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The Cut Flower

Q U A R T E R L Y

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

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FROM the **PRESIDENT**

Polly Hutchison

First off, dear readers, my heartfelt sympathy for the hot and dry weather that many of you endured this past season. We got rain this year, but I know what it feels like to chip away and know that irrigation is a weak substitute for actual precipitation. I hope that the cooler days of fall are restoring your faith and heart.

We all have to plan for a better year next year, starting now. No matter how many years you've been farming, your record-keeping, looking to others for new ideas, and your early start on planning the coming season is the way to improve and keep interested in your operation, small or large. Mike and I are twenty years farming together next year and we still tweak, adjust, and occasionally go for a big change.

On your farm (or farms, or garden plot) look to your records now while the season is still fresh and sort out any important trends. Sometimes a crop needs a second chance, especially in a bad weather year, but sometime you can just tell that baby is a dud and it's time to stop growing it even if it's pretty. Conversely, some trials can really show promise. Not enough records, you say? Well, that's a great thing to fix for next year. Trial a system now, at the end of the season, so you can get some of the bugs out for next year.

Looking around for new ideas is more important for flower growers than any other farmers. Not only do we have things to learn from vegetable and other farmers in how to improve our systems but we have to look at color trends, what designers are reading and following, and

what goodies the breeders are dreaming up. New, fresh and exciting is just not as important when you grow cabbage. I know this from experience.

Obviously, this is where we put in a plug to schlep to Tacoma this year for the National Conference, November 12-14. It is easy to get to, easy to walk around when you're there, and there are great workshops. Diane from Jello Mold Farm and others have worked their tails off to bring you an excellent program. Come on out, it will be worth it. Also, as many of you have already noticed, your board has decided

to change the format a bit for 2013, so we won't have a "one big" conference but focus on upgraded and expanded regional programs instead, so come to Tacoma in 2012!

Additionally, attend some other local workshops, or a course online. Many of you know these resources, but I think they bear repeating. One of the best organizations across the U.S. is SARE (Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education) www.sare.org They have four regions. I know the Northeast and North Central ones are very active, and this is also a great place to find grant funding for that cool new idea you have.

Also this year Cornell is offering some great online courses at <http://nebeginningfarmers.org/online-courses/>. It is geared toward newer growers, but there are financial and



planning courses for more experienced growers as well, and the instructors are top notch. Check it out! If you are an educator member—can we get more of these kind of courses around the country? Great idea, Cornell!

Thanks for making me feel so welcome this year as President. We have a great board, and I would like to thank the outgoing members so much for their work. To those coming in, welcome and rejoice in knowing we still have work to do. The ASCFG is one of those great places you all come to for information, for support and laughter during the season, and for advice in making next year even better. Our strength just builds from year to year. May it be so for your business as well.

Happy fall, everyone!

Saving the Temptress Poppy

I have been growing Iceland poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*) as a cut flower for about 10 years. It was probably Betsy Hitt of Peregrine Farms in North Carolina who first turned me on to these magical spring beauties. She suggested I try the Temptress series sold exclusively by Gloeckner. Temptress was bred as an F1 hybrid by a Frenchman to have long, strong stems, large flowers, and a weeklong vase life—a perfect cut flower. My experience is that they live up to all of these claims.

All of my florists know this flower and some are willing to pay \$9.75 for a bunch of 10 stems. I almost always sell all my production.

Unfortunately, that French breeder has retired. In fact, he stopped his seed development in 2008 and no new seed has been available since. There is still a

cache of a few thousand seeds in Gloeckner's vaults, and there may be some other hoarders like myself who bought up some of the old inventory. I have about 30,000 seeds and will sow about half of that this fall.

Knowing that the series was endangered, I asked a number of grower friends if they thought we could find a substitute cultivar. I tried 'Champagne Bubbles', 'Red Sails', San Remo and a couple other seed types, but none matched up to Temptress. My friends had no other suggestions for alternative varieties.

Saving my own seed was declared useless, and the crossing of plants to develop the F1 hybrid seemed more art than science.

My local extension agent led me to a new research facility here in Virginia which grew out of the tobacco

settlement. The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research was born in an attempt to find alternatives for tobacco farmers. It is a partnership between Virginia Tech and state government, and is engaged in research, education and conferencing. Research involves renewable resources, agriculture and horticulture, and analytical chemistry. Education spans K-12 STEM programs, graduate and post-graduate research, and lifelong learning.

The IALR was already researching tissue culture development of other unusual and promising plant material when I asked them to "save the Temptress".

Under the watchful eye of Dr. Kedong Da, the institute has been able to reproduce Temptress poppies from specific plant material taken from my seed-produced plants, but we are still working on a commercially viable production method.

We are starting our third year of this possibility now. Last spring, using tissue-cultured material, we were able to successfully test four different colors selected from previous years' seed plants. The process has two big-time advantages. First, we can guarantee color. Second, we can guarantee strong, healthy, productive plants.

Meeting the challenge of the cost of production, and the selection of the best and most desirable colors are still ahead of us. The four test colors were selected for their viability, which proved to be excellent. The hope is to make at least five or six of the most popular colors available to all growers. But the most desirable colors (orange, red, and salmon) were not included in that sample, so we will be selecting plants again next spring in hopes that we can have commercially viable, strong plant material available by specific color in the following years.

Will the Temptress poppy be saved? I hope so. It is unique within its own family of the Iceland poppy. Floral designers marvel at its delicate beauty and landscapers may yet have another alternative to pansies.

I'm certainly open to ideas of how we save this fabulous plant. Meanwhile I'll be sowing some of my old seed, we'll be selecting the most perfect colors and healthiest plants for more work by the IALR, and we'll hope to have commercially available plants ready in a couple years.

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Sunflower Pollination Does Not Influence Vase Life

Chris Wien

Flower growers have lots to worry about during the growing season: production issues such as the weather, pests and weeds, labor, marketing, taxes, etc. Here is one issue that we have just found not to be a problem: sunflower pollination.

Some flowers, notably snapdragons, some orchids and the potted plant cyclamen, shed their petals soon after the flower has been visited by a bee, or the pollen has been shaken onto the female part of the flower. Rather annoying for the consumer, or the cut flower grower, who is expecting at least a week of petal life.

What about sunflowers? Most cut flower varieties of this species have been selected to not produce pollen, because pollen makes unsightly stains on table cloths. But some varieties are pollen-producing, as are all those grown for snack food, birdseed and oil. And so it might be possible that in a mixed planting, bees will busily transfer pollen amongst them.

To find out if pollination matters with regard to flower longevity, we conducted a couple of tests in our high tunnel, either pollinating the flowers, or keeping them from being pollinated. We then harvested the flowers, kept them for 5 or 7 days in water at room temperature, and then measured the petal retention force. The weaker the force holding the petals on the flower head, the closer they are to falling out, thereby ending the flower's vase life.

We did the experiment in the 2011 and 2012 growing seasons, and in both, pollinated and unpollinated flowers had similar petal retention force after 5 and 7 days of flower storage. So don't worry about the bees in your sunflower plantings; the flowers you harvest will last an equal length of time.



Sunflower producing pollen



Pollenless sunflower

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The Best-Laid Plans

Janet Foss

This is not about the best plan, but about taking stock and making a review of the past season, so that there will be a workable plan for the next season. No matter how good the plan, there are still times when we have too much or not enough flowers. I would rather have too much than too little, but still the amount matters. My goal is for each row to be profitable, resulting in less to take care of but more to sell by growing plants that produce well and that sell. Those totals vary every year, making for a constant shuffle of product.

A few catalogs have arrived, and I've discovered that I'm addicted to buying plants and seeds. Even with a plan in

place, I worry I may not have enough. This happened recently, due to poor germination of a few things, too much rain, and then too much drought. As I start though my list of annuals, I wonder: what will do better next year?

Agrostemma githago

We have grown this annual for years. It's easy because it is direct sown, hardy, and fall sowing produces the nicest crops. This year we planted too much, and not enough: too much at one time, but not enough successions. Weather often plays a role in the successions getting messed up, but I should have done better. We planted white this year instead of purple, which was good for weddings, but a little purple would have been nice too. Next year I need to plant shorter rows in closer successions. The best cuts are from the first two weeks to three weeks. Week one I cut individual stems into bunches but the next two or three weeks we cut the whole plant by handfuls. To look its best, I feel *Agrostemma* should be cut with lots of buds and no seed pods to last and look the best.

Ageratum

This is another we have grown for years. I really like only the blue color, which has an excellent vase life. 'Blue Sensation' has been my favorite; it's supposed to be three feet tall, though it never has been for us, but it does have good stem length. Sometimes it doesn't sell well, and then every once in awhile it's just the color someone wants and



Ageratum

we totally sell out. It's long-lasting and works well in mixed bouquets. I will keep growing it next year in limited quantity, because the color periwinkle blue is rare. I usually plant it only once as it continues to produce stems all summer, but a second later planting would have been good this year. We transplant ageratum from plugs.

Queen Anne and Her Pretenders

Demand seems to have weakened for *Ammi majus*, but *Orlaya grandiflora* sales were excellent. Even though it has short stems and smaller flowers, the larger florets give it a nice look when used with other flowers. *Orlaya* is reliably hardy for



Agrostemma githago

us in zone 8 from a fall sowing and the quality is the best. *Daucus carota* 'Dark Knight' looks like a dark brown or Champagne-colored Queen Anne's lace.

It's more closely related to wild carrots, but with more substantial flower heads, and nice heavy stems. It produces over a longer time than either *Ammi majus* or *Orlaya* successions therefore, 'Dark Knight' actually produced more per square foot because it can be cut by the stem for such a long time. It actually reminds me more of *Ammi visnaga*, but the flowers are slightly different. The flowers of *Ammi visnaga* are generally white or slightly green, but not a true green unless cut quite immature. The plan for next season is less *Ammi majus* and more *Ammi visnaga*, and slightly more *Daucus* 'Dark Knight', and it's especially important to sew some *Orlaya* this fall. We direct seed *A. majus* but transplant *A. visnaga* and 'Dark Knight'.

Pot Marigold

Calendula has never been one of my favorite flowers; the flowers come and go so fast it's hard to keep them picked before they go to seed, and it easily becomes a weed. Even young blooms tend to look wilted. The color is not my favorite, and it doesn't sell that well. The flower heads break, and tangle, easily. How's that for a list of good reasons I don't grow this crop?

