great character and liveliness to the Board meeting. We'll owe her forever for her beautiful artwork. Joan Thorndike has quietly and graciously served as ASCFG Vice-president; with her work as Nominations chair resulting in a quality Board of Directors for next year.

What to say about Dave Dowling? If you didn't know, Dave has been the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, the chair of the 2005 National Conference, and the ASCFG President for the last four years. He's probably the best ambassador for the organization, bringing in more than 30 new members, hosting and speaking at countless meetings, and perpetually sharing his own growing and marketing experiences. He has made my job easier, more enjoyable and I am glad to know that he'll stay in touch with his nearly daily emails.

To honor Dave's service to the ASCFG, the Board unanimously decided to rename the ASCFG student scholarship the Dave Dowling ASCFG Scholarship. Dave's commitment to bringing young people and students into the cut flower industry will be publicly commemorated every year. No one could deserve it more.

As always, as we say good-bye to one terrific group of Board members, we welcome the chance to work with another. Incoming President Vicki Stamback, Vice-president Leah Cook, West Regional Director Christof Bernau and Northwest Regional Director Diane Szukovathy will undoubtedly carry on the excellent work their predecessors have begun. I'm looking forward to it.



# Rolling the Dice with Cut Flowers



**November 17-18, 2009**  
**Hilton Memphis, Tennessee**



## Day One: Tuesday, November 17

- 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Registration  
 8:45 - 9:00 a.m. Introduction & Overview  
 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Fired Up About Cut Flowers  
 Ko Klaver, Zabo Plant, Pittsburgh, PA  
 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. Welcome to My Farm  
 Vicki Stamback, Bear Creek Farms,  
 Stillwater, OK  
 11:00 - 12:00 noon Welcome to My Farm  
 Van Cheeseman, The Gardens at Bluebird  
 Farms, Holly Springs, MS  
 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. LUNCH & Trade Show  
 1:30 - 4:45 p.m. Concurrent Sessions (break included)

### Basic

Dave Dowling  
 Farmhouse Flowers & Plants,  
 Brookeville, MD

### Advanced

Frank Arnosky  
 Texas Specialty Cut Flowers,  
 Brookeville, MD Wimberley, TX

- 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Optional tour of the Dixon Gallery & Gardens.  
 Transportation on your own (maps provided).  
 Tour, hors d'oeuvres & drinks compliments  
 of DGG. SIGN UP REQUIRED.

Dinner on your own

## Day Two: Wednesday, November 18

- 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Organic Cut Flower Production  
 Mark Cain, Dripping Springs Garden,  
 Huntsville, AR  
 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. What Market is Best for You?  
 panel farmers' markets  
 Amy Phelps, Pearl River Blueberry Farm,  
 Lumberton, MS  
 florists wholesale  
 Terry Hannah Home & Garden, Memphis, TN  
 Darrell Johnson/Fred C. Gloeckner & Co.,  
 Johnson Greenhouses, Duncanville, AL  
 9:30 - 9:45 a.m. BREAK  
 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. The Best Trees and Shrubs for Woody  
 Cut Flowers  
 Lane Greer, Oklahoma State University, OK  
 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. Effective Cost Accounting  
 Vicki Stamback, Bear Creek Farms, Stillwater, OK  
 11:45 - 12:45 p.m. LUNCH

## Day Two: Wednesday, November 18 continued

- 12:45 - 1:45 p.m. Postharvest Techniques for Consistent  
 Quality  
 Gay Smith, Chrysal, USA, Portland, OR  
 1:45 - 2:30 p.m. Snapdragons  
 Darrell Johnson, Johnson Greenhouses,  
 Duncanville, AL  
 2:30 - 3:15 p.m. Perennials as Cut Flowers  
 Janet Bachmann, Riverbend Gardens,  
 Fayetteville, AR  
 3:15 - 3:30 p.m. Grower Assessment & Program Evaluation  
 Dr. Ron Rainey, University of Arkansas, AR

