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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 specialty greenhouse cuts

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The more things change, the more they stay the same.

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FROM the **PRESIDENT**

Polly Hutchison

From Where I Stand...

As growers, we have a natural inclination to be optimistic. “That crop will do great—I’ll try it.” “We’ll do that better next year.” “The weather can’t stay this bad!” So bear with me as I am a Pollyanna, after all.

While no one can say the economy is great, and the news is still gloomy, I do see improvements all around me. Customers are happier and less pained-looking at farmers’ markets. Brides and grooms are less anxious and a little more flexible with the budget. Gardeners are ready to add some new color and texture. Individual sales are up for us in all these categories, maybe not a lot, but up. Thank goodness!

The small business people (like the majority of ASCFG members) will drive the recovery, so we are told. What have you undertaken in the last year? Added a greenhouse? Hired an extra worker? Bought more bulbs or plugs than the year before? I thought so. A strong characteristic of our membership is to learn about new crops and techniques, and then once you know about these new ideas, well, we have to try them, right?

In our little corner we have added a few new crops, mainly some perennials (new agastache ‘Summer Love’, a mint or two, more astilbe). I continue my dahlia addiction with ten or so new varieties. We also built a small tunnel near the greenhouses for spring spillover and shade in summer. Finally, we finished the lighting and shelving for the design/processing room we started last year. All of this took money, and I am glad to spend it. It feels good to invest in the business and be positive.

I think that is what is affecting our customers as well. It’s exhausting to be scared and anxious. Of course, way too many of our fellow Americans are scared for darn good reasons. Chronic unemployment is horrific. But for the folks who buy flowers, a decent amount of them are ready to be a little more optimistic regardless of the statistics, because it feels good. And flowers feel good.

So I encourage each of you to share the love: get your flowers out to the folks who need them. Share positive stories about what you’re working on to your customers, whether via Facebook, at markets, or by emails that focus on what’s happening. Emphasize growth, and good news, so this contagion can spread.

Look at ways to share flowers with community groups that can’t buy flowers easily as well. Is there a food bank that holds a fundraiser? Recently there was a thread on the old bulletin board about writing off composted flowers. Can’t do that, but some of those could be given away. Maybe that won’t work in your area, but chances are, if you can donate flowers even once or twice a year more, you’ll see the benefits of that positive endeavor. Our flowers make a difference in people’s lives, no matter what their income.

Share these stories on our new Social Forum as well, at se.ascfg.org. Sign up from the Members Only of the ASCFG site. We can post photos and links, and it’s easier to search out what a certain member posted. Not to name anyone in particular, but a few of our members are awfully funny.

Judy and Linda and our Northwest Regional Director Diane Szukovathy have been working hard to finalize the details for Tacoma. Please plan to attend—this will be a great National Conference, and since we are trying out a new format for next year, our best chance to be all together for a while! Set aside the dates: November 12-14. Also look to some excellent Regional Meetings around the country. You don’t need to live in the Region to attend.

Here’s to hoping everyone will have a little more ease in their budgets this year. Tell us about it!



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Flower Bulb and Lily Postharvest Research at Cornell

Bill Miller

My colleague Chris Wien, who normally graces this spot in the *Quarterly*, has taken his part-time retirement to heart and asked me to write the column this time. I thought I'd take the opportunity to tell you a bit about my overall research program at Cornell and some thoughts on lilies and lily postharvest handling.

Background, Flower Bulb Research Program

First, the program. In the mid-1960s the Dutch export industry initiated a research program at Michigan State University to focus on developing information specific to the North American bulb forcing industry. The program began in 1965, and under the leadership of Gus de Hertogh, rapidly developed information on cold-week requirements and forcing suitability for many bulb crops, especially tulips. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, plant growth regulators (PGRs) were becoming more available to the industry, and Gus did a significant amount of work on PGRs to tailor tulips as potted plants. This work expanded to include hyacinth and daffodil, then onto lilies and a number of other bulbous crops. Ultimately, the *Holland Bulb Forcer's Guide* (in its many editions) became the centerpiece of the program through the mid-1990s, with Gus' retirement.

Without prolonging the story, I moved to Cornell and assumed leadership of the Flower Bulb Research Program in

1998. By 2000, Cornell had invested a substantial amount into the program, building three state-of-the art coolers, remodeling a laboratory and rebuilding two greenhouses (some 6,000 sq. ft.) to support the program, and another 6,000 sq. ft. of glasshouse has been rebuilt in the last 3 years.

Our main research program support, however, continues to come from the Dutch export industry through Anthos, the trade association that represents bulb, perennial and nursery stock exporters worldwide. Our main goal is relatively simple. The information we generate helps North American flower bulb forcers grow a better product that in turn helps increase exports from Holland. So, in principle, we have a better product for the customer, better sales and profits for North American growers, and increased exports and a larger market for the Dutch export industry.

Most of our findings find their way onto our website, <http://www.flowerbulbs.cornell.edu>

We continue to evaluate tulip, hyacinth and narcissus cultivars for suitability as potted plants. Especially with tulip, this involves cooling bulbs for varying lengths of time. Basically, the longer the cold period, from ca. 12 to 20-22 weeks, the longer the

stem. For pots, less cold is better (since you end up with shorter plants), but for cuts, a longer cold period, all things being equal, is more desirable. Also, the exact temperature of the cold is important. "Warmer cold" (for example, 48F) leads to shorter plants with larger flowers, for a given duration of cold. A "colder cold" (for example 34F), leads to taller plants and smaller flowers for the same cold duration. Thus, optimum handling of a given tulip cultivar is different if the bulb is destined for cut flower or pot plant forcing.

A comprehensive listing of tulip cultivars and their suitability for cut flower or pot plant use can be found on our web site. The data there are derived from our own Cornell research, and some is adapted from the *Forcer's Guide*.



We also do studies on landscape perennialization of bulbs, combinations of bulbs and perennials (<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/combo/>) and other landscape-related topics. In forcing, we have done extensive work on growth regulators on a wide range of new cultivars and on plant physiological and practical industry problems.

A Brief Worldview of Lilies

Worldwide, lily is one of the most widely grown cut flowers. Most of the bulbs forced in the world are grown in and imported from Holland. The nearby table shows the bulb production area (in hectares, multiply by 2.5 to get acres). This table does not include lily acreage in other production locations in Europe and especially the southern hemisphere crop (Chile, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) which is important for maintain year-round available of forcing bulbs. This shows a decrease in production acreage in the last 5-6 years and also relative changes in acreage. Most notably, the area of Asiatic hybrids is decreasing, with much of that being replaced by LA hybrids (hybrids derived from Asiatic cultivars crossed with longiflorum). Also, one can see a decrease in oriental hybrids. It is expected this decrease will be made up with increases in the OT hybrids (orientals crossed with trumpets).

Lily breeding is perhaps the most advanced and dynamic example or ornamental breeding in the world. Breakthrough work by Jaap van Tuyl's lab in Holland led to the ability to cross widely separated species, and has ushered in groups such as LA-hybrids (longiflorum-asiatic), LO (longiflorum-oriental) and OT (oriental-trumpet). Within each of these group dozens if not hybrids of cultivars exist.

'Sorbonne' dominates the list of top lily varieties. It was not even released until 1994, whereas 'Star Gazer', by far the most important lily in 1994, has fallen out of favor and will face the prospect of literally becoming extinct in a few years. In general, since lily breeding is so sophisticated and done on such a large scale in Holland (here, I am referring only to commercial cut flower breeding, not hobbyist and local garden breeding), hundreds of cultivars are released each year and breeders have an interest in getting growers to adopt them as quickly as possible. And exporters have an interest in getting their forcing customers to adopt them at a similar pace. Only through trialing at one's own facility and at different times of the year can a grower be sure a new cultivar will perform better than a currently produced cultivar.

A Few Thoughts on Lily Postharvest Handling

The basics for lily postharvest handling are simple. There are two concerns. First, to reduce or eliminate the potential for leaf yellowing, it is important to treat stems with a product containing gibberellin₄₊₇ (GA₄₊₇). An example is Chrysal BVB, which is labeled for after-harvest treatment of lilies. This is a grower-level treatment, done shortly after stems are harvested, as a pulse, either in the cooler, or at room temperature (see BVB label for specifics). Other products, such as Fascination, contain GA₄₊₇ and are also effective but are not labeled. The second main issue is to provide customers with a packet of lily food for the vase. There are many options here and Floralife and Chrysal both have offerings. The important point is a sugar source and a biocide (to reduce microbial growth).

Table 1. Acreage (in hectares) of the Dutch lily bulb crop (in Holland) since 2006.

	2006	2008	2010
Aurelian	7	14	17
Asiatic hybrids	641	553	409
L-A hybrids	782	983	835
L-O hybrids	37	30	46
Longiflorum	123	48	27
O-A Hybrids	0	1	0
O-T Hybrids	215	251	307
Oriental hybrids	1755	1446	1504
Misc.	44	31	34
Total	3604	3357	3180

Sugar is extremely important for maximizing lily flower life. We have looked at many lily cultivars (mainly LA and oriental hybrids) and invariably see longer flower lifespans when sugar is included in the vase, and many other published studies show the same result. Sugar also intensifies flower color, especially for flowers that open later. An undesired side effect of vase sugar is occasional leaf yellowing that some have reported. We have not regularly seen this in our work, perhaps because leaf yellowing in lilies is dependent on many factors, including the cultivar, storage after harvest, storage temperature, and possibly other factors (greenhouse environment, season, etc.).

Regardless of whether vase sugar (especially, in the concentrations resulting from correct use of lily food) causes leaf yellowing or not, pretreating with GA₄₊₇ (Chrysal BVB) will eliminate yellowing problems. A side benefit is that flowers will tend to last even longer due to the GA treatment (this was shown in our original research on gibberellins and potted lily plants, and by other research dating to the mid-1960s). When used as an integrated system, the GA₄₊₇ can literally stop leaf yellowing (which is exacerbated by cold storage, and is cultivar-dependent).

Two other points deserve mention. Are lilies ethylene sensitive? Yes and no. Most lilies are sensitive to ethylene in the greenhouse, with small buds being especially sensitive. Malfunctioning heaters that release ethylene can lead to ethylene accumulation during winter greenhouse production and will severely damage lilies. For most cultivars, however, open flowers are not especially sensitive to ethylene. If harvested stems are cold stored for a significant period (perhaps 7-10 days), young buds will abort when moved to warmer temperatures. This is probably related to increased ethylene sensitivity due to carbohydrate shortage from the long storage. In summary, under “normal” situations where lengthy cold storage is not needed, most lilies can be considered relatively non-sensitive to ethylene.

Moving certain lily cultivars from a full sun, warm greenhouse into a 35F cooler can cause an ugly “blotch” of brownish, sunken tissue on the buds.

The second point is temperature. What is the best storage temperature for lilies? Some published recommendations call for shipping and storage temperatures to be 1-2C (34-36F). While a good general recommendation, low storage temperatures can lead to several physiological problems. Storage-induced leaf yellowing is generally made worse by lower storage temperatures. Pre-treating with GA₄₊₇ as described above is important, but if this treatment is not available, I would recommend storing lilies at slightly warmer temperatures (40-42F) and not at 34-36F. Secondly, moving certain lily cultivars from a full sun, warm greenhouse into a 35F cooler can cause an ugly “blotch” of brownish, sunken tissue on the buds. This problem occurs within 2-3 days of placing stems in the cooler and

can happen on puffy, nearly open buds as well as smaller unopened ones. The solution is to first store stems for a day at temperatures in the 7-9C range (45-48F) before moving to a lower temperature. More information on this problem can be found on our website in the “Research Newsletters” section.

I welcome your questions and comments.

*Bill Miller is Professor of Horticulture at Cornell University.
Contact him at wbm8@cornell.edu*

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Recipe for Beauty: An Introduction to Hippeastrum

C. LaDell Sumpter

As a child I remember the sweet smells of cake batter in the kitchen, and the occasional sneeze from too much cake flour in the air; my mother basting the Thanksgiving turkey and the aroma of delicious sweet potato pies baking in the oven. Now that was a recipe for good eating!

I remember my instructor as we worked together for the first time. “Today we will learn to make bread.” he said. Childhood memories of my mother’s cooking came to mind and I thought I must be in the right career field. Plants and eating, what a job! As we crafted medium for a bulb, it wasn’t the fresh baking of bread that would be filed away in my memory but this would be my first encounter with *Hippeastrum*. Who would have thought the same way one uses a recipe to create a superlative dish is the way I was introduced to *Hippeastrum*?

Upon being introduced to this bulb, I was overtaken with inquisitiveness to learn everything about this phenomenal plant. I discovered brilliant cultivars such as ‘Christmas Star’ and ‘Miracle’, learning that these bulbs were also wonderful additions to the Christmas assortment. My search led me to discover that most *Hippeastrum* cultivars were marketed as potted plants, mostly during the winter in the United States. I had discovered a new recipe and now it was time to gather the ingredients on how to maximize the potential for a wider market spectrum through alternative production methods such as cut flowers

Hippeastrum or Amaryllis?