But last spring a bride wanted orange for a wedding June 1st, and since calendula was a pretty good choice I ordered plugs of orange calendula, from the Prince series. I was surprised to realize that these were the best calendulas I've ever grown: they had strong, 24-inch stems, and they produced for weeks. Most importantly, they sold well.

The Prince series is supposed to be good for forcing, but in my plantings, they flowered in the greenhouse and outside the same week, and the outside blooms were better. An earlier planting in the greenhouse would probably be more profitable forcing-wise; I plan to try it early for the greenhouse and some later planting for season extension.

So begins the plan for next year. This year has actually been a good year, every year has good and bad, surprises and disappointments. A good plan prepares me for next year but still who knows what will happen, I look forward to whatever it is.

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Marketing the Power of Flowers to College Students

Heiner Lieth

College students could easily be a much bigger market for flower consumption. As a professor at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis), I have learned that most college students do not make any use of flowers. Even when a perfect occasion arises for using flowers, most students have no idea how to use them to make an impact. While there are students who do have an appreciation for flowers and how to use them, on our campus it is virtually impossible for them to obtain flowers. Even if they wanted to use cut flowers in some way, it is much easier for them to acquire balloons, chocolates, or greeting cards. Is it then surprising that when these students graduate from college,

many do not even think of using flowers when it comes to gift-giving or simply beautifying their own living space?

Much of my career at UC Davis has been devoted to teaching students how to grow ornamental plants in greenhouse and nursery production. In this capacity I deal only with a very small fraction of the UC Davis student population. Over the years, I have noted that even these students are excited when they have contact with flowers. Realizing that there was student interest, I designed a course, “Flower Power: The Application of the Art and Science of the Beauty and Perfection of Flowers,” with the intention to teach college students how to use flowers to their advantage. At the same

time, my plan was to expose students to the inner workings of international floriculture by showing them how flowers are grown domestically and in Europe, South America, and Asia. They would learn how the industry is driven more by the genetic traits that are important for growers, than ones that are important to consumers.

By going through the process of developing the course and then delivering it to college students, I have learned a number of things that the leaders and marketers of floriculture should know.

Flower Power – The College Course

I first offered the course as a “Freshman Seminar” at UC Davis. As such, it was intended for 15 students. However, the interest and demand was apparent at the first class meeting where 40 students had made their way into the classroom. In the years since the interest level has been so strong that the course has evolved into a regular offering in the course catalog with over 100 students enrolling each time it is offered. The enrollment is limited only by the number of seats in the room.

Amy Stewart’s book “Flower Confidential” is required reading over the course of the 10-week quarter. With each chapter of the book, I provide lectures, slides, and virtual field trips from my own experiences. The students are exposed to flower breeding, ornamental production – both domestic and abroad – and some issues related to the florist industry. I try to give the students an unbiased picture of the



global floriculture industry and markets. The students also learn how flowers and particular flower colors are used in society. Early in the course each student receives a flowering potted plant with the assignment to (1) “make some impact” and (2) write a short essay about the experience. I have had to add a third component: “Do not let the plant die,” because it turns out that this aspect is not obvious to many students. The flowering potted plants are generally grown by some of my student interns during the months before the course, from propagation material provided by plant companies. The statements of impact generated by the students generally include typical experiences but also a wide range of unexpected effects, some extremely joyous and exciting (one young man used the opportunity to endear himself to a potential mother-in-law, with a remarkably positive outcome). Some impacts have been very sobering, like a young Asian student who gave a white pot mum to her ailing mother to try to cheer her up – if you don’t know why that is a problem, then you obviously need to take the course.

Most recently, I included small workshops in the course in which the students were able to make their own flower arrangements for the first time in their lives. I hired a teaching assistant with flower-arranging experience (I myself am pretty inept at this art). I asked my friends Alan Mitchell at California Pajaro, Curtis and Janet Louie at Green Valley Floral, and orchid breeder Andy Easton whether they had any spare flowers we could use. They donated the very best flowers from their production with the result that all the students had a powerful experience in handling flowers and making arrangements.

What I Have Learned from the Students

The most important thing I have gained is that college students, in general, are very willing, even eager, to be consumers of flowers. I told the students that I would write this article to you and that they should tell me what I should write. Here is a sample of what the students want marketers to know:

1. We need flower vendors to be on campus. How are we supposed to use flowers if we cannot get them? Many of us are in dorms and it is a challenge to just get groceries back to the room. Why not sell through the campus stores? Why not set up flower vending machines?
2. We students are indeed subject to “impulse buying,” but NOT on the way to class – only on way back to the room or apartment. If there were affordable flowers available, they would sell.
3. We have some obvious financial limitations. Most students are experiencing financial pressures which make buying flowers for ourselves a low priority but we do still spend money; it just means we won’t buy expensive flowers for ourselves. However, we will still buy special things for others, particularly friends who might be in need of cheering up, and for this it is not ideal to just have the cheapest flowers. It needs to be something nice; something special.

4. In grocery stores near campus there are features designed specifically for students – use those to also market flowers. After all, it makes much more sense to put flowers by the chips and pizza than by the ripening fruits and vegetables. It also makes sense to have the flowers near those self-checkout counters, because students tend to like to use those. Maybe use those little refrigerators where stores currently just sell sodas.
5. Promote flowers on campus. Get flowers into campus events so they are more visible and in the hands of students.
6. Give us longer-lasting flowers – we want value and quality. Make sure there are always instructions with the flowers because most students have never had guidance on how to arrange and care for flowers.
7. Don’t get trapped in gender stereotypes. They do make for some obvious marketing opportunities (e.g. “How mad is she?”), but students are not so narrow and would respond to more diversified marketing. While male students rarely buy flowers for other male students, why not present the information that it is acceptable?
8. Why do flowers have to be “given” when it is just as important to simply have them in your environment? Dorms and apartments can be pretty dismal places, so some flowers would make a big positive difference.

My own perceptions on the subject include a few things the students did not tell me. It is my observation that they would be just as receptive to marketing about flowers as they are to the marketing for a variety of other things in daily life: shampoo, perfume, chocolates, clothes, cars, etc. Students are brand-conscious and would likely respond well to attempts to associate your flower products (your brand) with important traits such as love, forgiveness, and beauty. Note also that this clientele would appreciate it if they felt that you were paying particular attention to them, rather than to the population in general. You don’t have to be subtle.

Many of my students suffered (at least initially) from pretty absurd notions about the flower industry. I will only repeat one of these here: most students are absolutely sure that cut flowers only last two days. Therefore, they initially see investments in flowers as absurd squandering of money. At the end of the course, nearly all write about how the flower arrangements that they made (with fresh flowers direct from the grower) lasted two weeks longer than expected. Why is this a shock to these students?

It is my sense that the industry is totally failing the flower consumers of tomorrow. If you don’t market to them (i.e. teach them about flowers) while they are students, can you really expect them to be your customers when they are independent adults.

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The Sun is Our Income

Gay Smith

What insights did you capture in the whirlwind of summer 2012? I'm always jotting notes in a desperate attempt to capture ideas before they fall off my radar screen, considering that the tidal wave of information drifts by and disappears faster than dandelion parachutes floating in the breeze. Since my "notepads" include any writing surface at hand used to record quotes, inspirations and viewpoints for future use, my autumn goal is to develop a system to organize this cache of insights. Otherwise, those cool facts continue to float around my office or get trapped in travel bags and float away like, well, dandelion seeds.

A few impressions that stuck with me during my summer travels have inspired me to start zeroing in on attitude shifts concerning sustainability. In June, as part of a company meeting in Holland, I had the opportunity to visit Floriade 2012, the Dutch-sponsored horticultural exposition featured every 10 years. This year's theme underscored sustainability and recycling materials as a way of highlighting the program theme of "Cradle to Cradle" (C2C). Displays focused on

recycling materials in order to upgrade them (upcycling instead of downcycling).

Although some may feel the C2C goal is unrealistic, a utopian world vision at best, the Floriade marketing group grounded their goal by explaining that C2C is a "... theatre in which you learn about nature and from nature, which makes you realise that flowers, plants, trees, vegetables and fruits are important in our daily life..."

This eloquent statement got me wondering about the U.S. approach to raising public awareness of nature as theater. Have marketing efforts, focused on sustainability, positioned the concept as a new fad rather than a tenet of good citizenship? Somehow, I feel that many consumers perceived certification efforts and sustainable practices as a feel-good and are now ready to move on to the next big thing.

Has interest in recycling, reducing, upcycling and reusing stagnated in this country? While the Netherlands has slowly and steadily developed a platform of consumer awareness in the 25+ years I've been watching, other parts of the world now exhibit dramatic difference in food choices, packing

methods, and recycling awareness. Ideally, the US will adopt the slow and steady approach of the Netherlands in accepting sustainable activities as normal behaviors rather than localized interests of individual communities.

Before you start yelling at me, I know it's unfair to compare the effectiveness of changing consumer behaviors in a country of 311 million people to one with 16.7 million citizens. Regardless, Floriade sparked my interest to keep looking for positive signs that the sustainability mentality is more than a marketing fad in the States.

When the Audience is Willing to Listen

What other insights bloomed in summer 2012? Did you catch Judy Sharpton's article in the August 2012 *greenProfit* in which she discusses how our customers give us great feedback, if only we listen! She cites examples of mining the depth of information available from in-store surveys. In one survey, the reason customers, who bought in record numbers in April, didn't return the next month was because employees failed to greet them or make eye contact. An easily fixable

problem, yet the store's managers wouldn't listen (or believe) the survey results.

Ha. I know how frustrating it is when people embrace truthiness rather than facts grounded in research. A huge part of my job is providing training workshops for supermarket floral clerks, retail designers, big box merchandisers, and growers. Many times, I notice body language that indicates participants are rejecting my information, no matter that I back it up with research and real-life results. Nothing hones one's ability to separate naysayers from listeners like being on stage, trying to debunk crazy myths about flower care with fact-based information. My favorite urban legend this summer was an audience participant's insistence that nothing works better than Pam as a spray to reduce leaf dehydration. I suppose PAM shines leaves too, at least according to Honey Boo Boo, that is.

Sharpton continues to provide tidbits of information gleaned from garden center customer surveys over the past decade including: too much variety, confusing product information, and staff not knowing enough about the products they sell.