### Lodging:

The host hotel is the fabulous Hilton Memphis (939 Ridge Lake Blvd, Memphis, TN). We have negotiated an excellent conference rate of \$99 (plus tax) for single or double occupancy rooms. You must contact the hotel directly for room reservations. You may call the toll free number at 1-800-445-8667 or direct at 901-684-6664. Please tell them you are with the University of Arkansas for the Rolling the Dice with Cut Flowers event. If you chose to make your reservations online you can go to [www.hiltonmemphis.com](http://www.hiltonmemphis.com). Our Group/Convention Code is: UA1118. Make sure you enter this code so that you get the discounted conference rate. The cutoff date to block reservations is Monday, November 2. The Hilton Memphis is 11.6 miles from the Memphis International Airport (MEM). A complimentary shuttle is provided by the hotel and leaves hotel at the top of the hour from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. When you land, you may go to the baggage claim to use the courtesy phone to request a shuttle to come pick you up. For those traveling by car, self parking is free.

### Other local attractions:

Dixon Gallery & Gardens: [www.dixon.org](http://www.dixon.org)  
 4339 Park Ave; 4 miles from the Hilton

The Memphis Botanic Garden: [www.memphisbotanicgarden.com](http://www.memphisbotanicgarden.com)  
 750 Cherry Rd; 4 miles from the Hilton

Graceland: [www.memphisbotanicgarden.com](http://www.memphisbotanicgarden.com)  
 3734 Elvis Presley Blvd; 14 miles from Hilton

UT West Tennessee, Rsch. & Educ. Cntr, Jackson:  
 605 Airways Blvd. 78 miles. Exceptional Trial Gardens.

## Rolling the Dice with Cut Flowers Registration Form

**Cost:** Preregistration (by November 10) is \$85.00, which includes lunches, breaks, and handouts.  
**Attendance is limited to the first 100 registrants.** On-site registration is \$125.00.  
Tuesday - November 17th ONLY: \$55.00  
Wednesday - November 18th ONLY: \$55.00

*Detach and return. Contact Holly Beason (501) 671-2237 for more information.  
Please fill out one form per person. Photocopy if needed.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Full registration:       Nov. 17th ONLY       Nov. 18th ONLY

Day one (select one 3 hour session): Beginner       Advanced

Dixon Gallery & Garden Tour (limited to 35 people):

If you prefer a vegetarian meal, check this box:

### Return Registration Form by November 10 to:

Holly Beason  
Attn: Cut Flower Workshop  
U of A Cooperative Extension Service  
PO Box 391  
Little Rock, AR 72203-0391

**Make checks payable to:  
Agricultural Development Council (ADC).**

This workshop was funded by a grant from the Southern Region Risk Management Education Center.  
Conference location: Hilton Memphis, 939 Ridge Lake Blvd, Memphis, TN



Judy Laushman is ready to greet attendees



Polly & Mike Hutchison were terrific hosts



Judy Laushman, Neil Caggiano & Chris Wien



Alicain Carlson & Emma Locke kept the AV running smoothly



Carol Caggiano, AIFD, PFCI



Growers' School Speakers



Scholarship recipient, Jennie Love with Carolyn & Quentin Tschetter, benefactors



Kelly Demasi & William Pratt show off bags sponsored by GeoSeed



Growers' School class soaking it all in



Chris Wien speaks about making flowers last longer



Becky Devlin speaks about the importance of social networking



Lourdes Reyes from Ball gets flowers ready for her Trade Show booth



Ruth Moore admires Ednie's flowers



Gloeckner's Robin Patterson greets a visitor at the Trade Show



Bob Wollam, highest bidder & Suzy Neessen, quilt coordinator at the Research Auction

Tours Design Show Auction 2009 National Conference



Mark Bridgen, our host at Cornell's Long Island Research Center



Fall mum research at LIHREC



Pat DiVello leads a tour of her flower farm



Taking a closer look at Long Island flowers



Landcraft Environments was spectacular!



The Rice Family enjoying Landcraft Environments



Enjoying the beach after lunch at Orient Beach Park.



The Van Essendelfts and Lubbers gathering treasures on the beach



Dave Eastburn creating a design for the competition



Designer Carol Caggiano wowed everyone at Successful Events



The Charles found wedding ideas at Successful Events



Margaret Muth Kirby chooses flowers for her design



Vicki Starnback holding David Deutsch's winning design



Carolyn Ramsbotham, second place



Cynthia Alexander, third place



Association of Specialty  
Cut Flower Growers, Inc.  
MPO Box 268  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

*Scenes from the 2009 National Conference & Trade Show*