For any grower entering into the world of *Hippeastrum*, the first thing that must be learned is the difference between *Hippeastrum*, and amaryllis. Although ‘amaryllis’ is the common and trade name for the species, *Hippeastrum*, is the genus name, and is used to botanically separate the two groups.

While great for pot production during special holidays, this plant can be further explored outside of its marketed window through field and cut flower production. For these, bulbs are planted in late January and grown for harvest in late March through early May. *Hippeastrum*, is native to subtropical and tropical environments, meaning it would



be comfortable most of the year in zones 8 to 11. For cut flower production, however, it is best to limit production to zones 9 through 11, which includes Florida and parts of Texas.

While Florida’s subtropical humidity may seem attractive, it may not be the best environment for field production, which requires moist soil and warmth during the growing period, yet dryer and cooler conditions in dormancy. Some areas of the South such as coastal Texas may fit this description. With a growing season from March through December, hot summers and warm winters, and well-drained suitable soils, this region could lend itself for field production.

More Than Just a Pot Crop

Bulbs are grown mainly by specialized growers in the Netherlands, Israel, and Brazil. For pot production, compact cultivars are used. Cut flowers, however, need the exact opposite criterion. When growing any flower for production, long stems, and plants with high floral output is highly desired.

Selecting the Right Supplier

Before ordering, consider bulb grade, cultivar habit, and flower type. Bulbs may be grouped by single-, double-, and specialty-flowered varieties. Select a supplier who carries cut flower cultivars, and not only pot varieties. It is also important to

research which cultivars will give you high market return. Selecting a cultivar that is inexpensive to purchase but has a low market return will result in low profit margins and high expense outputs.

Preparing your *Hippeastrum*

Growing my first *Hippeastrum* bulb crop for a display at Longwood Gardens was like working with a recipe for the first time. Light, temperature, and water volumes were something that had to constantly be monitored. Too much of either could tip the scale and throw off the “recipe”.

fungal disease. Avoid overhead watering late in the day to minimize moisture and prevent fungal buildup. Keeping these environmental factors in order will allow you to prepare a field prime for producing optimal plant growth and flower development.

Balanced and timely fertilization is important. A moderate to low amount of fertilizer is preferred over intermittent highly concentrated applications. Fertilization occurs during the active growing season, as soon as foliage develops, until foliage starts yellowing with the onset of summer dormancy.

most basic of recipes, just add water! *Hippeastrum* scapes are hollow, and if left exposed to air, the tissue can quickly dry out and slow transportation of water to the bud. To remedy this, fill the scape with water and plug the opening with a soft material.

Once the stems are cut and plugged, they are ready for packing and shipping. The cut flowers must be shipped at a cool temperature of around 41F to keep the buds tight. Transportation must be quick as the flowers are perishable. Once placed in a vase, the ‘plug’ can be removed and warm temperatures will promote the opening of the bud. Flowers can last up to two weeks after being removed from the bulb and opening completely.

Depending on your region, field production of *Hippeastrum* may allow you to grow a potentially profitable cut flower crop.

Bulb Burdens

A number of diseases and pests can affect your crop. Constant vigilance is in order; you should be scouting consistently to keep your bulbs healthy. Slugs damage bulbs by chewing on emerging scapes. Control by chemical means or manually discarding them.

Soil-borne diseases such as fusarium and phytophthora rot are also a problem, especially when plants are stressed by too little or too much water. Symptoms of root disease are usually evident in stunted growth of the scape. The best preventative method for these pathogens is to limit overhead watering in the field to avoid spread. Remove the infected bulb from the crop as soon as possible.

Scouting for disease vectors in your crop is a must as insects transmit *hippeastrum* mosaic virus. Signs of infection include discoloration of the leaf in a mosaic pattern. Thrips are also a common pest and are vectors for tomato spotted wilt virus. Symptoms include wilting and browning of leaves. While virus infections do not normally kill the plant, they affect vigor and the overall appearance of the scape and blooms. The only feasible means to manage viruses in the field is removing any plants showing symptoms.

They generally need 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight, and prefer well-drained, moist, and loamy to nearly sandy soil. The medium should be low in organic matter, meaning no compost or pine bark-based amendments.

Light is key, and its consistency is important. Increasing the light duration during blooming phases will increase the bulbs’ transpiration and put more energy into flower production. Maintaining a consistent, high light environment will reward you with bold colors. Be sure no structures or other plants cast shade on your crop.

Temperatures are not as critical, but it is good to monitor soil temperatures in winter, as bulbs are highly susceptible to frost damage. In summer, ambient air temperatures should be monitored as high temperatures can cause scapes and buds to burn. Hoophouses and shade structures are simple solutions to maintaining your field crop.

The main concern for water is around the roots. The soil needs to stay well drained, as pooling water around the bulb and roots can lead to bacterial and

Slow-release fertilizers can be applied to the field and slowly release into the soil over the course of the growing season.

Fertigation may be the preferable option if a soaker hose system is installed.

In the post season, it is important to go through the field and remove any yellowed foliage to control disease pressure for the next cycle. During this dormant time, the field should be scouted for any bulbs that are producing adequate pups for division and further propagation of your crop. This is possible only for cultivars that are not protected by breeder rights or plant patents.

Caring for Cut *Hippeastrum*

When preparing cut flowers for postharvest, three questions must be addressed: “When do I harvest?”; “How do I transport the cut flowers?”; and “What is the shelf life?”. It is preferred to harvest the stems as soon as the bud has set and has taken on color to prevent any bruising during shipping. It is important that the stem be cut at a 45-degree angle to avoid damage to the stem. After cutting off the stems, like the

New Horizons

Hippeastrum cultivars are grouped by flower type and growing habit. When selecting new cultivars, choose colors which sell best for your region in a given season, and vigorous cultivars with an attractive habit that produces multiple tall scapes during one season. Look for exciting cultivars that intrigue both the florists and the consumer.

A factor that carries a bit more weight is proper flower time. The peak times for cut flower sales are late March through early May, which includes holidays and events such as Easter, Mother's Day, and spring weddings.

Renowned floral designer Dorien van den Berg told me that cut amaryllis are among the top arrangement flowers in the European Union and Middle East. Her favorites include:

Hippeastrum papillio—a species with brick-colored markings on lime-green petals.

'Aphrodite'—a cultivar with a brilliantly soft pink double.

'Red Peacock'—a double-flowered cultivar with a deep red bloom.

In trials at Longwood Gardens, I found the following varieties offered variety in arrangements:

'Miracle'—quick to bloom and showy with crown of vibrant trumpet flowers.

'Inferno'—large bloom of double ember-colored petals, often lustrous in direct sunlight.

'Bellissimo'—wonderful pink flowering bulb with large scapes that promises to be a good cut flower cultivar.

Much like following a recipe, having the proper ingredients, such as favorable environmental conditions, correct storage, and willingness to explore, can result in a great *Hippeastrum* cut flower program.



C. LaDell Sumpter, a recent graduate of Virginia Tech, is a college intern at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Penn. He works with forcing bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, and Amaryllis. Contact him at lsumpter@longwoodgardens.org



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Conference Treasures

Janet Foss

Last year when I flew home from the National Conference in Reston, Virginia, my bags were packed with plants I'd picked up at the meeting. I also had a flat of hydrangea liners wrapped in newspaper tucked into my carry-on bag. The friendly TSA agents who searched my bags and rewrapped the hydrangeas didn't do as good a job as I did, but the plants made it home in one piece.

As I struggled through the airport with my massive luggage load, someone asked why I would torment myself like this, when I could more easily order these plants and have them shipped to my

farm. That was true, but I'm naturally an impulsive shopper. I would rather shop off the availability list than order ahead. Since I was flying on Southwest, I could check bags for free, getting my money's worth.

Most of all, I like to get home with my treasures in hand. And, the struggle at the airport is always memorable, and helps me remember what a good time I had at the conference.

Now those hydrangeas are blooming in my greenhouse. They are actually the first hydrangeas I've ever gotten into flower at this farm; all the outside plants freeze to the ground, and have never flowered in the nine years we've been here. I haven't had much better luck with hydrangeas that bloom on new wood.

So I've been loving the trip to Reston with fond memories because these hydrangeas are beautiful. I never would have planted them in the greenhouse had I not found this deal at the conference. I bought them thinking it was probably a foolish thing, since my record with hydrangea is so poor.

These hydrangeas are called 'Oak Hill'. They were produced by Robert McNiel at Highand Moor Nursery in Kentucky. I think I will replot them and keep them for cold frame cuts. I picked my first cuts from them May 28th—several weeks before the outdoor ones would bloom here (if they would bloom!). Now I can see that if I want reliable hydrangea flowers, a tunnel is the way to go. I consider this collateral learning from attending the conference, which is still paying dividends months later.



Delphinium 'Guardian'

I also brought home a flat of purple 'Champion' campanula from Gro'n Sell. They have been blooming in the greenhouse for a month. Greenhouse-grown campanulas are such great lasting flowers, and I have had much better results from plug trays than from starting my own. It's great to have them flower so early in the greenhouse. In all honesty I wish they were white or pink, but even so they are blooming at a time we need color and flowers, when not a lot is flowering outside.



Hydrangea 'Oak Hill'

Plugs of 'Guardian' delphiniums were planted into crates and began flowering in April in an unheated greenhouse. They produced their second flush of blooms right before the outside delphiniums started to open. They were a great experiment for me because they were totally grown without heat and I can see they will provide profitable early sales to florists at the wholesale market. The flowers are huge and long lasting. I'm really glad I brought them home on the airplane. Next year I will buy plugs of straight colors so I know what colors are coming.

Another plant I'm interested in is a new tulip called 'Cousteau'. Flowers are purple, tall enough for cutting, and last well in cold storage and in the vase. This tulip is cool in the garden because it produces one large flower, and three to five small flowers, from the same bulb. It's true that the small blooms weren't worth as much, but they were good for smaller arrangements and extended the bloom time a bit. While I loved these for cut flowers I think their real worth will be perceived by gardeners as a good value for the number of blooms.

This fall the conference will be in Tacoma in western Washington. I'm looking forward to cool plants that might be brought to the trade show, and I won't even have to lug them through the airport, since the conference is only a two-hour drive from my farm.

Amazingly, there are still many plants to try and ideas to put in motion, more than we can try or use in a lifetime. I love the possibilities! See you this fall in Tacoma.

Janet Foss, J. Foss Garden Flowers, is a specialty cut flower grower in Chehalis, Washington, and a long-time contributor to The Cut Flower Quarterly.



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What's the Next Big Thing?

Gay Smith

*Small purple flowers
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Anonymous

A Peek at the Numbers

By the time you read this article, Mother's Day hoopla will have passed, Venus made its transit across the sun, and we've experienced the longest day of the year, as the sun hesitated during the solstice before starting its annual retreat to the southern hemisphere

Before closing the chapter on the first half of 2012, let's take a quick look at Mother's Day sales. If holiday success is an indicator of economic recovery, the future looks bright because both Valentine and Mother's Day sales were ahead of last year. Every wholesaler I spoke to said Mother's Day sales

boost for domestic growers. Strong demand for gerberas, peonies, lilies, tulips, wax flower, sunflowers and fillers prevailed right through Memorial Day weekend and tight supply kept prices high. Retail prices (speaking about supermarkets here) indicate that the trigger prices on mixed bouquets were in the \$14.99—24.99 range. Rose dozens (unadorned) sell at \$9.99—the holiday AND everyday price. Everyone I spoke to said that sales didn't stop on May 13th. In fact, several bouquet companies (in California and Oregon) say they didn't expect things to slow down until the end of June.

View from the Street

Trendy floral products I noticed during my travels to (mostly supermarket) customers this year include terrariums,

bunch sells! Monochromatic color blends sell ahead of rainbow bunches as income levels move up the ladder. Cut cyclamen, a longtime favorite in France, is starting to gain a foothold as a cut bloom in California markets. Tulips were as popular as ever this spring but without any price increases over last year, and lily sales were slightly up to flat compared with 2011.

What about new marketing trends? A recent edition of *greenProfit* magazine suggests piquing customer interest by featuring oddball aspects of plants, flowers or veggies staged as a "weird" event. QR (quick response) codes are increasingly showing up on plant tags, flower food packets, and signage as another way to promote services, specific products and information.

Statistics show that men ages 18-34 are the biggest users of QR codes, which often direct them to Facebook, company websites and videos to inform, entice and educate information-thirsty consumers. Another look at the numbers shows that the flower buying community is mostly populated by women 35-55 years old, not the 18-34 year-old male group, a consideration if you plan to incorporate QR codes on materials.

There is no doubt that all roads lead to social media when discussing marketing trends, but beware of the time sink involved in staying current on Facebook or Twitter, and carefully consider the audience at whom your messages are aimed before deciding the best social avenue to pursue. For example, Pinterest is the latest rage, but are your

"You want to play on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn?

Figure one to two hours per day MINIMUM.