And although she is referring to plant material, the same holds true for cut flowers. Too many price points confuse customers who often use size or color as the discerning aspect of flower value. Training and signage goes a long way in remedying both issues. The curious consumer appreciates signage that gives insights on the product. Also, signage is a wonderful subtle weapon to engage interest without scaring away a potential client with a direct approach.

How can you use information from survey results to set yourself apart from the competition? Study after study shows that by far, the number one reason people don't buy flowers more often is because consumers don't think flowers are a good value because they don't last long. Although growers know that longevity is a balance of variables starting with variety selection and continuing through postharvest handling, your customers don't. Are you sharing the various efforts you employ to provide a beautiful product?

Thinking back to the late '70s when STS became the accepted treatment to counter the negative effects of ethylene damage, smart growers noted "STS Treated" on sleeves so customers (wholesale and retail buyers) would request (and pay more for) their brand over untreated bunches. Give information-hungry consumers reasons to buy your products.

Not sure what STS is? No worries, John Dole and I will share postharvest info at the Tacoma convention. I'll have plenty of free samples in the trade show, too. Of course, I can't complete an article without reminding readers that the 10 cent flower food packets

is a cheap insurance policy to ratchet up consumers' attitude of value—research shows flowers last more than 50% longer in commercial flower food vs. tap water. Longevity and value... surveys don't lie, yet I run into doubting Thomases at every turn.

Why is "Change" a Dirty Word?

A naysayer popped up during training sessions I recently presented to the floral departments of a large Las Vegas hotel chain. I was there because they wanted to reduce costs. Their blooms didn't last so they had to make complete product change-outs every 3 days, and it was expensive! As I made location audits, the problem soon became apparent. The hotel design companies treated everything in Las Vegas tap water (high total dissolved solids and pH.) After my presentations, I got the perfunctory "thank you's" from managers. They appreciated staff education about the "whys" behind different floral practices, yet sighed with resignation and explained that their designers would never change old habits regardless of training or cost-savings. As one designer told me when I asked if she filled containers with flower food, "My first manager didn't believe in that stuff so I never use it."

Longevity and value: simple concepts to embrace, but a difficult paradigm shift to maintain.

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Still Raising a Stink Over the BMSB

Stanton Gill

At a recent cut flower field day in Maryland, we asked growers if they had any problems with weeds and insects this season. One grower wryly commented that he did not have a problem—weeds and insects were both flourishing in his operation this year. We know that 33 states were in major drought conditions this season. Many plants shriveled up and died this summer, solving many weed and insect problems. This obviously is a rather surgically blunt method of taking out these pests.

Cut flower growers are eternally optimistic and will be back next year trying it again. Unfortunately, so will the bugs and weeds. I write this not to depress you but to make sure you are well prepared and equipped when they show up at their dinner table (a metaphor for your cut

too high. Dead standing trees appears to be an ideal overwintering site. So, if you have dead standing trees near your susceptible plants, drop them to the forest floor to cut down on overwintering sites.

The really great thing is that local parasitoids are starting to adapt to this invasive bug from China and trying it out as a food source. This year we were seeing 20-25% parasitism of BMSB egg masses from native wasp species. This is great news and reason for optimism.

I have spent time this late summer wandering about commercial cut flower growers' fields looking for BMSB on cut flowers. The good news is BMSB appear somewhat selective and prefer to feed on just a couple major cut flower species. David Dowling of Farmhouse Flowers and



I also found nymphs and adults feeding on the ray petals of cut sunflowers. The damage appeared as spots on the petals. The population was not nearly as high as what was found on the amaranth but the damage is more evident on sunflower.

Dahlias are also a host. Nymphs and adults were feeding on the flower heads and some were found on the foliage but none seemed to be actually feeding on the leaves.

Presently I am working with OESCO Company on the efficacy of a woven insect barrier. We installed it on the side and end walls of high tunnels and are observing whether it can exclude this pest from susceptible plant species. It is looking very promising to date.

We will continue to do our research and share the results with you as our knowledge base grows. Meanwhile, keep your chin up: this crazy season will pass and it will be brighter in 2013.

At a recent cut flower field day in Maryland, we asked growers if they had any problems with weeds and insects this season. One grower wryly commented that he did not have a problem—weeds and insects were both flourishing in his operation this year.

flower plots). Not being a weed guy I will talk about the bugs instead.

In past articles I wrote about the brown marmorated stink bug. This pest is still busy spreading across America and into Canada and establishing itself very nicely. Here in one of the six epicenter states (Maryland and 5 adjacent states) we are getting lots of experience with this pest and now understanding a lot about its life cycle and plant preferences.

The BMSB overwinter outdoors under the bark of dead trees. They do not like fallen trees since the moisture level is

Plants (and past President of the ASCFG) helped me focus on one particular plant—amaranth. He reported BMSB were all over the flowers. I observed nymphs and adult in mid-August and a large part of the population was on the flowers, on which they were feeding. I found nymphs and adults feeding on the foliage. The extent of damage was really not detectable. Amaranth appears to be a good trap plant for this pest and you might consider growing it just so you will know when they are active in your local area.

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Megan Bame

Short-day Treatments Under Long-day Conditions for 'Sunrich Orange' Sunflower

Helianthus annuus 'Sunrich Orange' is a quantitative short-day plant, like most ornamental sunflower cultivars. This means that while the sunflowers will flower under any photoperiod, flowering is accelerated under short-day conditions. Demand for sunflowers is highest from May to August, which are long days, resulting in increased production time, and longer and heavier stems than is considered optimal for cut flowers. This study evaluated flower quality after early application of short-day treatments while finishing the plants under long-day conditions.

Three stages of plant development were evaluated: cotyledon, two true leaves and four true leaves. Three durations of short-day treatment were evaluated for each of the plant stages—

one, two and three weeks. Short-day conditions (11.5 hour day-length) were created by automatically opening and closing photo-protective plastic film. Following short-day treatment, the plants were returned to long-day conditions until flowering and harvest. Control plants were grown only under long-day conditions.

In this experiment, the sunflowers were responsive to short-day treatments for as little as one week at the cotyledon stage, only 9 days after sowing. The accelerated flower bud initiation was demonstrated by the reduction in the numbers of leaves and nodes. Short-day treated plants for one week at the cotyledon stage flowered 23 days earlier than the control. Short-day treated plants for three weeks at the cotyledon stage

flowered 39 days earlier than the control. Accelerated growth (for all short-day treatments) also resulted in reduced stem length, weight, stem diameter and number of ray florets.

This study suggests short-day treatment for 2 weeks beginning at the cotyledon or two true leaves stage can promote earlier flowering of quantitative short-day sunflowers, like 'Sunrich Orange', without reducing quality.

Yanez, P., S. Chinone, R. Hirohata, H. Ohno, K. Ohkawa, 2012. Effects of time and duration of short-day treatments under long-day conditions on flowering of a quantitative short-day sunflower (Helianthus annuus L.) 'Sunrich Orange' Scientia Horticulturae 140, pp. 8-11.

Longer Vase Life with Lily with Hydrogen Peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide is known to be involved in plant response to various environmental stresses and is known to mediate plant growth and influences various developmental processes; however, there has been no suggestion of positive effects of hydrogen peroxide in cut flower senescence. This study reports the ability of hydrogen peroxide in the vase solution to extend the postharvest life and quality of cut Oriental x Trumpet hybrid lily 'Manissa', and looks more broadly at the effects of hydrogen

peroxide on flower senescence during the postharvest life of cut flowers.

Vase solution treatments included:

- 1) Various concentrations of hydrogen peroxide (0, 200, 400, 600, 800 and 1,200 μ M)
- 2) 6 μ M ascorbic acid (ASA)
- 3) 1 μ M diphenylene iodonium (DPI)
- 4) 600 μ M hydrogen peroxide + 6 μ M ASA
- 5) 600 μ M hydrogen peroxide + 1 μ M DPI
- 6) Control (distilled water)

Vase life was terminated when the flowers had no decorative value (color change, wilt, loss of turgidity). Leaf senescence, leaf relative water content, total chlorophyll content, flower opening rate and change in fresh weight were other parameters measured.

In this study, 600 μ M hydrogen peroxide vase solution resulted in maximum vase life and the maximum number of days taken for full flower opening (keeping quality). The highest levels of hydrogen peroxide treatments

resulted in decreased vase life. Physiologically, hydrogen peroxide treatments retarded the degradation of leaf water and chlorophyll as well as petal carbohydrate. Stems exhibited lower petal electrolyte leakage and fresh weight loss.

Liao, W., M. Zhang, G. Huang, J. Yu, 2012. Hydrogen peroxide in the vase solution increases vase life and keeping quality of cut Oriental x Trumpet hybrid lily 'Manissa', *Scientia Horticulturae* 139:pp. 32-38.

Light Quality and Flowering *Gypsophila paniculata*

Though incandescent lamps are most commonly used for supplemental lighting in plant growth, LEDs are expected to increase in use given their energy efficiency. LEDs emit a single color of light, such as red (R) or far-red (FR). Most supplemental lighting evaluations have evaluated a R:FR ratio, rather than assessing a single color. In this study, LEDs emitting R, FR and blue (B) were evaluated for their effect on flowering in *Gypsophila paniculata*.

Plants were grown under natural light from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and under LEDs, incandescent lamps (W), or no light (short-day conditions) with shading from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. The number of flowering or budding flower shoots per plant was evaluated, together with the number of nodes to the first flower per shoot. Cut flower quality factors were also assessed.

In this study, flowering and flower budding were promoted under FR light, while no flowering was observed under short-day conditions (no light). However, flower promotion with FR alone was considered insufficient in three independent trials (three separate seasons). Red light is known to inhibit flowering, but flowering and flower budding were promoted under long-day conditions of FR supplemented with R. A R:FR ratio between 0.23 and 0.71 promoted more flowering than FR alone. Gene expression is suspected to play a role in this observation. This study suggests that white LED bulbs and experimental LED modules rich in B and R should be carefully used due to their high R:FR ratios, as this study found a low R:FR ratio was effective in promoting flowering and producing high quality cut flowers of *G. paniculata*.

Nishidate, K., Y. Kanayama, M. Nishiyama, T. Yamamoto, Y. Hamaguchi, K. Kanahama, 2012. Far-red Light Supplemented with Weak Red Light Promotes Flowering of *Gypsophila paniculata*, *Journal of the Japanese Society of Horticultural Science*, 81(2):pp. 198-203.

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GROWER PROFILE

Betsy Webster, Mount Ulla Gardens

I've been writing grower profiles for *The Cut Flower Quarterly* for nearly eight years now, I believe. In looking through the ASCFG membership listing I knew that there was a grower in Mt. Ulla, a tiny, unincorporated town about 10 to 15 minutes from where I live in greater Salisbury, North Carolina. But we had never met and, despite the neighborly distance, I didn't know exactly where she was located.

A couple years ago I tried to reach this grower, Betsy Webster, but she was out of the country as my deadline loomed. This year, another deadline was fast approaching and I thought it might be easier to make a farm visit (most interviews take place on the phone or through email exchanges). I remembered Betsy, and after a phone message and a bounced email, we finally connected. What a pleasure it was to meet her and take the walking tour around her property on a late summer evening.

One of the first things Betsy showed me were two books, the Proceedings from the ASCFG Conferences in 1988 and 1989. She reminded me, "This was

before the Internet." She says she learned a lot by trial and error. She worked for a local florist and then a local greenhouse grower; she took Cooperative Extension Courses and communicated with Dr. Joe Love at N.C. State University; but ultimately she considers herself a "product of the ASCFG."

Betsy is a retired special education teacher. She and her husband have a 40-acre farm, and while they tried many money-making farm ventures, including raising llamas, sheep, boxwood and Japanese maples, it was cut flowers that worked for them. That being said, her husband, Don, isn't exactly a flower lover. He's supportive and he loves to do the tractor work, but he leaves all the sales to Betsy.

Her customers value the freshness of local flowers and the more unusual stems she shows up with.

As we walked around the farm in mid-September, Betsy pointed out the cutting landscape she's cultivated. From a boxwood-lined driveway to a windbreak of yellow-tipped Leyland cypress and a holly hedge serving as a screen from the adjacent railroad tracks, her cutting garden is her yard. Well, partly.

There is a bed of peony, a cluster of hydrangea, and this year's exciting find—a bed of red hot pokers, maybe five, 20-foot rows that have been blooming since May. The flower garden proper is the more expected long rows of sunflowers, zinnia, ageratum, gumphrena, lambs' ear and celosia. She uses millet and rye grain as a cover crop with the strategy that the seeds they drop will become her primary weeds, and a selective grass killer can be used for weed control.

Behind the cutting bed are a few rows of curly willow, viburnum, quince and eucalyptus. Betsy says that all together there are about two acres of annuals and 10 acres of woodies and perennials. She has a hoophouse for starting seedlings and a walk-in cooler for postharvest storage.

She has one seasonal part-time employee, who happens to be a retired florist. He helps with planting, picking and bunching. Together they used to do regular wedding work, but decided there was too much drama involved when she could more easily



Before PowerPoint made them obsolete, conference session transcripts were printed!



run a florist route. At peak, she visited around 15 local florists from Charlotte to Winston-Salem. Now, largely due to shops closing, her weekly runs hit only six to eight florists and she's home by noon, "because the delivery van starts to get hot." Her customers value the freshness of local flowers and the more unusual stems she shows up with. When the ASCFG declares a variety the next hot item, she wants to have it in the dirt the next year. This year she sold several large branches cut from mature crape myrtles to an event florist, who created a tree-lined aisle for a wedding, hanging dendrobium orchids from the branches.

Betsy doesn't do much marketing. In the past 20 years, her customers have become her friends and they know what to expect from her. In fact, from a local grower standpoint, she says there is very little competition. Last Christmas her husband gave her an iPad and she has put it to use for the business. She doesn't take preorders, but she does snap photos of what's blooming each week, and sends those pictures to her customers

so they can know what to expect. She says it's quick, easy, and something they really appreciate.

Mostly her season runs from March to October with some winter items, like the holly and boxwood clippings by the bagful. But she's not afraid to take time off, a luxury of retirement. She and her husband try to spend three months of the year in New Zealand, in a one-room house on the side of a mountain overlooking the sea. They've gone during the summer before. She says, "Florists are slow in the summer, anyways." The abundance of perennials also lends itself to their occasional extended absence. Betsy reflects, "I grow mostly woodies so when I am 80 I can go out, pick and sell for some extra money without much effort."



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Developing Hydrangea with Yellow Blooms by Chemical Manipulation

Henry D. Schreiber, Corinne M. Lariviere, and Ruthann P. Hodges

The bountiful, striking, and large blooms (inflorescences) of hydrangea make them high-value specialty cut flowers. The diversity of hydrangea cultivars provides a selection of bloom colors ranging from white to green, pink to blue, and varying shades of lavender to purple. However, none of the hydrangea cultivars possesses the necessary pigments in their blooms to generate yellow and orange colors. Extending the palette of available colors would correspondingly expand the appeal and market for cut hydrangea blooms.

The Underlying Chemistry of Hydrangea Sepal Coloration

The color of the sepals comprising a hydrangea bloom relies on the chemistry of two primary components—aluminum and anthocyanin. The default color of the anthocyanin (delphinidin-3-glucoside) is pink to red in the cellular environment of the individual sepals. This anthocyanin can also react with aluminum to form a blue entity. However, in order to react with the anthocyanin, the aluminum must first assimilate into the hydrangea. Aluminum compounds in the soil are

soluble, and thus available to the hydrangea, only under acidic conditions (low pH), but are not available under neutral to basic conditions (pH of 7 and above). Sepals of white blooms lack the anthocyanin pigment, and remain white regardless of the aluminum content.

As a result of understanding this underlying chemistry, hydrangea growers manipulate the color of blooms of certain cultivars from pink to blue, or vice versa. Thus, when hydrangeas are grown in neutral to basic soils, produced by adding lime to the soil, aluminum is not available to hydrangeas and their blooms remain pink to red. Upon addition of aluminum sulfate, the supply of aluminum increases and the soil pH is lowered. The aluminum then becomes mobile in the soil and incorporates into the hydrangeas. Consequently, the hydrangea blooms turn blue. Accordingly, the pink-or-blue color in hydrangea blooms is all about the aluminum content in the sepals (figure 1), which in turn is controlled by the availability of this aluminum to the hydrangea as a function of the soil pH.

Because aluminum is central to the bluing of hydrangea sepals, we first approached the development of unique colors by replacing the aluminum with other metals. We studied the reaction of the hydrangea pigment with common metals such as iron and tin as well as the uncommon like uranium and scandium under ideal “test tube” conditions. The result of the metal-anthocyanin reaction in these model systems was always bluing (figure 2), with molybdenum (as the molybdate ion) being almost as effective a bluing agent as aluminum with the anthocyanin. However, when we placed a cut stem of a hydrangea bloom into an aqueous molybdate solution, we surprisingly observed yellowing instead of the expected bluing.

Some of the properties of molybdenum within the hydrangea were similar to that of aluminum. Both metals need citric acid, or rather an aqueous solution of a citrate – citric acid buffer, to be assimilated into and transported throughout the hydrangea to get to the sepals in the bloom. In a sense, the citric acid detoxifies the metals, allowing the hydrangea to be one of the few plants to tolerate high concentrations of aluminum in the soil. In addition, the content of molybdenum in the sepals needed for yellowing is about the same amount of aluminum required for bluing. On the other hand, the red-



Figure 1. Cut blooms of *Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Endless Summer’. Regardless of bloom color (pink, lavender, purple, or blue), the concentration of anthocyanin in this cultivar is always about 0.01 wt% in a fresh sepal. However, the aluminum content controls the color as it systematically changes from 0 wt% in the pink to 0.004 wt% in the blue, with the lavenders to purples having intermediate concentrations.

blue coloration caused by the aluminum-anthocyanin reaction occurs in the upper surface of the hydrangea sepal, while more of the yellowing happens in the lower surface. We attribute this molybdenum-induced yellowing of the hydrangea sepals to be possibly due to the formation of yellow phosphomolybdates before the molybdenum even encounters the anthocyanin.

Producing a Hydrangea with Yellow Blooms

Because the molybdenum was not reacting with the anthocyanin in the sepals, we changed our approach to add molybdenum (as the molybdate ion) to hydrangea with white blooms. We have studied the delivery of the molybdenum to the white blooms through the soil and into the roots, by infusion in cut flower stems, and with spraying directly onto the blooms.

At too high a concentration, we determined that molybdenum directly mixed into soil or added as watering solutions became toxic to the hydrangea, and likely will be even more toxic to other plants. We are currently performing long-term studies of white-blooming hydrangea planted in soils with trace levels of molybdenum to see whether the hydrangea will adapt to this environment and produce yellow blooms. After all, aluminum sulfate or lime additions to the soil may take more than a growing season to produce the desired blue or red blooms in hydrangea (and too high a concentration of aluminum in the soil also becomes toxic to the hydrangea).

We have infused the molybdenum in a citric acid – citrate buffered solution through cut stems of white hydrangea blooms. Even very dilute solutions of molybdenum generate yellow blooms within a day of soaking the stem. This yellow color is permanent, as the molybdenum solution can be replaced by water after a day without any loss of color, and appears quite natural (figure 3). Higher concentrations of molybdenum in the solution and/or longer soak times yield a greater intensity of yellow, but unfortunately decrease the effective vase life and also brown the sepal edges. We are still optimizing the molybdenum concentration and soak time; that is, we are developing a protocol for cut flower processing to achieve both acceptable yellow blooms and an adequate vase life. A further complication is that, similar to some cultivars of red hydrangea being better at bluing with aluminum than other cultivars, certain white hydrangea cultivars appear to be better at yellowing with molybdenum than other cultivars.

Finally, we have sprayed a dilute molybdenum-containing solution once a day directly onto the white blooms of hydrangea with successful yellowing of the bloom (figure 4). The water-based spray is buffered to a pH of 6 with citric acid and sodium citrate, and includes a surfactant. Advantages of the spray include the localization of the molybdenum concentration onto the bloom with no effect on neighboring plants or even adjacent blooms, the development of a permanent yellow without any loss of color from rain, and essentially no waste. A disadvantage is that it takes



Figure 2. Cut blooms, initially pink, of *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Tovelit' infused with metal ion solutions (of pH 6 buffered by a citric acid – sodium citrate mixture) in water for two days. Stems were soaked in a molybdate solution (LEFT), control with just water (CENTER), and in an aluminum-containing solution (RIGHT).