And don't think you can post something and walk away.

Social media thrives on current and new information."

were great and florists super busy! The majority of supermarkets had record sales increases, too.

Grower reports were mixed: most said the holiday was great, but some described this year's sales as just slightly stronger than last. Poor product availability from off-shore was a huge

potted orchids and succulents. These three categories are not new trends, but continue to top popularity lists. Best-selling cut flowers are rainbow mixes (both natural and tinted) of statice, poms, gerberas, roses, and mini carnations. Incredible as it sounds, floral clerks claim the more garish or neon the color, the faster the

customers using it to make purchasing decisions or for personal interest?

Identify your target market prior to diving in because done properly, social media venues require time. Steve Miller, of Two Hat marketing consultancy puts it this way, "...you want to play on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn? Figure one to two hours per day MINIMUM. And don't think you can post something and walk away. Social media thrives on current and new information." He continues to say that in the B2B world, if anyone tells you social media is working for him, don't ask how many friends, fans, or followers he has. Ask him to show you the money.

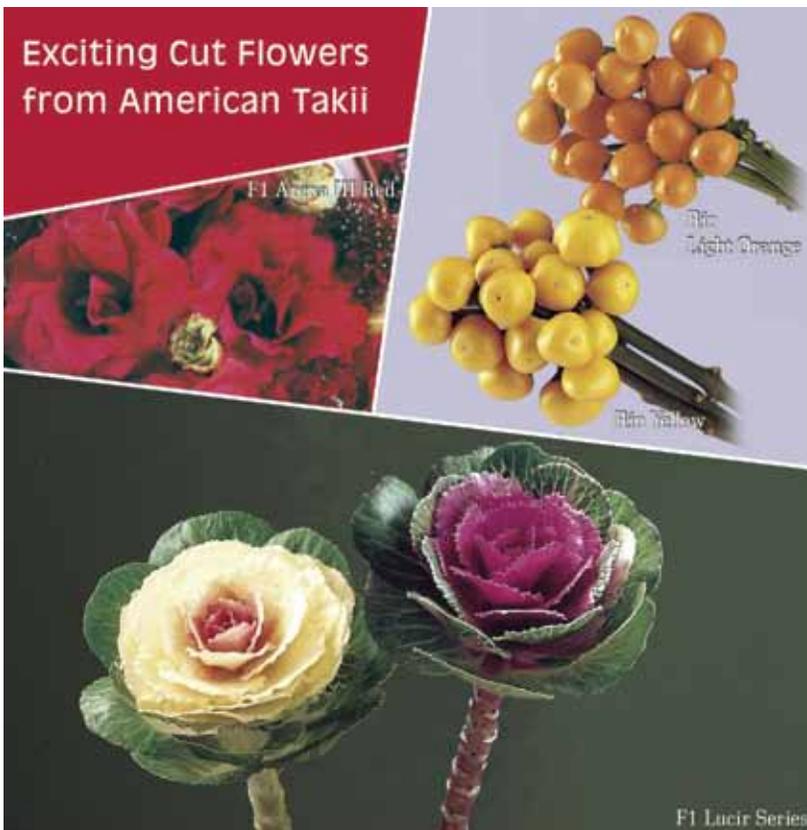
Certification Labels—Still Trendy?

Tired of reading about sustainability programs? Wondering if it is a fad that'll disappear? Or are you applying to receive a label from Veriflora, MPS or USDA Organic? The green-washing bluster in flowers seems to have waned

a bit in popularity, but the concept of sustainability is here to stay because environmental impacts have financial costs for companies. Sustainability is an ongoing process based on the idea of continual improvement, and is tied to critical resources including water and energy. Water and energy are the two most important resources connected to money and availability issues in our exploding world market. As the certification playing field became crowded with different programs, duplications diluted the identification seals, frustrating growers and confusing consumers. Regardless, sales analyses show that consumers appreciate the opportunity to vote with their purchase dollars when it comes to supporting sustainable agricultural practices in the U.S. and abroad. Certification focuses on three areas—environmental integrity, social and economic sustainability, and product integrity—with the emphasis shifting slightly depending on the program chosen.

No one disagrees that best practices and sustainable use of resources make sense, but when the playing field became so crowded, consumers couldn't stay up with the next best thing. In response to the confusion, a group in the Netherlands called Floriculture Sustainability Initiative (FSI) is working to produce a tool to eliminate duplication and make it easier to compare different certification programs. "The tool will increase transparency and comparability of existing floriculture sustainability standards" says Herman de Boon, chairman. The 19 founding stakeholders of FSI include companies based in northern Europe, Kenya, and the Dutch Flower Group, Rainforest Rescue and MPS. FSI is welcoming other organizations to join, but to date, no U.S. group is involved. Stay tuned to find out how the initiative will play out in this country.

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Scale Insects of Woody Plants - Continued

Stanton Gill



Japanese maple scale clustering at crotches of branches

Host Plants for Japanese Maple Scale

A brief list; the total includes over 400 species

Acer (maple: American red, Japanese red, sugar, and paperbark)

Camellia

Cornus (dogwood: American, Chinese, and hybrids)

Cotoneaster

Diospyros (native and oriental persimmon)

Euonymus

Fraxinus (ash)

Magnolia

Malus (crabapple)

Prunus

Pyracantha

Pyrus (ornamental and edible pears)

Salix (willow)

Styrax

Syringa (lilac)

Ulmus (elm)

Zelkova

In the last (Spring) issue of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, I wrote an article on soft and armored scale which attack woody plants. In this edition, I will concentrate on the nastiest scales currently rampaging through many cut flower operations. Of the many species of armored scale, the Japanese maple scale, *Lopholeucaspis japonica*, has in the last five years become one of the most frequently encountered pests in Maryland and most states on the East Coast. We now have reports of this scale cropping up in Minnesota, Indiana and Ohio.

This invasive insect species is a gift from the Orient and is quickly spreading across the U.S. on a wide range of woody plant material. A body covering that conceals the insect, along with its cryptic coloration and nature, make this scale very difficult to detect. Over several years, populations can build up to levels which cause dieback and even death of the infested plants. Once established in a cut flower operation it will often spread throughout, infesting many different species of woody plants.

This scale is not a quarantine pest on the East Coast but several states in the Midwest have quarantines on Japanese maple scale. Infested plant material can be condemned

when shipped to Midwest states. Unfortunately, this scale has made it through the quarantine and is now found throughout the Midwest.

Understanding This Pest

First off, Japanese scale does not look like your typical insect. The cover of the insect is what you are going to see first. The actual body of the insect is under the hardened cover. Even when you pop off a scale cover the body looks sac-like rather than a typical insect's with six clear defined legs and antennae. It does have legs and antennae but they are greatly reduced in size. The insect is basically a couch potato; not moving most of its life but feeding on your plants like a useless teenager hanging out in your living room playing video games and draining your refrigerator.

The Japanese maple scale is in a grouping of insects called the armored scales, members of the family Diaspididae. Entomologists love to group everything in families so we know the common characteristics of the pest. Kind of like knowing what type of family characteristics are for the feuding Hatfields and the McCoys. For example, the Diaspididae have a hardened body cover that is not attached to

the body. This characteristic is useful to distinguish armored scales from other families that may feed on different part of the plant, or damage a plant in a different manner.

The cover of Japanese maple scale is elongate, basically long and narrow. As the insect grows it sheds its skin and goes through growth stages called instars. A newly-hatched scale is a 1st instar, moving around at first, then settling down and covering its body with a wax that becomes the hardened cover. As the insect grows it moves to the second instar stage which is light brown. This is overlain with a dirty whitish wax. The male and female covers look very similar, but the male covering is smaller.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of Japanese maple scale is rather poorly understood. It is pretty well documented that it has three female instars and

five male instars including adults. The information on what stage of development varies between researchers. In Pennsylvania and Japan it is reported to overwinter as fertilized 3rd instar females. Other researchers report that it overwinters as 2nd instar male and females. Miller and Davidson (2005) report that adult females and males are not found until April, which would indicate that they overwinter in Maryland as 2nd instars.

We do know that eggs are laid over a relatively long period. At the Central Maryland Research and Education Center in Clarksville, we have observed females laying eggs in early May in warm springs, but in most years egg laying starts in mid to late May to early June. Miller and Davidson (2005) report that eggs continue to be laid through June and early July. We have observed crawlers in late May to early June (2002 through 2007) and have observed them until the first week of August. Miller and Davidson report 2nd instars present from the last of June through late August and adult females from July through October.

Eggs of the fall generation are present from late July and continue through October. Because the egg laying period is extensive, it is very difficult to distinguish between the two generations.

Monitoring and Control

Plants with slow dieback of branches should be examined for the presence of male and female scale. The scales tend to settle at branch junctures and like to concentrate populations in



Heavy population of Japanese maple scale.
Note the white covering.

the center of the plant in early infestation. Later you can find them through the branches of the plant.

Horticultural oil can be applied at 2-3% rates in the fall after leaves drop, or in spring before bud break. Be sure to apply only when temperatures are above 50-60F for 4-5 days. In summer, 0.5-1.0% oil can be applied during the growing season when crawlers and early instars are present. This is a good suppression method but don't expect better than 50% - 60% control of Japanese maple scale using oil applications.

Do not apply horticultural oils to drought-stressed plants. When crawlers and early instars are present, which is over a relatively long time, one of the two insect growth regulators (IGRs), Distance or Talus, can be applied. The IGRs will prevent the crawlers or early instar stages from developing into the next instar stage, resulting in death of the insect. IGRs are slow acting so patience is helpful. The systemic dinotefuran (Safari) has been used to control several species of armored scale but there are no published data

on efficacy of this material on Japanese maple scale.

We have worked closely with Maryland nursery owners to evaluate Talus applications over a three-year period. This IGR appears to give excellent control if timed when crawlers and 1st and 2nd instar stages are present.

And Finally

The best advice I can give you is do not plant Japanese maple scale-infested plants into your cut flower operation. If you have it, be very aggressive in controlling this pest or it will rapidly overwhelm you and your lovely cut woody plants. If you are not sure if you have the right scale send me a good clear digital picture at the address below.

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Maple dieback caused by Japanese maple scale.

Megan Bame

UV-C Irradiation Improves Vase Life of Cut Gerbera

Decline in postharvest quality of cut flowers is often related to disease, such as infection of *Botrytis cinerea*. Lesions on the flower petals due to infection have been noted in waxflower, freesia, gerbera and rose, among others. Typical disease management relies on conventional fungicide application, which, after extensive use, may result in fungicide resistance. This study aimed to evaluate the potential of UV-C irradiation to control floret specking and extend vase life in cut gerbera.

The gerbera cultivars 'Ice Cream' and 'Ecco' were used for this experiment. UV-C doses of 0.5, 1.0, 2.5, 5.0 and 10.0 kJ/m² were applied for various exposure times. The germicidal effect of UV-C irradiation was assessed by measuring conidial germination and mycelial growth. Vase life was considered terminated when gerbera florets started to senesce and change in color, or when stems were bent over 90 degrees.

UV-C radiation produced a significant negative effect on both mycelium and conidia of *B. cinerea*. Furthermore, lesion diameters on the florets of both cultivars tested were reduced by all UV-C treatments. Vase life, flower fresh weight and water uptake was maintained or increased at all UV-C treatment levels. For example, the vase-life of 'Ecco' treated with 10.0 kJ/m² UV-C was extended by 2.4 days, while 'Ice Cream' treated with 1.0 kJ/m² UV-C irradiation saw the incidence of stem breakage delayed by 3.3 days.

Based on the results of this study, the authors propose low UV-C doses ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 kJ/m² for cut gerbera to maintain postharvest quality and keep *B. cinerea* infections low. This use of UV-C irradiation is envisioned as a component of an integrated postharvest disease management program.

Darras, A.I., V. Demopoulos and C. Tiniakou. 2012. UV-C irradiation induces defence responses and improves vase-life of cut gerbera flowers, Postharvest Biology and Technology, 64:168-174.

The Cut Flower Quarterly

Cocktail for Improving the Vase Life of Cut Tulips

Tulip vase life is often limited by tepal senescence, tepal abscission, leaf yellowing or stem elongation that result in a drooping flower head. This study looks at multiple approaches to determine whether, if applied together, each of the vase life detriments could be addressed with one treatment.

The study initially began with two cultivars, 'Apeldoorn' and 'Frappant', but ultimately resulted in testing on a range of other cultivars. Also, initially treatments were applied in the vase solution just prior to initiating the vase life study, but further testing looked at a pulse-treatment directly after harvest.

In short, the following combination was used successfully as a continuous treatment starting shortly after harvest: 0.10 mM ethephon, 0.5 mM GA3 (gibberellic acid), 0.05 mM BA (benzyladenine) and 10 mM calcium chloride or calcium nitrate. For an overnight (12-hour) pulse treatment or a 6-hour pulse in daylight, the following concentrations were proposed: 0.50 mM ethephon, 1.5 mM GA3, 0.5 mM BA and 50 mM calcium chloride. Higher concentrations (1.0 mM ethephon, 2.5 mM GA3, 1.0 mM BA and 100 mM calcium chloride) were needed for a 1-hour pulse, lighted at 20C.