Figure 3. Molybdate-induced yellowing of *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Regula' (TOP) and *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Incrediball' (BOTTOM) blooms by infusion of a molybdate solution through cut stems (RIGHT) compared to a control in water (LEFT) for two days.



almost a week of spraying to generate a sufficiently intense yellow color of the bloom. Once again, we are developing a protocol to define the molybdenum concentration in the spray and length of spraying to optimize the yellowing, before harvesting the bloom as a cut flower.

With an understanding of the chemistry of hydrangea coloration, albeit aided by serendipity in stumbling upon the effect of molybdenum on hydrangea sepals, we have now developed yellow blooms on hydrangea by chemical manipulation of their environment. Throughout the next growing season, we plan to ascertain the best delivery mechanism to produce yellow blooms (via cut stems or direct spraying), the best cultivars to accept the yellowing, and the protocol for optimization of the yellow color.

Henry Schreiber is a Professor of Chemistry at the Virginia Military Institute and operates BackCountry Research in Lexington, Virginia.

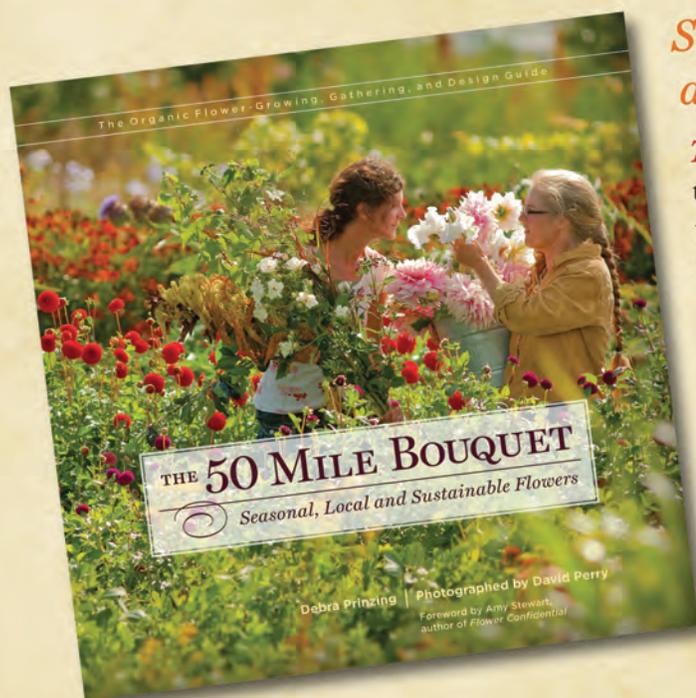
Contact him at HS@vmi.edu.

Corinne Lariviere and Ruthann Hodges are students at VMI and Roanoke College, respectively.



Figure 4. Blooms of *Hydrangea paniculata* ‘Incrediball’. Left bloom is control, while right bloom has been sprayed with a dilute solution of molybdate, citric acid-citrate, and cocowet@ once a day for five days.

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NORTHEAST

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“Efficiency is intelligent laziness.”

David Dunham

Here’s my simple goal for this column: To save you a \$1 per day. Let’s see... Saving one dollar each day would be about equivalent to paring off six minutes of inefficient work each day. That can’t be too hard to do! I hope this list of efficiency tips helps you save BIG (or at least helps to pare off a few inefficient minutes).

- Use a guillotine instead of pruners to chop your bouquets.
- Make your favorite reference books and your crop list required reading for your crew so they know the names of the flowers you are growing, at what stages to harvest flowers, and where and how to reference flower harvest stage and postharvest details when it begins blooming.
- Put everything on wheels. Processing tables, design tables, carts within your cooler—everything is more efficient if you can adjust it to your needs at a given time, and keep from carrying flowers bucket by bucket.
- Recognize who is faster at what. Unless you have told your workers that they will get to experience every aspect of every job on the farm, choose the faster pickers to pick, the faster strippers to strip, and the faster bouqueters to bouquet.
- Pick aggressively on the crops that end up getting away from you with deadheading or disease issues. Zinnias are a good example. We have a problem with being reluctant to harvest aggressively when they first start blooming, and yet, shortly after, we are trying to keep up with them and get the most out of them before disease gets the best of them. Ultimately, it would be better if we just went for those first gorgeous blooms.
- Give helpers only the buckets of flowers they need to work with for bouqueting. A lot of time can be spent roaming around

to various buckets when a limited selection can streamline the process and still yield fantastic results.

- Plan tomorrow before today ends.
- Make sure you don’t have hired paid workers doing low-pay work. Bucket washing, cleaning, and labeling are examples that are easily hired out to a young neighbor for many fewer dollars an hour!
- Fill buckets with only a few inches of water.
- Plant high-yielding fillers and foliage close to your design area for easy refills.
- Have a helper mimic your bouqueting, making the exact bouquet at the exact time as you are, or a smaller version of the same one you are making. This is a fantastic way for her to learn your style and how to handle the flowers, as well as increasing quality bouquets and color combos you know will sell.
- Have a running list of 10 Minute Projects for turnaround times where one person may be waiting on another to fill buckets or sharpen pruners.
- Don’t underestimate the resources around you. The ASCFG Forum, National Conference, Regional Meetings, Growers’ Schools, farm tours, etc. One little observation that you bring back for your operation can easily pay for your efforts to go to the Conference, and then some!
 - Cultivate often and aggressively. Weedless beds make for much faster picking.
 - Cut stems consistent lengths, so bunching doesn’t require recutting.
 - Direct sowing is much cheaper than starting from seed in the greenhouse and transplanting plugs. Of course, there are some crops for which plants are more successful, but get to know the crops that you can direct sow successfully and plant many successions so you can harvest aggressively and move on to the next vibrant succession.
- Plan on winter not coming, and plan on spring happening really early. Besides the fact that it strangely has been happening this way lately, you can get some easy harvests from ‘By Chance’ Sowings of sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos and other direct sows. And these fringe times tend not to have the same weed pressures.



Best of luck for a strong, profitable and happy finish to your 2012 season!

“Earn by your efficiency and your enthusiasm.”

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

MID-ATLANTIC

Becky Devlin

Roost Flowers & Design

beckydevlin@cox.net



This summer flew by even faster than usual with not one but 2 moves (we got to rent while we remodeled!), 4 kids home from school for the summer, 3 workshops at the farm (with 2 more coming up as I write this), many weekends with multiple weddings, a hot market season, and an ASCFG Regional Meeting at my farm. It's been

such a great adventure so far.

The 2012 ASCFG Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting this past June was an amazing experience. Over 70 growers were registered and it was a fun crowd on my tiny farm. We had great discussions on several topics—rather than the usual speakers—and all the growers generously shared ideas and information. We demonstrated how easy it is to build a small hoophouse with Johnny's new hoop bender and raffled off the one they donated. Barbara Lamborne was the lucky grower who went home with it and I'm sure she has great plans for it. We walked the field, much of which was still newly planted or recently tilled in. I showed off my favorite varieties of David Austin roses ('Scepter'd Isle' and 'Jude the Obscure' led the way, with 'Abraham Darby' close behind) and shared which were not the best (I still want to like the color of 'L.D. Braithwaite', but it just seems to go with nothing). My dahlias were just beginning to bloom and I was able to show a few of my favorite varieties, but just a little. So I thought I'd give an update here. By September 1st, I have ranked them as follows:

1. 'Papageno'—still my favorite for the second year in a row, with large, 5-7", peachy-terra cotta blooms with hints of lavender, and non-stop production.
2. 'Snowbound'—a close second, again with 6-7" blooms of pure white with frilly edges, and later but productive bloom. I'm taking cuttings now for the winter hoophouse.
3. 'Brushstrokes'—this variety surprised me. Swan Island Dahlias described it as "rose blooms of 5" in water lily form...of strong and sturdy substance". This all sounded good, but not amazing, blow-your-mind exciting. However, by end of summer, if I had to recommend only one dahlia for cut flower production, this would be it. By late August, plants were easily 5 1/2" feet tall, base branching for over 2' tall straight, thick stems and large purple/lilac flowers that are fully double with constant production that started early and never let up.
4. 'Neon Splendor'—I am not a huge fan of orange flowers or super bright colors in general, but I have to give this one props. One of the first to bloom, and no end in sight, the 3-4" blooms are a cool mixture of red-orange fading to yellow-orange in the center. A little shorter than



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I would like, but for first year tubers, every stem was usable. A winner for a market head-turner.

5. 'Uptown Girl'—I would grow more of this for the color alone. Described as "rust-orange with pink undertones" on Swan Island's website, but more of a deep rose with coral-orange accents for me. Like a few others, this one started early and is still going strong in September with great long, strong stems.

6. 'Myrtle's Folly'—I was so excited about this one with its frilly blooms in a wild blend of pink, salmon, lilac, purple, coral, mauve and peach! When it first bloomed, the flowers were even cooler than I expected. More frilly and more colorful with lots of the raspberry pink that is my favorite these days. However, my patience is regularly tested by this one that drags out the days between new blooms. Still, the healthy plants and head-turning flowers would make it worth the wait as a market flower.

7. 'Excentric'—unbeatable color and shape, but not the strongest production for a mid-sized bloom. Hopefully second-year plants will be a little taller and more productive.

8. 'Raspberry Punch' and 'Jennifer's Wedding'—I am lumping these two together as they were similar in many ways for me. Many purple blooms on both (not raspberry) with good size and shape. Nothing wowed me, but I would still recommend them as cut flowers for market or wholesale.

9. 'Fatima'—a tiny little bloom of about 2" with great, bright pink color and tons of blooms. If I liked the smaller flowers, I might grow more of this one for its high production levels.

Although, I have to say: it looks like a mum, so I think I'd opt for a mum instead with less bug pressure and a better vase life!

10. 'Gabrielle Marie', 'Sonic Bloom', and 'Miss Delilah'—this group all had beautiful blooms with great colors, but all were short plants or short stems. Big hopes for 2013 as they all were listed as four-foot plants and stayed around 24" this year. 'Miss Delilah' never reached over 15" and will be moved to a garden bed next year if it stays so short.

11. 'Linna'—a great yellow with touches of orange, and nice and tall. This one almost stopped blooming in the dead of summer, though.

12. 'Sugar Lips'—this one was an impulse buy, thrown on to my order at the last minute. Its whimsical blooms feature pink and white cactus flowers that were smaller than advertised (2-3" vs. 5") for me, but still really cool. The stems, however, were very thin and needed extra support (which incidentally, I did not provide). Needless to say, this one is a tangled mess at the start of fall.

13. 'Voodoo'—As of the Regional Meeting in June, these had just started blooming and I LOVED the almost black, perfectly formed blooms. However, they bloomed until mid July and stopped. I am really hoping they will make a fall appearance. Everything else about this variety was perfect.

As always, fall is one of my busiest times of year with weddings, fall planting and big planning sessions for the next year. I hope you all have had a successful and fun 2012 and are looking forward to new and exciting things for a new season.



'Voodoo'



'Brushstrokes'



'Neon Splendor'

SOUTHEAST

Charles Hendrick

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We are on the downside of the hottest growing season on record, and a season noteworthy for the weirdest weather. The summer was nothing but drought, but now I have 2 rows of sunnies that are probably drowned because of constant rain! I've never had that happen in all my years of

growing. Sales have been steady for us this summer, and although the economy continues to be tight for many florists, weddings, it seems, will always go on, no matter how bad the economy. We were recently contacted by a young lady in the upper part of our state looking for flowers for her upcoming wedding. When we found out we were over 200 miles apart, it was a pleasure to refer her to a farm close to her: fellow growers Mike and Katie Gear at Lady Luck Flower Farm in Ashville, North Carolina. Mike and Katie have a very cute website. Check it out at www.ladyluckflowerfarm.com

Speaking of web sites, we are in the process of having one developed for us, which was a trade for services deal. Patty is doing the flower arrangements for the wedding of one of her best friend's daughter. The groom designs web sites for a living, so in exchange for her arranging help, he is setting up a page for us. We are excited, and will share more about that as it develops.

If anyone wants a logo for their farm, an inexpensive way to get one is to seek out the graphic design department at your local high school or vocational school. Having a student or students come up with a design for you is good experience for the student, and will look good on their resumé. Patty worked in a high school last year, and did that very thing. One of the students in the graphic design class came up with this logo for us, and in exchange, we gave her a gift certificate. We were all happy.

Anybody looking for a great stocking stuffer (it's never too early to think Christmas) for your favorite farmer? Grower Ella King of King's Country Gardens in Owensboro, Kentucky, recommends the "frogg togg" cooling towel for use in triple digit heat. Go to their website <http://www.froggtoggs.com> where the towel is described this way: "Made from a hyper-evaporative material that retains water while remaining dry to the touch, The Chilly Pad® is an innovative way to cool down while enduring



outdoor heat and/or high levels of physical activity. When wet, the towel begins to evaporate and cool, providing cool, soft comfort to the user. When it stops cooling, simply re-wet the towel in hot or cold water and wring it out. Within minutes, it's cool again."

We are finalizing the speaker schedule for the March 18, 2013 "Mega Mini" meeting at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Please make plans to attend, because the lineup is going to be awesome. Speakers include Dr. John Dole and Dr. Joe Neal of NC State, as well as John's graduate students. Topics will include everything from "new cuts" to "diagnosing plant problems" to "weed management in field-grown cut flowers". Lisa Zeigler, a member from Newport News, Virginia (The Gardener's Workshop) will share how using equipment such as

a bed maker, and timing, and planning tools have increased production and decreased chores on her small city farm. She will show a video of her bed maker in action laying biodegradable mulch film. Also speaking will be our friend, Raleigh floral designer Pat Murray. Pat has done design work all over the country, having served on design teams for the North Carolina Governor's Mansion and at the inauguration of President George Bush. She has decades of extensive design experience. She even made the bouquet for Susan Sarandon's daughter, which was recently published on the cover of People magazine. Pat will be demonstrating the basics of making bouquets and boutonnières for wedding work for those interested in learning a bit about the design side of things.

Please make plans to attend this jam-packed day of sessions sure to teach us all something to take back to the farm!

MIDWEST

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Some of my thoughts during this summer season.

First thing that comes to mind was the heat, yes can I say “HEAT”!

Central Illinois had its warmest July and August on record. I’m sure our heat was the same as your heat in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Indiana and Ohio. Don’t want to leave anyone out, so “most of the United States”.

And with the heat came the drought. Like most areas the rain came few and far between any normal amounts. In our area it just seemed to not reach us. Two miles away they would get a half inch, 30 miles away may have gotten one inch. As of the end of August our area was 17” below normal average. We had one measurable rain in August – a quarter inch. July and August storms would roll through and drop only enough to get your back wet. This past Labor Day when the tail end of Isaac reached us, the weathermen were predicting 5-8 inches for central Illinois; we got a total of 2½” over the weekend.

My neighbors who are all corn and soybeans farmers have been harvesting the corn for the past few weeks. The weather has taken its toll on conventional farmers as well as us cut flower farmers. Almost everyone is collecting insurance on their corn crops this season. The beans fields don’t look much better. They didn’t get the moisture when need in pod (bean) formation. As I travel the country roads the bean fields are getting large yellow patches in their sea of green. It is getting to be that time of year when combines and large machinery clogs our country roads.

As I walk in our “Back 40” where most of our woodies are, I’m noticing on the red curly and fantail willow that

the inner leaves are starting to yellow up and thin out a bit. Oh, the stick season is closer than we think. Been cutting a few bundles of flame willow to try at our farmers’ market the last few weeks and the response has been good. Broomcorn has also been moving well. In a few weeks we will be adding more willows, dried wreaths, ornamental peppers and bittersweet. Have your customers already been asking for bittersweet? Our web site has generated several requests the last few weeks, on top of our local sales. We will start our bittersweet harvest later this week. Just walking the rows and eyeballing them, it looks like the total bunches will be down from last season. Maybe weather related.

With the summer to fall transition we have had some winners and losers this season.

Winners:

- Sunflower—best year, we are really moving them this year. Sales to wholesalers, retail florists and farmers market all up. We read about and see other farmers using succession plantings and if you have not planted your sunflower program that way, you are missing out. We planted every 2-3 weeks 10 (210) trays of suns and are doing our last planting in the field the second week in September. Gambling on the frost time. Our largest order of sunflowers for a single event was 600 stems, plus 100 mini suns for a Chicago wedding. You can make money on sunflowers!
- Zinnia
- Celosia
- Lilies
- Matsumoto asters
- Ornamental peppers

Losers:

- Ageratum—just didn’t get the height and volume as in years past
- Bittersweet—low berry/pod volume
- Ornamental peppers—should have grown more
- Lisianthus—need to work on this for better field production
- Millets/grasses—some worked, some did not. ‘Dallas Blues’ came through on the positive side.

We tried something new this year with our red curly willow. We sell in three grades: tips, medium and tall. Normally our harvest starts with the onset of frost and is completed by the end of February. This past winter I decided to leave a row uncut. In June the uncut row was pruned back and because of that, the regrowth has all been medium grade, four to five feet tall, compared to the plants that we pruned in winter, which gave us 8-10 feet of regrowth. Of those we get the tall grade with tips and medium grades in the cleaning or processing. These are more (labor) money in harvest. The one with that June prune harvesting and grading will be less time and more (medium grade) per plant than the tall plants.

The medium grade is our top seller, followed by the tip and tall grades. We also offer 12-24” green curly willow stems. They are sold to wholesalers, commercial accounts, and event planners. Finding new ways to make more money per woody row is what we are working on for this winter.

Hope you are considering going to Tacoma in November for the National Conference and Trade Show. It has shaped up to become one of our more informative conferences in a while. Hope to see and meet many of you there. Emails and phone calls are not the same as face-to-face chats.

Are you using the ASCFG Community Network? If not, please check it out and sign on. If you can do Facebook, you can do the Community Network.

For the last couple weeks we have been getting seed and plug catalogs in the mail. Must mean fall is here or on the way for some of us. Hope you have your fall and winter sales forecast and items lined up for your customers. Not to get political (recession, downturn economy, election) with your customers they do have money to spend on flowers. It is finding what they want and you giving your best product you can grow for them. Look for new doors and paths to go down to find what is out there. Old dogs can be taught new ideas: at least I’m learning new ones. See you in Tacoma, peace out!

SOUTH-CENTRAL

Rita Anders

Cuts of Color

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The last week of August is upon us as I write my quarterly update. Some mornings fall is in the air and after a long hot busy summer, and I'm ready to walk out and feel a brisk wind from the north. But not yet, there is so much to grow and harvest. Our season can go till Thanksgiving if we don't get a hard freeze and that's what I always hope for.

Our part of Texas was blessed with timely rains and not too harsh of temperatures, which allowed for plentiful harvest. From what I heard at the Regional Meeting, growers in Oklahoma and other parts of Texas were not so lucky. Nancy Bartlett hosted the meeting in early August and her area was receiving too much rain. We got to tour her beautiful farm but unfortunately the fields were too wet for her to make many summer plantings. Things didn't get any better for her with Hurricane Isaac coming right toward her and dumping tons more of rain, wiping out any plants that were there. Nancy has a very good attitude and just says she will plant again. I hope all the growers come through the storm okay and Mother Nature is nice to them.

Many folks gathered for the Regional Meeting, exchanged information on flower growing, and enjoyed listening to several speakers. I believe that no one left without learning a lot and taking some bits of helpful hints to use on their own farms.

One grower said she directs seeds her sunflowers by poking a hole in the ground with a solid dowel type rod and then uses a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " PVC pipe , 3 to 4' long and places it over the holes and drops the seed in and doesn't have to bend over to place the seed.

Nancy had an interesting setup with her brood of chickens. She had some of the prettiest chickens from which she will harvest eggs to sell at the farmers' market but the chickens worked to make her compost. She put down straw and the chickens turned the straw into compost which she will take out of the pen and use on her beds.

Fred C. Gloeckner reps Jerry Meyer and Joel Kemper were in attendance and told us all about the 'Vincent' sunflowers. These are upward facing, which could really be nice in bouquets and they have two rows of petals which help if you have any petal drop, your flower still looks full. This could be a promising variety.

Allen Owings of LSU gave a very informative talk on seed germination and stated that a germination mix should be used when starting seedlings. Also 50 ppm of nitrogen in the seedling stage should be used twice a week until they have a set of true leaves. I also thought it was interesting that he stated you should use the right nozzle when watering your seeding trays in order to not disturb the tiny seeds in their germination process. Dr. Owings stressed the need to have your well water tested because the water does change and we should test it the same time each year. Nancy uses bat guano in her seedling mix to help with root formation.