Vase life following pulse treatment and a 48-hour dry transport at 5C was also evaluated with results generally indicating an increase in vase life by 2 to 5 days.

As the authors used various chemicals (ethephon, GA3 and BA) to address a negative aspect of tulip morphology during vase life, they were met with at least one negative side effect for each chemical. They note that "remarkably, when these three growth substances were combined, and calcium ions were added to alleviate the negative effect of BA, all negative side effects disappeared."

Stem bending was prevented by exogenous ethylene (ethephon). Used alone, ethephon would cause early tepal shattering and lack of flower opening, but the addition of gibberellic acid, benzyladenine and calcium ions alleviated the negative side effects and delayed flower and leaf senescence.

van Doorn, W.G., R.R.J. Perik, P. Abadie and H. Harkema. 2011. A treatment to improve the vase life of cut tulips: Effects on tepal senescence, tepal abscission, leaf yellowing and stem elongation, Postharvest Biology and Technology. 61:58-62.

Skip the Soda Tankmix when Battling Thrips

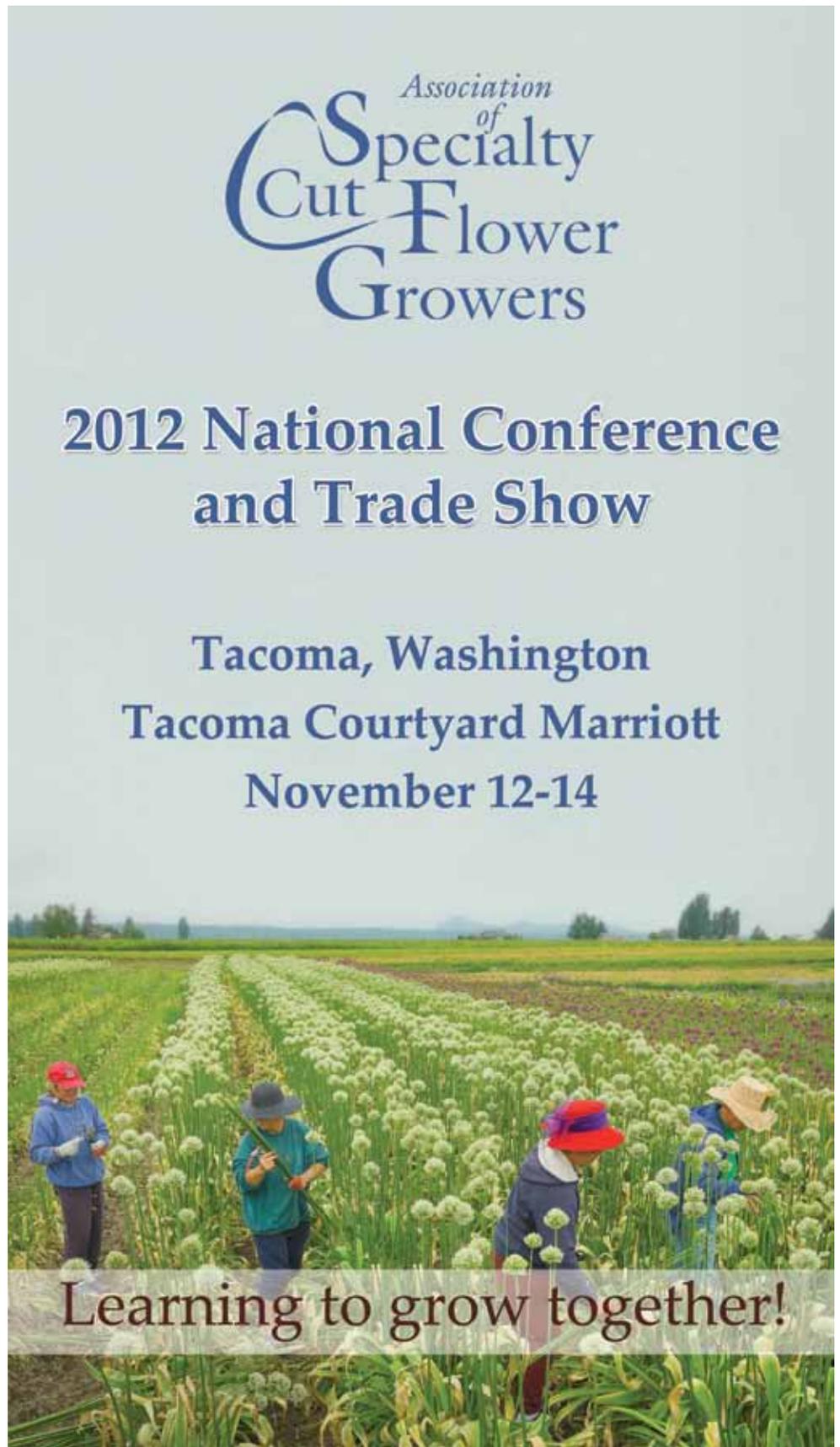
Some greenhouse producers have suggested that adding a sugar substance to an insecticide as a tankmix will help to combat western flower thrips. The theory is that the sugar will attract the thrips from the tightly enclosed areas where they often reside and will encourage them to come in contact with or consume the insecticide. This study tests this theory in laboratory and greenhouse condition to provide quantitative data that will support or refute this practice.

The sugar additives tested were: white sugar, brown sugar, Mountain Dew and Diet Mountain Dew. Nymph and adult stage thrips were used in testing. Attraction to the treatments was measured by how long the thrips visited each treatment. This study found that neither adult nor nymph stage western flower thrips were attracted to any of the sugar-based treatments regardless of rate. Therefore, there is no benefit to adding these types of materials into spray solutions for control of western flower thrips.

Suggestions for best control when using insecticides include: obtaining thorough coverage of all plant parts, applying insecticides frequently enough, and rotating insecticides with different modes of action to avoid populations developing resistance.

Cloyd, R.A., J.D. Gillespie, 2012. Effect of Sugar-based Compounds in Enhancing the Efficacy of Insecticides against the Western Flower Thrips, HortTechnology, 22(2):177-184.

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Keith Cramer, Cramers' Posie Patch

Megan Bame



Cramers' Posie Patch, in Mt. Joy, Penn. (that's in the well-known Lancaster County), is a third-generation cut flower farm. Keith Cramer serves as president and has been a partner in the business, with his father Ralph Cramer, for 10 years. Currently selling fresh cut flowers, dried flowers, and a small selection of seeds and divisions, they are beginning to diversify even more into fruit and vegetable production.

Though he grew up transplanting, weeding and harvesting, Keith took a job at a printing company after high school. After a few years of noise, fumes and shift work, he had the opportunity to get back out in the sunshine and took on the responsibility of field management for his dad's growing business. In the 22 years he's spent working with his dad, Keith says, "My business and flower education came to me in the best possible way – hands-on learning. There are times when I wish I had a formal education in horticulture, but working with my dad – who is a real pioneer and visionary in the industry – has provided me with an extensive list of opportunities that you just can't get with a degree."

Cramers' Posie Patch may sound like a quaint little business, but the "posie patch" consists of more than 60 production acres on a 95-acre farm—a sizable operation. In 2009, the Cramers were able to purchase

the 95-acre farm at auction. Keith says, "It is prime farmland with excellent soils, an incredibly strong well, and a constant flowing spring-fed stream for our irrigation needs." In 2010, after considerable building renovation, they moved the offices to the new farm, seven miles from their old location where they had operated under a long-term lease agreement.

By 2011 nearly all production was transitioned to the new farm, meaning some perennials and woodies are still getting established. Four acres of willow production (one of their primary crops) remain at the old location. At the new farm, they have one 30 x 96 hoophouse and one 24 x 100 cold frame used for starting plugs. In addition, they have more than five acres of Haygrove high tunnels.

Tunnel Vision

Ten years ago, Ralph saw the potential to utilize high tunnels after travelling in Europe where they are much more common. They first attempted to build a homemade structure, but discovered quickly that they were not happy with it. They contacted Haygrove and installed the first Haygrove tunnel in North America. The Cramers currently serve as sales agents for Haygrove for the eastern United States, acting as a liaison between the manufacturer (in England) and the farmer. In addition to a small sales commission, Keith says, "We've built lots of relationships and opened doors, particularly with vegetable and perennial producers, by representing Haygrove."

As for production, Keith says, "We replicate plantings in the tunnels and field to achieve the best sequential production possible. This applies to both annuals and perennials." They are also using the tunnels for fruit and vegetable production this year, experimenting with one half acre heirloom tomatoes, one third acre bell peppers, one half acre asparagus, a blackberry trial and some wine grapes.

Over the years they've learned to tweak common production practices. For example, they don't try to accomplish continuous production with zinnia. Instead they do succession plantings and simply move to another field when one is spent. Some advantages include no problems with powdery mildew and no concerns about short stems. They direct seed as much as they can, starting in mid-March through July, using a Cole Planet Jr., sowing four rows per bed.

Cramers' grows a wide variety of crops, but Keith reports, "Our best sellers by volume are annual sunflowers, celosias and zinnias. Some of the celosias were selections made by my grandparents. Perennials include *Alchemilla mollis*, hydrangeas ('Limelight', 'Quickfire'), yarrows and our varieties of mountain mint and 'Silver King' artemisia."

They grow several varieties of willows, a popular item they sell at the Philadelphia Flower Show, which they've attended for 16 years. Willow selections include fantail, rustic, black and standard pussy willow, red and green curly willow. Keith says, "We are looking into investing in more woodies over the next few years with many decisions yet to be made!"

They sell their flowers primarily to wholesale florists and distributors in the mid-Atlantic area and sell dried flowers to retail florists and event designers all over the United States. A refrigerated box truck runs a set route five days a week from Southern New York to the Washington, D.C.



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Keith Cramer leads a tour of Cramers' Posie Patch during an ASCFG Conference.

Keith believes his company has a unique approach to fresh sales for a farm its size. Each morning, Keith emails an updated availability list to his customers. The customers getting product the next morning send in their orders by mid-day. The flowers are cut and processed in the field specifically for the orders. He says, "We try to avoid any speculative harvesting whenever possible. The flowers rehydrate overnight and ship the next morning. This puts tremendous pressure on our crew to provide product on such a short turn-around, but the customer benefits from receiving the freshest product possible." Another benefit he mentions is being able to maintain strong pricing on items rather than having to drop prices or dump flowers that have already been cut.

While working with more than 20 wholesale florists via phone or email daily is certainly a personal approach that is no doubt valued, Keith feels that marketing is one of their weakest areas. In fact, they recently hired a new field manager to allow Keith more time to focus on revitalizing their marketing efforts.

While such a large farm takes a different approach to labor, Keith identifies labor as its biggest challenge. In addition to four full-time staff (including Ralph and Keith), they have 10 field workers, contracted through the government's H2-A guest worker program, who handle all the day to day cultivation and harvest. Keith says, "Cramers' is committed to using only legal workers, and while the H2-A system has many problems, in the end we are able to have excellent workers and remain compliant on the labor front."

While most of their workers have been returning for several years, the program requires an audit three times in 18 months by two different U.S. Department of Labor divisions (Employment and Training, and Wage and Hour). Keith described one response to a request for documentation as over 380 pages long, on top of the "reams of documentation that we must file and maintain just to participate in the program." He laments, "Our crew has been delayed an average of two weeks due to red tape over each of the past 10 years." It's certainly not a perfect system and that paperwork occupies much of the "off-season," but they've found that it provides reliable, skilled, experienced labor.

For all the headache of managing labor, moving locations and working toward an improved marketing system, Keith conveys a genuine enthusiasm for the industry and the future growth of Cramers' Posie Patch, even if it includes a few fruits and veggies alongside those posies.

*Megan Bame is a freelance writer in Salisbury, North Carolina.
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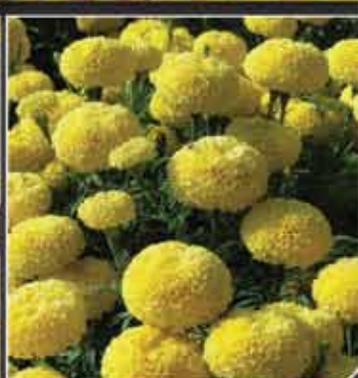
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- Spacing : 18-20 in.