When we go to these meetings, you get to put a face to the members who post on the ASCFG Community Network and

Bulletin Board. One interesting grower I met at this year's meeting was Tanis Clifton from Mississippi. The name of her farm is Happy Trails Flower Farm and she has a page on Facebook if you want to check her out. She grew a lot of beautiful lilies and several other flowers the past two years, and has a beautiful clean greenhouse with no weeds. I was really impressed by her energetic flower growing and know she will do great.

Fall is a great time to get old beds cleaned out and new ones planted. This morning as we headed out to start cleaning beds I was informed by my husband that they make this tool to pull rebar and steel posts out of your beds instead of struggling to get them up when you need to take them out to redo the beds. This lovely tool is so easy to use and sure saves your back. He has had this tool for quite some time but it wasn't until I asked him to pull out a bed of zinnias this Labor Day that he pulled it out. It can be purchased wherever you buy your steel posts. We plant our zinnias in 100 foot rows and when it's time to take them out, he takes the tractor with forks on the front and just scoops up the zinnias and puts them on the burn pile. Sure makes my life a lot easier and it works so fast.

Our National Conference is just around the corner and I hope you have all checked out the information, made your reservations and hope to see you in Tacoma for the awesome program, tours and cool air.

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NORTHWEST

Diane Szukovathy

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My father was a Hungarian immigrant. He came from people who valued education, was a hard worker and had a bizarre sense of fashion

which he had picked up from watching Hollywood westerns in Budapest as a child. He was a skinny guy with a gloriously large nose upon which he perched the biggest, darkest dime store sunglasses available—the kind that are 2” tall with peripheral vision panels on the sides. In the summer he never went anywhere without his straw cowboy hat, shades and a carefully selected bolo tie. In winter it was felt hats, cravats, neckerchiefs, scarves and overcoats galore. He was known far and wide as a colorful character in the rural eastern Washington county where I grew up.

He died a few years back and I think about him almost every day, and about how he taught me to take risks.

On September 11, 2001, my parents were staying over at our farm when the first announcements of the horrible plane crashes in NYC and Washington D.C. came through. On that day, he told us a story about how he had lived for several years as a teenager in Vienna with false papers, hiding out from the Nazis, certain that he would die young and how he didn't brush his teeth because he knew he wasn't going to need them for long. As a consequence, he had suffered with bad teeth all his life and his words to us were (you'll have to imagine the accent), "Be careful, you just might survive."

I feel like this past decade has gone by in a blur. Dennis and I had just bought our farm when that particular piece of advice was dispensed. We knew we wanted to take good care of the land we had sold our souls to the bank for, but we didn't know much beyond that.

Somewhere early on, I read a Wendell Berry essay, *Conservationist and Agrarian*, which eloquently stated that in order to have responsible ecological stewardship, there must be a stable human economy attached to the land.

We weren't that young, but we weren't dead yet either. I determined that hell, high water and whatever else might come, we would make a living sustainably growing something on our little seven-acre postage stamp of ground. Dennis went along. We planted a great big garden, tons of fruit trees and woody ornamentals, decided we needed more beauty in the mix and started growing flowers, discovered

the ASCFG, attended a few Regional Meetings, then a conference and year by year we landscaped in the city a little less and sold a few more flowers. We bought a tractor, built a barn and put in a well. Very slowly and often painfully through those years, our land—the wildness, the chaos, the workload, the sheer sheer volume of life and death—shaped us into being farmers.

A few years ago, it became apparent that we could not expand our farm to a level that would make us a living without figuring out a smarter, better and quicker way to sell what we worked so hard to grow. Farmers' markets weren't cutting it and driving a bucket truck to various

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florists around the city was not efficient. The big box wholesalers weren't buying what we wanted to sell and as a small business, we didn't want to have one or two large-scale customers controlling our livelihood anyway.

Through the ASCFG we started to connect with other farmers in our area and realized most of us shared the same common problems and therefore shared solutions might be of benefit.

And so began the real risks—and rewards. Thought and action often merge in my world. Start a cooperative with all your competition, why not? Done! Right now our market is two years old. I won't deny it's been a ton of hard work, facing of fears and opportunities for spiritual growth... but it turns out we had a good idea and nobody would have been the wiser if we didn't try it.

Because of efficiency of distribution and better served customers, many of us are benefiting. Together, we are creating jobs, expanding our farms and turning the tables on industry trends. We recently learned that our proposal to the USDA for a \$138,000 multi-state specialty crop block grant has been accepted. These funds will help us collectively build a program to access grocery and chain store markets. This means we will be moving a whole lot more local product, bringing in more growers to our cooperative and encouraging sustainable growing practices.

For the first time I can clearly see a path to my own personal goal of making a sustainable living doing what I love.

None of this would have been possible without the ASCFG and the deep and abiding friendships and spirit of sharing that exist within the organization. As my three-year term comes to an end I want to thank you for the privilege of electing me to serve as your Regional Director. And if you see me wearing a bolo tie at the National Conference in Tacoma this fall, you'll know why. Thanks, dad.

WEST

Christof Bernau

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Way out west it was a much warmer summer than the last couple of years and despite the persistence of our June Gloom coastal fog all the way through August, it was a good season for flowers. At the UCSC Farm and Garden, we have had very good quality production of some standards such as the Rocket, Chantilly, and Opus snapdragons. *Euphorbia*, bupleurum, *Salvia farinacea*, stock and marigolds have all been steady, sturdy and disease free. Constant experimentation with varieties, planting density, fertility inputs, irrigation delivery and placement across our various microclimates continues to bear results in terms of improving crop quality, consistency and abundance. The beauty of this is that there is always more to learn, new methods to experiment with and new varieties to trial in an effort to discover what grows best and what you are best able to market to your audience.

This season, we have been getting rave reviews from our customers on some of the simple and easy to grow grasses we have in rotation. 'Utrecht Blue' wheat, with its long, stout stems, and lengthy, dark awns contrasting with its light blue seedheads has been a crowd favorite. Easy to harvest, long standing in the field and relatively easy to blend into mixed bouquets, we will definitely be saving as much of our own seed as possible to grow more successions next year. Similarly, the standard 'Silver Tip' and 'Black Tip' wheats have been very reliable, fairly drought tolerant and

disease free even as nearby wheats and barleys grown for grain are succumbing to rust. Earlier in the season, we also grew a couple of nice successions of 'Red Jewel' millet, with the hope of finding a cheaper alternative to the hybrid 'Purple Majesty' millet. 'Red Jewel' is by no means a substitute, but it has proven to be easy to grow, incredibly abundant, quick to harvest and strip, and it provides a nice dark color contrast to the brighter zinnias, snaps and dahlias which it often accompanies. As for the 'Purple Majesty', we will likely continue to save and grow out seed from previously purchased F1 hybrids. As in the past, we see some inconsistency in the F2 and F3 generations, but not enough to warrant spending too much money on this remarkably expensive seed. Our F2 and F3 generations of 'Purple Majesty' are slightly more variable in the size and depth of color in the flower heads, and they are somewhat erratic in their cropping time, but the crop quality from our own saved seed. Apologies in advance to the breeders and seed companies that sell this beautiful millet.

As an update to our previous woes with dahlia mosaic virus, our new crop of just-purchased tubers is producing crazy quantities of flowers, despite the fact

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'Henry Eilers

that we planted only two to three tubers per hole. Most plants look incredibly healthy and are sure winners, but even among our new planting stock, there is evidence of some DMV. I have stopped harvesting the couple of seemingly infected plants, have sent tissue samples to our local cooperative extension pathology lab, and am hoping that what I am seeing is just some random abiotic disorder that will magically disappear. Wishful thinking, I know, but it is hard to dig up and discard plants you just paid perfectly good money for. On the other hand, sacrificing a few plants now for the good of the entire 600 row feet is really the wisest long-term move.

Of our dahlias, customers and friends have commented most on two varieties that I really love, 'Maarn' and 'Patricia Ann's Sunset'. 'Maarn' is a very attractive, dusky orange decorative type flower, with good productivity and stem length, five to seven days of vase life and a bright personality that will enliven just about any summer bouquet. 'Patricia Ann's Sunset' produces an abundance of very refined, red-orange, water lily type flowers on long, slender stems. They blend fluidly with the bold colors of summer, but also have such a refined appearance that they stand alone quite beautifully, encouraging flower lovers to pause, look closely and to wonder how such stunning color can come from a crop so easy to grow.

Finally, I want to put in a plug for *Rudbeckia* 'Henry Eilers.' We have been growing this plant since first seeing it on the Terra Nova tour at the 2008 ASCFG National Conference in Portland. While I realize that some growers think it is over-rated or else too understated, we have found that it has a very delicate, subtle and architectural presence in mixed bouquets that always attracts customers' attention, not to mention that it has a two-plus week vase life that our customers consistently thank us for. In addition, 'Henry Eilers' has thrived in the same location where I have lost hundreds of eryngiums and all of my *Echinacea purpurea* cultivars from the ASCFG Perennial

Trials to the dreaded western pocket gopher. Go figure: sweet roots, in the ground year round and unprotected, but not a plant lost to the voracious and unforgiving gophers.

Last but not least, I want to highlight what I am hoping is a revitalization, of sorts, of the 'bucket shop' style of setup and marketing at our area farmers' markets. The ladies from Everett Family Farm: Zoe, Kara, Sky and Molly, are growing an incredible array of flowers, displaying them beautifully at market, and attracting hordes of attention as they compose made-to-order bouquets in the midst of busy market mornings. Customers are lining up for their beautiful flowers, their grace and style under pressure and the stunning arrangements they produce while working in front of a crowd. Perhaps I have been missing out on what is going on elsewhere in the country, but the bucket shop display and live theatre of made-to-order bouquets seems to have been somewhat of a dying art form in these parts. However, the ladies of Everett Family Farm in Soquel, California, are generating tremendous interest with their gorgeous flowers, elegant presentation, and the drama of seeing art in the making. Perhaps this is just the sort of attention getting that local flowers need to thrive alongside the abundance of bright, nutritious, and delicious vegetable and fruits also sold at farmers' markets.