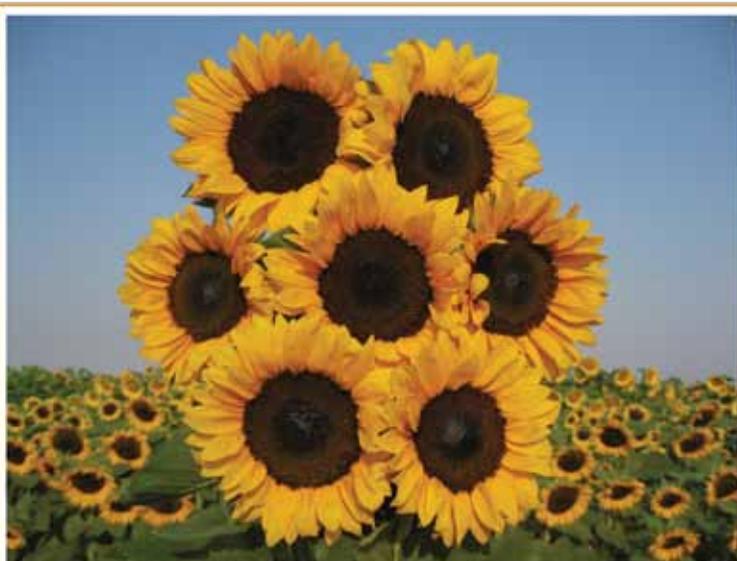
Narai Orange



Narai Yellow



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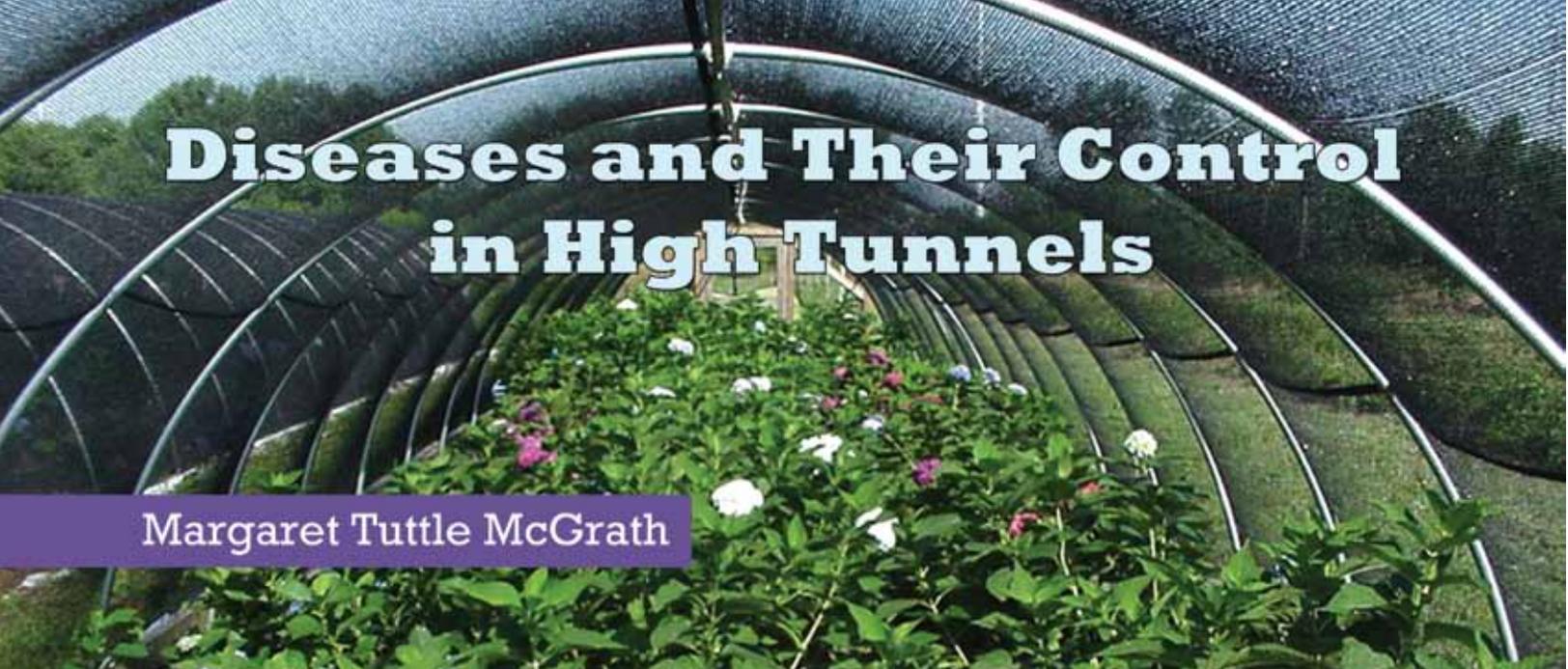


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Diseases and Their Control in High Tunnels

Margaret Tuttle McGrath

Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, Cornell University
Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center

Conditions in high tunnels differ in important ways from conditions outside in fields. Consequently, disease occurrence can differ as well. Environment is one of the three ‘disease triangle’ components that dictate disease occurrence. Drier environment in high tunnels creates less favorable conditions for many diseases, but not all. Ability to manipulate the environment to create conditions that are more unfavorable and further improve disease management is an important benefit of growing crops in high tunnels. On the other hand, rotating land amongst crops is an important management practice that cannot be implemented as easily in high tunnels as in fields where a much greater diversity of crops typically are grown. Therefore, tolerance needs to be at or near zero for diseases caused by pathogens able to survive in soil between crops. Knowledge of the biology of pathogens is valuable for identifying diseases that could occur and for developing a management program.

The objective of this article is to explain the factors that determine what diseases can occur in this protected environment and to describe general

management practices, thereby providing the foundation for successful managing diseases in any crop there. Some vegetable diseases are covered as examples.

Disease Occurrence in High Tunnels

Principles dictating disease occurrence are applicable to all cropping situations. Thus in addition to susceptible plants, a pathogen must be present in a high tunnel and conditions must be favorable for development of a disease in order for it to occur. To enable disease to develop, conditions must favor infection and pathogen spread.

Ability of a pathogen to enter a high tunnel is an important factor to consider in determining what diseases could occur. Main ways in which a pathogen can get into a high tunnel include: 1. wind-dispersed spores blown in through open vents or sides, 2. insect vectors of pathogens that fly or are blown through these openings, 3. infested seed or transplants, 4. contaminated soil brought in on shoes or tools, and 5. contaminated tools such as pruners. Once a pathogen

has come into a high tunnel it can survive there between crops in alternative weed hosts, in infested soil or crop debris, and on contaminated planting and production supplies. Fortunately all these means are not options for every pathogen.

Most fungal and bacterial pathogens affecting foliage require a certain amount of time with free moisture (wetness) in order to infect. Those needing a period of time that plant tissue is wet are less likely to occur in a high tunnel than in field-produced crops, unless overhead irrigation is used or there is dripping water due to extensive condensation. These include tomato early blight. Pathogens primarily dispersed by splashing water, such as tomato bacterial spot and *Septoria* leaf spot, are also less likely to occur in a high tunnel unless overhead irrigation is used. Among the diseases most likely to occur in high tunnels are those caused by pathogens that can enter plants through wounds, such as tomato bacterial canker, and those caused by pathogens that only need high humidity to infect, which include tomato leaf mold, late blight, powdery mildew, and downy mildew.

Viruses do not have a moisture requirement. Diseases they cause are among the more common in greenhouse crops. The vector (typically an insect) needs to be present for viral diseases to develop.

Some diseases are more likely to occur because conditions are more favorable in high tunnels than outdoors. These include gray mold, leaf mold, powdery mildew, and pith necrosis in tomato.

Diseases caused by soil-borne pathogens infecting roots can also be important in tunnels.

Disease Management in High Tunnels

General practices:

1. Avoid introducing pathogen.
2. Create unfavorable conditions. Most importantly minimize humidity and leaf wetness.
3. Minimize opportunity for pathogen spread.
4. Implement no tolerance for pathogens that can survive between crops.
5. Understand biology of pathogens that could occur.
6. Routinely inspect crops for symptoms. Obtain help with diagnosis when at all unsure. New diseases can appear, as illustrated by basil downy mildew, which first appeared in the USA in 2007, therefore crops should be examined thoroughly for more than expected diseases.

Specific practices:

1. Locate and orient high tunnels such that they will receive good sunlight and air movement. An east to west orientation, perpendicular to prevailing winds, and away from shade of trees or buildings is ideal.
2. Select roof design that minimizes condensation dripping on plants. Condensation occurs on tunnel plastic overnight because as temperature decreases, air can hold less moisture. Also vent tunnel early in morning to dry condensation.
3. Select seed that is “pathogen-free”: produced where seed-borne pathogens were controlled or didn’t occur, tested for these pathogens, treated if necessary.
4. Select resistant varieties.
5. Add compost and other sources of organic matter to soil to promote beneficial microbes.
6. Cover the ground with plastic mulch. This raises soil temperature and prevents evaporation of soil moisture, plus serves as a barrier for pathogens in soil that infect above-ground plant parts.
7. Use raised beds to manage soil moisture.
8. Practice good sanitation. Thoroughly clean and disinfect tunnel structure and planting materials (e.g. trays). Wear gloves and also disinfect tools and planting materials routinely while working. Minimize worker movement between tunnels to avoid moving pathogens.

9. Avoid moving soil on shoes or tools from fields into high tunnels and between tunnels.

10. Separate plantings of a crop inside and nearby when feasible. An older planting can be a source of pathogens for a younger planting in the same high tunnel; however, this needs to be balanced with crop rotation needs.

11. Grow ornamental crops separately. They can be sources of some viruses, notably TSWV.

12. Provide appropriate fertilization (especially N; avoid excess), soil pH and temperature for good growth, and provide consistent soil moisture. Some diseases are more likely to occur when there is excessive vegetative growth; others when plants are stressed and growing poorly.

13. Control weeds and volunteer crop plants inside and around high tunnels.

14. Minimize humidity by using wide row and plant spacing, fans, ridge venting, open sides (early in day; also late unless this will result in unacceptable loss of temperature elevation gained from having the tunnel closed during daytime), orient rows to air movement, avoid overwatering, irrigate with drip, and prune old leaves and dead tissue. Cover the ground with plastic mulch. Many pathogens need a period of time when humidity is above 90% for infection.

15. Minimize humidity by pruning leaves and branches from tomato and other crops that tolerate.

16. Rogue affected plants and plant tissue when appropriate and feasible; dispose far from high tunnel. This is especially important when causal pathogens can survive long time in soil (e.g. white mold, verticillium wilt).

17. Use plants grafted onto resistant rootstock for soil-borne pathogens (e.g. with solanaceous and cucurbitaceous crops for fusarium wilt).

18. Apply fungicides. Start at or before first symptoms. Ensure disease is correctly identified. Apply regularly (e.g. weekly) maximizing coverage. Check state regulations about pesticide use in high tunnels, which many consider to be a greenhouse; a few do not if the sides are rolled up at the time of the application. Choose product labeled for target disease, and preferably also documented to be effective. Note that documented efficacy is not required for registration in the USA. Check label for restrictions on greenhouse use. See list below.

19. Remove crop debris including roots after harvest; dispose far from high tunnel.

20. Rotate where crops are produced. The goal of rotation is to manage soil-borne pathogens. It is critical to clean rototillers and other soil tools between production units. This can be challenging when these units are within one high tunnel, but in this situation it is absolutely essential as moving soil between units could defeat the purpose of rotation.

21. Grow a biofumigant cover crop to manage soil-borne pathogens when there is sufficient time between crops.

Some Fungicides Labeled for Use in Greenhouses (see item 18 above)

Agri-mycin 17, Armicarb, Botran, Cease, Contans, Copper (some formulations), Decree, Dithane, JMS Stylet-Oil, Kaligreen, MilStop, Oxidate, PlantShield, Regalia, RootShield, Previcur Flex (root rot and damping-off caused by *Pythium* and *Phytophthora*), Scala, Sonata, and Tenet.

Fungicides with no restrictive statement about greenhouse use: Curzate, Gavel, Penncozeb, Tanos, Revus, Revus Top, Switch (except small-fruited tomatoes) and phosphorous acid fungicides (ProPhyt, Phostrol, etc.).

Products that cannot be used in Greenhouses: Bravo, Cabrio, Endura, Flint, Forum, Quadris, Presidio, and Ranman.

Some Vegetable Diseases Occurring in High Tunnels and Cultural Management Practices

A key to successful management is knowledge about the biology of pathogens that could occur on crops growing in high tunnels. This is what cultural management practices are based on. With this knowledge for a specific disease, the most appropriate practices can be selected while not wasting effort on practices that will not have an impact. Minimizing humidity is key for managing many diseases.

Powdery mildew. Causal pathogens produce many spores easily dispersed by wind. Some can produce structures that enable the pathogen to survive between crops. These are obligate pathogens, thus these structures are the only means for survival after susceptible plants die. These structures are the product of sexual reproduction for most powdery mildew fungi, thus strains of opposite mating type (pathogen equivalent of male and female) must be present. Some of these pathogens can also infect weeds, thus weed control can be important. They have narrow host ranges: the powdery mildews occurring on different crop types usually are caused

by different pathogens (e.g. cucurbits and tomato). The powdery mildew fungi can infect under drier conditions than other pathogens, thus reducing leaf wetness and humidity will not affect their occurrence.