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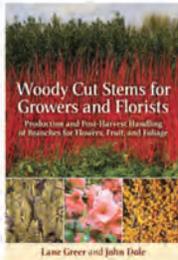


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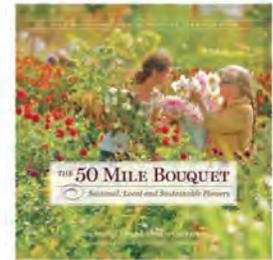
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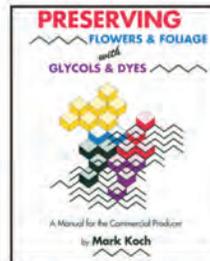
The Flower Farmer
by Lynn Byczynski

- \$30 Member
- \$35 Non-member
- \$ 7 S&H



Garden Bouquets
and Beyond
by Suzy Bales

- \$30 Member
- \$35 Non-member
- \$ 7 S&H



Preserving Flowers
& Foliages
by Mark Koch

- \$77 Member
- \$85 Non-member
- \$ 10 S&H



Herbaceous
Perennial
Plants
by Allan M. Armitage

- \$60 Member
- \$70 Non-member
softbound
- \$80 Member
- \$85 Non-member
hardbound
- \$ 10 S&H

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____ Website _____

\$ _____ + _____ S&H = _____ TOTAL DUE

Check enclosed Bill my: Visa Mastercard

Card # _____ Exp. _____ Name on card _____

The ASCFG Welcomes its Newest Members

Nancy and Haley Abramson

Rooster Ridge Farm, Aptos, CA

Laura Bigbee-Fott

Whites Creek, TN

Emily and Sam Calhoun

Floriography, Mesilla Park, NM

Daniel Campos

Camflor, Watsonville, CA

Shawn Campbell,

Petal Pusher Gardens, Green Bay, WI

Holly and Evan Chapple

Holly Heider Chapple Flowers, Leesburg, VA

Marlene Ann Epley

Flower Essence, Williamston, MI

Rebecca Fox-Kragstad and Sam Kragstad

Talk to Me Peonies, Anchorage, AK

Janine Grothe

Two Bee Garden Farm, Lakeport, CA

Chalow Kearney

Wooster, OH

Jeff Klingel

Appleseed Nurseries, Inc., Eastville, VA

Hillane Lambert

Cherokee, NC

Tara Kolla

Silver Lake Farms, Los Angeles, CA

Joy Parker Lee

Davis, CA

Betsy Levy

Olympia, WA

Theda Little

Baton Rouge, LA

Linda Matousch-Rau and David Rau

Sunset Flower Farm, Belleplain, NJ

Jeanne Motichek

Pomona Hill Farm, Covington, LA

Allen Owings

LSU AgCenter, Hammond, LA

Melissa and David Palmer

Florum Flower Farm, Titusville, NJ

Kristin Perry

The Kitchen Potager, Ottsville, PA

Lee Chin Phmah

Oakland Flower Market, Oakland, CA

Shirley Randon

White Oaks Farm, Metairie, LA

Marc Sowell,

Charlotte, NC

Denise and Richard Taft

Freyburg Flower Farm, Schulenberg, TX

Raymond Van Essendelft

Dual Venture Farm, Inc., Pantego, NC

Bess Wyrick

Celadon & Celery Events, New York, NY



Upswing in Autumn Nuptials

Although June still leads as the most popular month to get married, with 17.1 percent of couples tying the knot during that month, the autumn months follow closely behind. Nearly one-third of marriages occur in September (16.7 percent) and October (14.8 percent) combined, according to **The Wedding Report, Inc.**

Month	% of Weddings	Total Weddings
January	0.4%	8,943
February	0.9%	19,022
March	2.9%	59,833
April	5.7%	117,820
May	11.2%	229,253
June	17.1%	350,054
July	10.6%	216,619
August	12.2%	249,268
September	16.7%	343,027
October	14.8%	303,068
November	4.2%	86,662
December	3.2%	66,434

Source: The Wedding Report, Inc.; www.weddingreport.com

Flowers Without Borders

IN AUGUST, THE ASCFG MEMBERSHIP VOTED TO CHANGE THE ALIGNMENT OF ITS NORTH AMERICAN REGIONS. SECTION 5 OF ARTICLE IV NOW READS:

THE MEMBERSHIP SHALL BE DIVIDED INTO GEOGRAPHICAL UNITS CALLED REGIONS, AS FOLLOWS.

NORTHEAST:

CONNECTICUT, MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW YORK, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT, ONTARIO, QUEBEC, AND THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

MID-ATLANTIC:

DELAWARE, MARYLAND, NEW JERSEY, PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA, AND WEST VIRGINIA.

SOUTHEAST:

ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA AND TENNESSEE.

NORTH AND CENTRAL:

IOWA, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, KANSAS, MANITOBA, MICHIGAN, MINNESOTA, MISSOURI, MONTANA, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA, OHIO, SASKATCHEWAN, SOUTH DAKOTA, WISCONSIN, WYOMING.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL:

ARIZONA, ARKANSAS, COLORADO, LOUISIANA, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS, UTAH.

WEST AND NORTHWEST:

ALASKA, ALBERTA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CALIFORNIA, HAWAII, IDAHO, NEVADA, OREGON, WASHINGTON.



Sneak Peek at Next Year's Meetings

March 4-5

“On the Farm”

Texas Specialty Cut Flowers
Wimberly, Texas

Frank and Pamela Arnosky welcome the ASCFG back to their Hill Country Farm for tours and demonstrations.

March 17-18

“Knowledge is Flower Power”

J.C. Raulston
Arboretum – NCSU
Raleigh, North Carolina

Researchers and growers share the latest in new cut flower varieties, diagnostics, postharvest considerations, and farm procedures.

October 7-8

“From Seed to Sale”

Secret Arboretum - OSU
Wooster, Ohio

It's all about the plants! Growers will explain their production and marketing systems for a wide variety of cut flower crops

To Be Determined

“Strictly Business”

Record-keeping, employee management, logistics, taxes, expansion, market analysis.

FROM the DIRECTOR

Judy Laushman

“Planning” is a common theme throughout this issue of the *Quarterly*, and likely in many growers’ periodicals this time of year.

President Polly Hutchison suggests a thorough examination of your record-keeping. Northeast Regional Director Missy Bahret outlines several time- and money-saving steps. Bob Wollam fills us in on the status of his long-time quest to continue the line of Temptress poppies, and how he hopes to proceed with the project.

Of course, sometimes those plans are affected by unforeseen conditions like weather or economics. Cut flowers are resilient, and no matter how they’re thrown for a loss, like Cleveland Browns fans, they know next year will be more successful than this.

Here at the non-farm ASCFG office, we’re always looking ahead as well.

The National Conference and Trade Show is the organization’s most important event. Besides the valuable speaker sessions and tours, it provides important face-to-face networking for members who otherwise have met only through online communications. Growers come to learn from each other, and seem to have a lot of fun doing it. Many attendees tell us this is the highlight of their year.

However, sometimes it’s hard for a grower to leave her farm for four days. Family priorities often outweigh conference registration. Hotels are not getting any cheaper; neither is air travel.

Next year the ASCFG will be 25 years old, and we thought it was time to try something a little different to celebrate that anniversary.

Instead of one large central conference in 2013, we’re hosting several shorter events. The goal is to provide more meeting options, shorten your time away from your business and family, and decrease your travel and lodging costs.

The planning for these gatherings began earlier this year, and I am grateful to and impressed by those who have been so proactive and communicative during this process. Details for all meetings are not yet confirmed, but you can see the preliminary schedule on page 33. We hope to add one more in the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic area.

This experiment will let us know whether these kinds of meetings are preferable to what “we’ve always done”. As with all trials, we need your participation. Maybe you can make it to one spring meeting and one fall meeting. Maybe you can attend all of them. Perhaps you’re so accustomed to the one large national conference you don’t want to try something new – maybe you use the meeting as a vacation. This is what we’ll find out.

More information on the events will be provided as they develop. We hope you’ll join us to mark our 25th year together.

The beauty still
begins right here.




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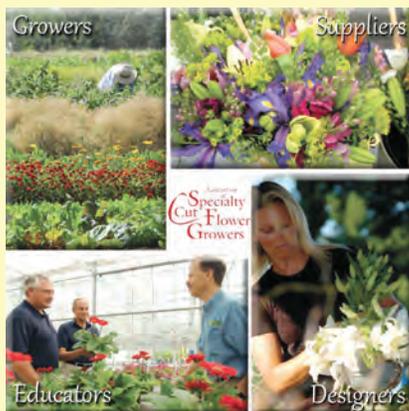
Association of Specialty
Cut Flower Growers
M.P.O. Box 268
Oberlin, Ohio 44074

Are you maximizing your ASCFG experience?

Top 5 Member Services

1 *The Cut Flower Quarterly* is the only national periodical dedicated to informing growers about the production, postharvest care, and marketing of cut flowers. The Winter issue is filled with color photos and descriptions of the year's upcoming new varieties. It is also home to the highly-anticipated ASCFG National Trials results, including seed and perennial plant trials. Regular content covers integrated pest management, research updates, business management, and reports from growers across the country. Members say that the *Quarterly* is the only magazine they read from cover to cover, as soon as it's received.

2 The ASCFG **Community Network** is a social network designed to provide members with the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience. This user-friendly tool allows users to post questions and answers, share photos and videos, and search for topics related to their specific needs. Access to the Community Network is like having your own online professional consulting firm.



3 The **ASCFG Flower Search** is an important marketing tool accessed at www.ascfg.org. Members may update their personal page to indicate the flowers they grow, services they provide, and add links to point to their own site, galleries, catalogs, and more. Buyers are able to navigate and search by company name, location, and flower to easily find your flowers and services. **Update your page today.**

4 **ASCFG Meetings and Conferences** offer educational sessions, floral design shows, and farm and greenhouse tours. These meetings vary in format from casual hands-on learning to Growers' Schools with in-depth instruction regarding production methods, pest management, postharvest care, and marketing. These gatherings also provide members time to meet one another face-to-face to share their experiences. **Register online now.**

5 **Members Only Services** This exclusive section of the ASCFG web site contains a wealth of resources available only to current members. Members receive a unique username and password that allows access to the Community Network, back issues of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, floriculture research reports, pricing guides, and many other useful links. Past and current forum discussions are here for you to search and browse for timeless information and current floral news.