Downy mildew. These diseases are also caused by obligate pathogens that produce many spores easily dispersed by wind. Most are unable to produce survival structures because both mating types are not present, thus they require living host tissue for survival and destroying crop debris is not necessary. Some can be in seed. They need high humidity but not wet leaf tissue for infection. Reducing humidity is an important management practice.

Botrytis gray mold. This pathogen is hard to avoid because it has a wide host range and produces an abundance of wind-dispersed spores. Keeping humidity below 90% is key. Also remove dead plant tissue because the pathogen usually first develops on dead tissue then invades adjacent living tissue.

White mold (aka timber rot). Promptly rogue affected plants including surrounding soil to avoid having the pathogen's long-lived survival structure remain in soil. Also minimize humidity and control weeds. Pathogen has a broad host range. Apply the biofungicide Contans to soil following affected crop.

Leaf mold of tomato. This disease is managed by selecting resistant varieties, keeping humidity below 90%, and controlling susceptible solanaceous weeds (e.g. nightshade) near the high tunnel. Rotate.

Late blight of tomato. This is another disease caused by an obligate pathogen producing wind-dispersed spores that can infect when humidity is high. Cool to moderate temperature is favorable.

Bacterial canker of tomato. Out of the three common bacterial diseases affecting tomato crops in the field,

canker is the one most likely to occur in high tunnels because this bacterium can be spread easily by workers handling plants. Bacteria are inside infected plants. Activities like pruning provide an opportunity for bacteria to come out of plants in the sap, get on to workers' hands and tools, and thereby be moved to another plant where the pruning wound provides a good entry place. The initial source of canker on a farm can be infested seed. The bacteria can survive in infested plant debris and on planting materials for up to 3 years. Thus disease-free seed and good sanitation during and after a crop are very important management practices for canker.

Root rots and damping-off. Avoid cool, wet soil conditions. Add organic matter and biofungicides (e.g. SoilGard, RootShield, Tenet) to soil. Rogue affected plant tissue.

Please Note: The specific directions on fungicide labels must be adhered to. Any reference to commercial products, trade or brand names is for information only; no endorsement is intended.

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Originally published in May 2012 issue of Agricultural News, a publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension – Suffolk County, New York. The original article contained specific information on vegetable diseases and their control in high tunnels. This was omitted in favor of the excellent discussion of disease occurrence for all types of plants.

NORTHEAST

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One of the joys I have been experiencing lately has been harvesting perennials. It wasn't always this way, in fact it wasn't until a few years ago that the Grande Perennial Move occurred and the perennials became a joy.

The Grande Perennial Move (as we dubbed it on our weekly lists) took a lot of initial work, but we are thrilled with the result. For years, the perennials at our farm had the unfortunate tag line of "But are they really worth it?" because of the obvious imbalance of time and money spent weeding and mulching versus money generated from them. I'd usually retort with "But at least we started nearly all of them from seed and look at how much money was saved! If we had purchased these large plants it would have cost a fortune!" or "These are the cuts that sell our mixed bouquets—we have to have them to move all the annuals!" Exasperated by my true but weak rebuttals, I began dreaming about the Grande Perennial Move.

Landscape fabric... YES! No more wood chips, no more weeds, no splash-up issues onto the blossoms, but what about when they need dividing, fertility, will it have rodent issues in the winter, what type of irrigation? I didn't want to let the perennials go, but the weed pressure was winning. If anything was to happen, it needed to happen soon.

The general specs of our Grande Perennial Move:

- We chose the wettest location we have (we farm a former glacial beach), and one that in most years cannot support tractor cultivation due to the wetness. The only irrigation is the natural moisture in the soil, and overhead irrigation. We always have the option of installing drip (overtop of the fabric), especially if any beds need more water than others.

- For one year, we incessantly stale-bedded the area to decrease the weed seed count in the soil. We lucked out and it was a dry year, making this possible in the usually wet location.

- The bed length is 180 feet, and the bed width is our standard 5 foot on center. We have plans for expanding it lengthwise, but need the next area fully prepped before installing the semi-permanence of the fabric.

- Using six foot wide landscape fabric, we created three styles of hole patterns and burned appropriate numbers of beds of each of the types.

- 'A' pattern has the largest holes (11-12 inches wide and 2½ one on the left side of the bed and one on the right in a typical walking pattern) for the peonies, liatris, phlox, eupatorium, solidago, grasses and other larger perennials. I have since wished these holes were wider, more like 15-16 inches.

- 'B' is a hopscotch-like pattern (center hole, then two outside holes, then center hole, etc; holes are 9-10 inches wide and 2½ feet apart along the row) for eryngium, sedum, delphinium, lysimachia, astilbe, echinops, etc.

- 'C' is the densest pattern, with three holes across the bed (holes are 8 inches wide and 14 inches apart along the row). In the 'C' pattern we have alliums, aquilegia, digitalis, heuchera, veronica, etc.

- The positioning of the pathways is very consistent, so we can drive the tractor onto the fabric in the fall and mow down any perennials that are done. A leaf blower helps to blow all the mowed chaff off the fabric, although we're in a really windy spot, so if we time the mowing to be prior to a windy period, we can get some work taken care of for us.

- All holes were burned with a torch, and all fabric was cut with a torch, so there are no frayed strands to catch on shoes or the mower.

- All perennials were transferred to the new area bare-root, to limit the transfer of grass and weed seeds to the new area. We tacked one lengthwise side of the fabric, laid it across the prepped bed, poked holes in the soil wherever the burned holes were, lifted up the fabric, planted the plants in the divots, then laid back down the fabric and tacked it in place. For small plants we planted directly into the tacked down fabric, but for larger ones this system worked really well and kept soil off the fabric.

- Some perennials were divided when they were transferred, and a list of re-sow perennials was created so that we have large blocks of perennials to expand the sales possibilities.



• Any netting added is staked within the hole itself (on the outside edge) rather than making new holes for stakes. Any hole in fabric is a possible weed refuge.

• To tack down the fabric, we used eight-inch ground staples every two feet, and the fabric is consistently shingled over the subsequent bed so that it can be lifted to the side (a bed at a time) when it is time for dividing. Divisions are potted up for retail sales the following spring.

• Three foot wide fabric was used for buffer strips to contain the whole area, so there is a clean edge separating the grass and farm road from the perennials. When mowing the edges, we can put one tire on the fabric and mow the edge without catching the fabric or leaving a weedy edge around the buffer.

• Annually, we use granular fertilizer and can always lift the fabric for full bed compost additions.

• For rodent control under the fabric during the winter, we use Tin Cats, a type of mouse trap. (Note: We let all shrews free so they can help control the rodents). We flag each trap location so we can find it in the snow. So far this has been very effective, although I attribute it mostly to having the perennials cleaned up before snowfall so there isn't much in the way of bedding materials, food, or vegetation for rodent habitat.

• Nearly all of our perennials were sown in 392's, then potted up into 50's, then planted out into their appropriate pattern from there. There is weeding that needs to happen until they establish their holes, although we have been toying with the idea of a thick adjustable paper collar to cover the unused part of the hole as the plants are getting established.

The Grande Perennial Move was worth the effort. No longer do the perennials get a "But are they really worth it?" tag line, but more often "What would we do without these?!" and "They just keep giving and giving and we hardly are maintaining them!"

Ahh, the joys of perennials!

I hope you all have been using the new Community Network, and everything you learned from the Regional Meetings and National Conference to have a great, fun, and profitable year!

Happy Growing!

MID-ATLANTIC

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Random thoughts during this busy time of year...

It is officially summer to me when yesterday's messy task was pulling out the

sweet peas. I guess I can wear white now.

I signed up for my local farmers' market as a full-season vendor after going to short season last year as a means for only promoting my expanding floral design business. This year I had planned to open a flower shop and thought weekly markets would help get the word out. The shop fell through for now but I booked 2 weddings from the first market. Re-thinking the whole shop thing now.

This winter was so warm and mild and we've been at the beach already a half dozen times BEFORE Memorial Day. I am slightly terrified of what summer brings.

I stabbed myself in the knuckle yesterday with Japanese floral shears trying to open a box of vases. Today I am making market bouquets with a swollen hand. Do not use Japanese floral shears to open boxes.

I designated a notebook that is only for marketing. My master plan is in the front. I carry it with me and read over it daily and act on it. So far, I am actually doing all of my planned marketing for the first time. Ever.

I was so excited to see clear zinc oxide at Target. I can't get strong enough sunscreen for my face and thought it would do the trick. Until I started sweating and couldn't wear my contacts for 2 days. I'm going hat shopping today.

I love my new Square. I run credit cards on my iPhone and, although the rates aren't the best out there, the device was free, is super tiny and my customers LOVE it.

Happy summer!

SOUTHEAST

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So far we have had an interesting season, as we have picked up two very nice customers in Charleston. Although it is a four-hour round

trip drive, the orders make it worth our while, and with Charleston being the second most popular wedding destination in the country (behind Vegas), there is no shortage of weddings in that area.

One customer made contact after locating us in the ASCFG's online Flower Search. (A reminder of the value of ASCFG membership... you never know who will contact you.) Two twenty-something young women own the company, and are thrilled to be able to provide our locally-grown products to their brides. Patty and I affectionately call them "the girls", and love that they are so enthusiastic over the quality of our product, and that it is grown right here in South Carolina.

We were also contacted by a florist in Fort Wayne, Indiana, of all places, looking for wild-grown smilax. We sell only locally, but as a favor to this florist, we shipped the smilax all the way to Indiana, since she seemed desperate. Now, if she would just pay us, we will go back to being the local growers we want to be. We hope this is not a lesson that "no good deed goes unpunished."

We are still in the midst of planning for next year's meeting. Since my last Regional Report, we had a change of location from Lexington, South Carolina to Raleigh, North Carolina, scheduled for March 18, 2013. We are still working on trying to line up a farm tour in the Raleigh area. Email or call me if you have any thoughts or suggestions.

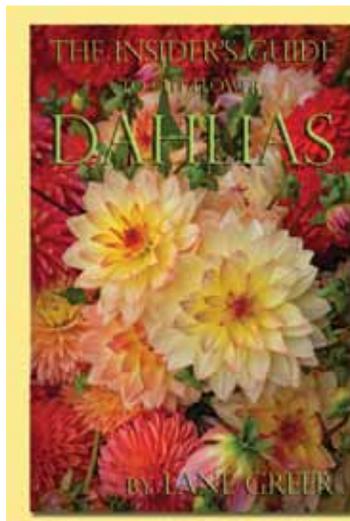
We thought it might be fun to occasionally feature a grower from the Southeast Region in my Board report, to get to know each other better, and maybe learn a thing or two. Our first grower to feature is Melrose Haas of Melrose's Farm in Smithfield, North Carolina. We met Melrose when she attended the 2011 Regional Meeting in Charleston. We were impressed with her commitment to being the best grower she can be. Her enthusiasm is contagious. Here are her entertaining and informative responses to our questions.

How long have you been a flower farmer? This is my second year as a flower farmer.

What did you do before, and how did you get into "the field"? I was a business manager for a law firm. I moved back to my family's farm, part of which I would inherit, and asked myself, "What kind of farmer would I be, and how would it look for me?" I spent about a year doing research, and looking at many crops. My initial gut feeling was flowers. When I talked with other farmers, and members of the business community, they would guide me to just about any crop BUT flowers. I decided that the general public did not understand how flower farming looked, and after investigating others (mushrooms, organic veggies, truffles, etc.) I was still feeling the flowers in my heart, and decided to go with my gut.

I started interning, and learning. After I joined the ASCFG, I would spend probably 6-8 hours a day reading the Bulletin Board, and talking flowers with the local extension office, or anyone who would listen. I must have sold many flowers in my conversations prior to sowing my first bed. I attended my first ASCFG conference before I had the farm deeded to me.

What has been your biggest challenge? Funding. Having enough money to grow until I can make a profit. I expect to make a profit in year three, so the coming winter really scares me. My second biggest challenge is the negative mindset of many of the farmers here, some of whom seem to be waiting for me to fail. Educating people is also a



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challenge, and yet so rewarding. I have developed enough curiosity and interest now. Over the last couple of months, I have had garden clubs out to the farm, and it has driven more customers to me (saves on time and gas and money).

What has been your biggest accomplishment? Just being a part of transforming the farm. I had a concern that farming would die out as my uncle retired. My generation is 4 women, and I think that most of the farm will be sold upon my uncle's death. That said, I thought I was the logical one to continue farming, and I was at a transitional point in my life. Second best moments are having people come out to the farm, and seeing the amazement in their eyes at what I am growing, and the techniques I use. Another encouragement is when folks are driving down the road, and just lay on the horns, and I hear that as cheers of support.

What are your favorite flowers to grow? Tuberose and sunflowers. Well, hell, whatever is blooming each day is my favorite. I did have a fabulous double yellow peony stem this year; only one but I drove it all over town showing it off.

How did you find the ASCFG? Gary and Sybil Calder. They gave me old copies of trade journals, and have always been there to answer my questions. I use my mentors sparingly, and listen to their wisdom.

What is the best advice you have been given? Vicki Stamback spoke at an ASCFG Conference about how many

times she was turned down for a loan, and how she just kept persisting until she found a source for funding. I think she said she was denied 4 or 5 times. At that time, I was having the same experience with the banks, and it gave me hope. I did get a conventional loan, and then an FSA loan. I applied for a grant for a high tunnel but do not expect to get accepted until next year.

What is one thing you've learned the hard way? I think that everything I learn is the hard way. I am often too confident, and as I am aging, I have to come to terms with my physical limits. I am very strong willed, and yet it does not work when it comes to the physical farmwork. I now know I need someone to help me, and now have this great young man who brings strong skills to my farm. I could not have gotten this far without him, and when I started I thought I would just be a one-woman show. Hahaha. Biggest lesson is that I need a team working with me to achieve my goals. Didn't figure this right in the business plan.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Dead in the fields, or planning my first vacation since becoming a flower farmer. Profitable, and smiling, and surrounded by God's beautiful flowers. I will have a solid business model operating at a profitable pace, and a solid continued growth plan. I would like to teach others by using part of the land as an incubator farm.

This incubator would be property on which “new” farmers can lease/tend a small tract of land, and develop growing skills through experience. The new farmer would have access to my equipment, and learn to care for all aspects of a growing system. This provides chances to learn on an operational farm, so that when they strike out on their own, they will have a better understanding of ALL it takes to make a farm work profitably.

Agribusiness would provide 30% of the farm income. I consider “agribusiness” to mean other ways to earn income for the farm, like garden club visits, kids’ summer camps expeditions, on-farm events, education, and information for people who want to grow flowers. I think this is a natural for me, and my showmanship. I can definitely engage and inform, and love working this angle. You would be surprised at how many people are just so curious about what and how I am growing. I recently took my flowers to the county commissioners’ USDA Soil and Water Conservation meeting, and shortly after, four of them visited my farm. I have several side jobs, especially potted flowers/herbs.

Melrose’s mantras are “The secret is in the soil.” and “If it ain’t fun, we ain’t doing it”. She loves the solitude of weeding and says “I am known to offer a weeding tool to visitors as we are walking, and I am spending time with them. I tell them this is how it works for me to spend time, and why not bend over and exercise while you are at the farm. I call it yoga weeding. Yo go the weeds!”

It’s obvious that Melrose has thrown her heart and soul into flower farming, and we have absolutely no doubt she will continue to become a huge success in Smithfield, all while having fun. Thanks for sharing, Melrose.

Editor’s Note: At the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, Melrose shared the happy news that she had been approved for a grant from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Its Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers. The goal of is to assist producers to extend the growing season for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.

MIDWEST

Kent Miles

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Sitting here the last week of May, I wonder what our summer will be like, weather wise. We recently received our first measurable rainfall - three hours of gentle showers. Other storms in our area always seemed to go around us.

Spring started off with March temperatures in the upper 60s to the high 70s, so we started to direct seed our first bed of sunflowers by March 15th. Just cut the first one last week. In a normal year our first sunflowers are being cut the first week in July for the farmers’ markets. So this year we are a month ahead for market sales. Germination and reseeding that bed was not up to par. I believe the soil temps were too low. It felt warm so I thought I would try an early bed of them. We usually direct seed our sunflowers. As a result of the first bed, this year we are trying something different by sowing them in plug trays. Having the intern sow ten (210) trays every two-three weeks in has made the beds fuller. She is an international student and asks “How many more?” This has gotten much better results.

In March and April we finished some crops that normally would be harvested the last weeks of April and beginning of May. We harvest the snowball ciburium in the green stage and it went all to florists. This year we tried something different with this crop, by selling it in two grades: 5 stems/bunch, 24-36”, and shorter stems, 12-20” with ten stems/bunch.

Our lilac and aronia florist sales also finished in March and April this year; normally these would have been sold at farmers’ markets in May. We sell black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) in bud or in flower. Japanese beetles often ravage its foliage so that it’s unsalable by summer.

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) is sold in the fall. The red-berried variety ‘Brilliantissima’ doesn’t seem to have Japanese beetle issues, so it’s sold with the berries and colored foliage in August and September.

The peony crop was a month ahead of schedule. The reds and early light pinks were showing a lot of promise this season. They had good stem length and bud count with color showing. Then we had one night of 27 degrees and a following night of 29 degrees. Overall we were down 30% on this crop due to the freeze of previous years’ harvests. Some of the heads never matured, and some that were showing color had too much petal damage inside the heads.

Thank goodness for our later varieties. We were able to offer peonies all month. In normal years, we sell peonies from mid May through the first two weeks of June.

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So what will this summer be like: dry? extreme heat? flood? drought? We will just deal with it when the time comes. As of this writing we have not been able to locate a host farm for our Regional Meeting this summer. If anyone would like to host a meeting contact me via e-mail or phone and we can set something up for the future. We are thinking of perhaps doing a webinar of some sort after the National Conference for anyone not able to attend.

Hope everyone has a productive and profitable summer. See you at the National !

SOUTH-CENTRAL

Rita Anders

Cuts of Color

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My spring has been life changing, and one I'll never forget. I was the most organized and exited about my business as I've ever been and then... my dad got his cancer back and my life took a dramatic change. During this time our part of Texas actually came out of the drought, experienced little or no real

winter conditions and it felt like spring began in January. It was awesome growing conditions and I don't believe we lost a plant to any freezing conditions. I carried a tomato crop through the winter and not once did the heaters come on in the greenhouse.

From the end of January to the beginning of April I pushed myself and my employees to keep up with all that we had planted and tried to maintain the weeds because everything was and is growing like gangbusters while I was going to the hospital at least 3 days a week to sit with my dad who was fighting his battle, and spent about 4 hours on the road everyday going back and forth.

Unfortunately he did not win his battle and we lost him on April 9th. I'm supposed to fill our regional members with ongoing in the region but at this time there is nothing that can come out of my head except thoughts of my wonderful dad. He was a wonderful Christian man; a dairy farmer, rancher, pecan and peach grower; father; husband of 55 years to my mom, and a great friend to many and filled with knowledge. He knew more about farming than anyone I know. He could look at the grass or plant and tell you what it needed without a soil test. I am so blessed to have had him as a dad.

He taught me work ethics that have made me successful with my business. I worry about today's generation because a lot of the youth do not have work ethics or morals. My dad inspired me to follow in his footsteps and teach our children those same good work ethics. Nobody wants to work anymore and you have to go through several employees to find one good one. It's so hard to be the boss sometimes and not hurt someone's feelings and tell them they aren't working out but we have to remember we are in the

business to make money instead of being frustrated when it takes that one employee to cut one sunflower while you are cutting four.

During my dad's illness and death, I always knew how important life and family are but now I really know. When dad passed he left us a nice family farm loaded with cattle, a pecan orchard and the desire to keep his operation going for my mom. Of course I can't do both—but wait a minute, yes I can. So I've had to rethink things and more or less mainstream my operation while still running my dad's. I'm definitely learning to delegate duties and not have to have my fingers in every part.

This whole ordeal has thought me to prioritize and get rid of baggage. Baggage is plants you like to grow and add in there but they don't really make any money.

I was able to attend a few farmers' markets during February and March and two other two growers, Kim Haven and Gita van Woerden, also had amazing springs. Gita was able to grow beautiful tulips and a lot of new crop material that she has never grown before. Kim planted lisianthus in the fall and on Mother's Day she had 2' tall lisianthus stems harvested from 4' tall plants. She sold 10-stem multiple bunches for \$12.00. I grow lisianthus by planting out in March and don't harvest till the beginning of June, but no way would they ever reach four feet and have that kind of vigor.

Local green movements and supporting local farmers are still very much alive and prospering in our part of Texas. My wedding business is great and seems to be getting better all the time. Weddings can be such an interesting venture. I've had the opportunity to make everything from bouquets, corsages, halos, flower garlands for cakes, wreaths to a lay for a horse that a bride rode into a wedding on.

In March I was called to do all the arrangements for a wake funeral. Then in April when my dad passed, one of my florists took all my flowers and made all the sprays for the family from my flowers. She made them look spectacular and you can't imagine how that made me feel. Two weeks after the funeral, our son was married and his day brought tons of joy to our family and needless to say, I did all the flowers for their wedding with lots of family help and that great florist friend of mine.

Interesting note on the flowers: My daughter-in-law wanted anemones, larkspur, delphinium and dahlias for her choice of flowers, all purple. I held all the flowers in the cooler for three weeks to the wedding date and they held amazingly and looked awesome for the wedding. I would never do that for a sale to a customer but for a wedding where they are used only for that weekend, they worked great. I sprayed all the flowers with crowning glory to keep the moisture after they were designed but didn't put them in the cooler till they were sprayed for at least two hours.

While I was so busy with my life, Nancy Bartlett from Louisiana was planning a wonderful Regional Meeting to be held at her place on August 6th. Look on the website for any and all information and if you have any questions, please call or email me at ritajanders@cvctx.com .

NORTHWEST

Diane Szukovathy

Jello Mold Farm

diane@jellomoldfarm.com



One year ago on a Friday in May, Dennis and I stopped at a friendly neighborhood food co-op in Seattle to get a cup of tea so

we could find the energy to finish up a winter landscaping job. It was 10:00 in the morning and we had started our day at 3:00 a.m., hauling flowers to market after a rugged week of harvesting and getting the summer field crops in. This is an incomprehensible schedule to most in our culture, but fairly standard for us flower farmers when the season kicks in. Sometimes it makes me cranky, but the work always manages to get done.

Anyway, I had to walk past a garish display of imported flowers to get to the tea. My eye got caught by a 3" diameter sticker on a few stems of anonymous,



imported carnations. It said, "Locally hand-tied in the Pacific Northwest with Environmentally Certified and Sustainably Grown Flowers--Buy Local, Think Global" in large letters. Clearly this was a deliberate attempt to mislead

consumers that this was a local product. I lost it.

I demanded to see the person in charge of merchandising the flowers. Well, it wasn't quite that simple, they said. They didn't really have a floral department and the store manager explained that I could leave a message for the merchandiser who handled floral purchases for all of their stores. And I did...

Four days later, I was at the International Floriculture Expo in Miami Beach, sitting in a hotel lobby when she called me back. It was not a fun conversation. First she explained to me that their company was not only dedicated to supporting local agriculture, but that providing jobs to people "hand tying" the flowers was also something they were proud of. She explained that it wasn't that simple to just sell my flowers and those of other local growers. She knew about our cooperative, but in her mind, she'd already figured there was no way we could meet their needs of UPC coding, scheduled deliveries, etc.

I said, "Hey, our industry is dying out here. If you don't want to make the effort to work with us, at least don't make false claims on your products and mislead the customers as to what they are buying." I asked her if she could tell me which farms their flowers were coming from so I could verify their claim of "environmentally certified and sustainably grown". She admitted that the flowers came through a wholesaler and she did not have that information.

Unbelievable to me, she did not appear to understand that cut flower farmers are part of local agriculture, even though her store chain flies huge "LOCAL" banners and

makes a point of selling local and organic produce. It was a chilling moment. She was not kind, and after about twenty minutes, I had to set the phone down for a while so she could keep talking and I could keep my cool. I was painfully



aware that future sales potential for more farms than my own rested with this communication.

At some point she learned that I was talking to her from Miami, that I had enough interesting things to say that they'd brought me out to be a speaker on local and sustainable flower marketing to the largest floral merchandising conference in the country and she got a little more respectful. That made me madder.

In the weeks following, some core members of our cooperative and I made a point to visit other grocery stores around Seattle and found that this issue of greenwashing and false claims of "local" on anonymous flowers was pervasive. We puzzled about how to change this situation. We felt that if we got a scathing expose published in one of the local papers, it would probably just embarrass some people for a short period of time, burn some bridges and result in a continuation of status quo. Not the result we were looking for...

Then the truly busy season hit at the market, and this whole issue went into simmer mode for the summer. About the last week of September, just before our first frost, a friendly new face appeared at the market who informed us that she

was the new floral merchandiser for the store chain who got this story started, and could she please establish a relationship to start selling our local flowers? She admitted that her company did not have a dedicated floral merchandiser so her primary job was in another department and like her predecessor, she knew very little about the floral industry. She knew enough, though, to know she wanted to start doing things differently.

We agreed to work together to build a program and launch it for Mother's Day the following year.

As I write this, we are exactly one month into delivering cooperatively made bouquets and bunches to their nine stores. They are selling better at some stores than others. It's too early to tell yet whether we can make our program stick with this particular company, but it feels good to play an active part in trying to find a solution. We are aware that "doing the right thing" for this store chain will only fly in the long run if it also makes money. The grocery floral phenomenon began with the advent of cheap imported flowers and while our quality is spectacular, there is a steep learning curve to educate customers about fair value and why the "real" local flowers aren't the cheapest ones.

On one hand, it is a benefit that the stores do not have floral departments because the store personnel are trainable in new ways. On the other hand, we are engaged in a constant program of education which takes a lot of time and energy. For example, bunches of sweet peas were included with our last delivery and one of the floral staffers asked what they were! The new floral merchandiser has been continuously supportive. She would like to sell only local flowers at her stores, but she is caught in the same price point game as her competition. We have worked up small display signs about our farms, so consumers can know where these flowers came from, but getting them to put our signs on our products, not just the flowers in general, has been a struggle.

The insult I took from one too many dubiously labeled bunches of grocery carnations a year ago is still plenty

memorable. I know now that this situation of pervasive greenwashing and treating flowers as somehow separate from the "buy local" movement has resulted from a world of ignorance, chaos and collusive malaise rather than a deliberate assault on our industry. No matter who is to blame and why, the result is still the same.

According to a recent SAF study, grocery and chain store sales now account for forty percent of cut flowers sold in this country, and the trend is growing.

I take heart from having witnessed the change that came with organic produce a decade ago. As that realm has proven, price point is not the only factor driving consumer choices and many will make conscientious decisions about their purchases when given proper information, including truth in labeling and alternatives to choose from. Careful, constant education is key and real solutions are going to take patience, teamwork and cooperation.

WEST

Christof Bernau

UCSC Center for Agroecology
christof@ucsc.edu



Way out West, on the edge of land and sea, where the North American plate collides with the Pacific plate, the long dry season is upon us. Most of the Western region received well below "normal" levels of rainfall this year. In many of the West's agricultural areas, we were down by as much as 50% below average. Regardless of whether you receive your water from surface sources such as rivers and streams, from one of our many reservoirs, most of which are supplied by snowmelt—that



frozen reservoir high in the mountains—or from your own well water drawn from hidden aquifers, dry years are always an important time to reflect upon all of your growing practices, your choice of crops and how water is distributed, used and reused on your farm.

Starting with the soil, have you done all that you can to increase your soil's water-holding capacity? This is most readily accomplished through increasing the organic matter content of your soil. While this is a slow and multi-year process, raising soil organic matter is fairly easily done through the use of compost and by incorporating crop residues directly into your soil. As you build organic matter, you simultaneously increase water-holding capacity, soil aggregate stability, the tilth or workability of your soil, and your soil's resistance to erosion, compaction and other forms of degradation. While incorporating organic matter into your soil brings many benefits, it is also important to limit the frequency and extent of soil cultivation, because excess cultivation volatilizes organic matter, degrades aggregates, and can contribute to both compaction and crusting. Though the subject of another conversation, both deep and shallow soil cultivation need to be undertaken within an ideal soil moisture window, which for most soils is between 50-75% of field capacity. Soil cultivation out of this window is another prime contributor to wind borne erosion, aggregate degradation, crusting, compaction and plow pans.

Choice of crops is often driven by our markets and by what is adapted to our local climate or the climate possible in high tunnels and greenhouses, but if your water is in short supply, it also makes sense to consider if there any particularly thirsty, but nonessential crops in your repertoire. Perhaps more important than eliminating crops that work for you, you might ask yourself, am I delivering the right amount of water for each of my crops across their life stages? Am I providing too little water? Usually not a problem, because plants readily let us know if we are undersupplying water. Am I delivering too much water, to depths beyond the root zone of my crops at their current life stage? Unfortunately, the literature on cut flowers rarely provides enough detail about typical root depth of our crops, and certainly not across their lives from seedling to harvest. Yet this is a critical question because too much water can contribute to soil-borne pathogens such as damping off fungi in germinating crops, to the leaching and loss of precious nutrients and to inefficient use of precious water resources.

Here, I believe it is imperative to do two separate things: better understand your plants and better understand the movement of water in your soil. First, learn more about your crops and their root nature by digging up several plants across their life cycle to gain firsthand knowledge about the extent and depth of their roots. If done carefully, your plants will suffer only minor setbacks, but sacrifices will be minimal, especially in comparison to the new knowledge you gain. At the same time, it is important to understand how the water you deliver moves through your soil. This can be done through the use of a simple soil probe or soil auger, which you can insert into the soil at progressively greater depths to see how far a given irrigation set moves into your soil. For example, through sampling and extensive observation, we know that one inch of water moves approximately 8" deep when applied at 50% of field capacity. If I have shallowly rooted seedlings, one inch of water is going to be far more than required, but if I am irrigating mature stock, whose roots are 12-15" deep, then more water and/or delivery before 50% of field capacity is necessary for the health of my crop.

Assessing soil moisture can be done both by qualitative or "hand-feel" methods, and by quantitative methods, using tools such as gypsum blocks, tensiometers, time domain refractometers, and other sophisticated soil moisture measuring devices. While highly reliable, these devices can be expensive and can limit the number of possible sampling sites due to the infrastructure required. Shovels, post hole diggers, and soil probes, on the other hand, are inexpensive, highly portable and provide rapid assessment of current conditions. However, the qualitative method requires practice

and consistency to achieve accurate results, and because of its subjective nature, there is some potential for inaccuracy. Along with lots of practice, one useful resource for making qualitative assessments is the USDA publication "Estimating Soil Moisture by Feel and Appearance", available through your local NRCS office or online at: http://www.msue.msu.edu/objects/content_revision/download.cfm/item_id.483981/workspace_id.-30/FeelSoil.pdf

This is all standard practice in agriculture, but building knowledge of soil-water interactions, the precise needs of our crops and the influence of current weather patterns, taken together, can contribute to much more effective use of resources, saving water and conserving nutrients. Mulching, repairing leaks, the use of drip irrigation, and avoiding overhead water in the heat of the day or when it is windy, are all useful and easy steps to conserve water. Really knowing your soil and your crops water needs is a more involved process, but one that will contribute to greater crop health, farm viability and sustainable use of the resources we must have to grow what we love.

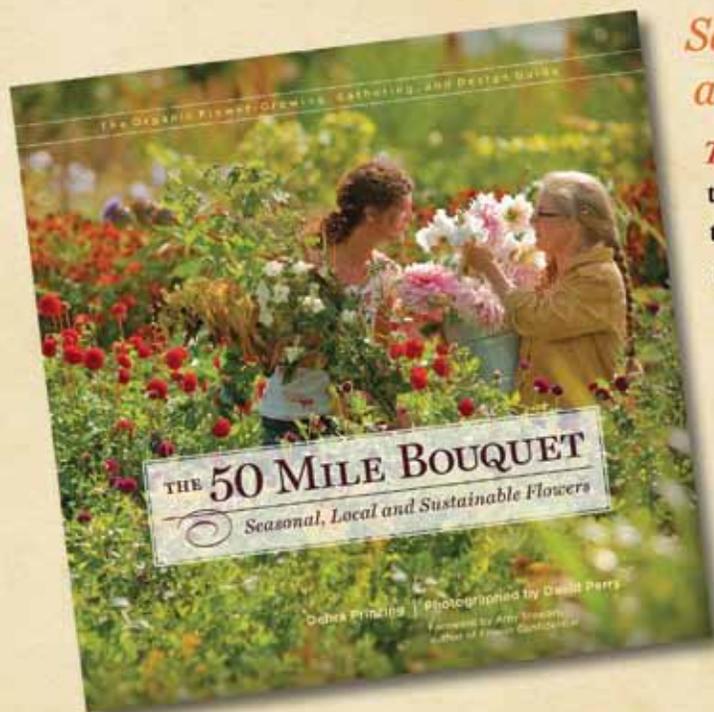
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Seasonal, local, sustainable flowers are in — and they smell wonderful!

The 50 Mile Bouquet is the first book to spotlight the “slow flower” movement – the dramatic transformation in how cut flowers are grown, designed and used. With in-depth reporting and breathtaking color photography, this visually elegant book takes us into the fields and studios to meet the dedicated farmers and designers at the forefront.

The 50 Mile Bouquet

By Debra Prinzing Photography by David Perry
Foreword by Amy Stewart,
author of *Flower Confidential*
ISBN-13: 978-0-9832726-4-9
\$17.95 US/\$19.95 CAN
144 pages, full-color, hardcover
Available in April, 2012



Cut Flower Tour and Educational Field Day

August 6, 2012

Sponsored by the University of Maryland Extension in cooperation with the ASCFG

M & M Cut Flower Farm
16415 Comus Road, Dickerson, Maryland
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Registration fee: \$25.00 per person.
Includes lunch and morning snacks.
Check made payable to University of Maryland.
We do accept credit cards.

Send registration to Suzanne Klick,
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or email at Sklick@umd.edu

GrowerTalks, 1951

“News & Views”
written by Carl Ball,
June 1951.

... In previous issues of GROWER TALKS we have often strongly advocated a more intensive effort to cultivate the use of flowers in the home, pulling some of the emphasis off the “feast or famine,” special occasions type of business. ... [Jerry] Brookins has hit his mark on this deal. His flowers go out every week, delivered for \$1.00; seasonal surplus flowers are used to excellent advantage and charges are billed monthly. It’s a surprise package; the customer isn’t told what it will be until it’s delivered, unless he asks. This way, it’s a surprise to the competition. This, we feel is merchandising!



2012 ASCFG Elections

The reinvention of daily life means marching off the edge of our maps. *Bob Black*

There is no ideal way to divide such a large and variable land mass like North America into practical and logical Regions for a trade association. The original system has been changed only once since the original was created in 1988—a pretty good record. It's time for a redesign. In order to better serve its members, the ASCFG Board of Directors proposes changes to its Regions:

- Montana and Wyoming to join the current “Midwest” Region, to be renamed “North and Central”.
- Arizona and New Mexico to join the “South and Central” Region.
- Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington to constitute the “West and Northwest” Region.

This redistricting requires changes to the organization’s bylaws, which requires a vote of the active membership. Please watch your email for instructions on voting on this issue, and please participate in this year’s election when it’s time to vote.

Assuming the above changes are made to the ASCFG bylaws, Paula Rice has agreed to run for Regional Director of the West and Northwest Region. The ASCFG appreciates Paula stepping up to represent the new region.

West and Northwest Regional Director

Paula Rice

I dreamed the dream of being a flower farmer back in 2006 and promptly joined the ASCFG in 2007. After attending my first National Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina, I was hooked on the organization and devoured (and continue to devour) every resource it offers. Growing and selling cut flowers in remote northern Idaho (and most places, I am sure) requires fortitude, ingenuity, and perseverance. I thoroughly enjoy the challenges I face when reaching into different markets and even creating my own new markets. I cannot believe how my flower business has grown and flourished; it has all surpassed my wildest dreams and expectations. The mentoring and help I have received from fellow growers has been indispensable. I would love being a Regional Director to share what I have learned and discovered to help, in any way that I can, anyone who is “dreaming the dream”.



Are You Connected?

Take advantage of the ASCFG’s newest online service. 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 members 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.

Treasurer

Josie Crowson

I joined the ASCFG ten years ago, and that was the beginning of a fabulous journey. A complete horticulture novice, I soaked up as much information as I could from the wonderful ASCFG members and in 2003 started my cut flower business—Josie’s Fresh Flowers, in Nacogdoches, Texas. I sold my flowers to florists, at the local farmers’ market, and by subscription, and loved it all. I helped build the Nacogdoches Farmers’ Market and chaired its first board in 2010-2011. I also served as the ASCFG’s South and Central Regional Director from 2008 to 2011, a job which I thoroughly enjoyed.

In November 2011, George and I sold our farm and moved to Fredericksburg, Virginia to be closer to family. Although it was sad to leave the farm and the flowers, we are happy to be back in the area we consider home. So now I am retired—but certainly not tired. I’m ready for the next challenge and I would be delighted to serve as ASCFG Treasurer. As a retiree, I have time to devote to that job and I believe that my background provides some unique qualifications for it.

I have a PhD in economics and worked for many years in the financial research and corporate finance areas at Freddie Mac. (That may not sound like a good thing, but I left long before the Freddie Mac fell apart.)

It would be an honor to again serve on the board of this organization which has so enriched my life.



Secretary

Linda Doan

My jack-of-all-trades/master of none personality lends itself well to our method of growing and marketing cut flowers. We grow on 1½ acres and have 3 part-time employees whom we cherish. We sell at a strong Saturday market, host arranging workshops like “lilacs n laughter” or “teapots n tablecloths” at our century farm, and do many weddings and events. We enjoy our easygoing market customers, our usually easygoing workshop folk, and our rarely easygoing brides, but it’s this variety of customer that keeps us growing. What allows us to grow is primarily the knowledge base provided by the ASCFG. I have learned much from attending grower’s schools, regional and national meetings, farm tours, and from scouring the BB, but my favorite way to learn is through sharing face to face with fellow ASCFGers I’ve met along the way.

My willingness to be a candidate is directly related to my desire to contribute to the ASCFG. Any qualifications I might have for office stem from faculty days at a small Christian college that included much committee and chairperson work and years of coaching and teaching, as well as from being a bit higher on the cut flower food chain than I was when I planted that first sunflower 9 or 10 years ago.



Barbara Lamborne

I have been passionate about organic gardening for decades, and have been farming for six years. I grow cut flowers, berries, and select vegetables on 2 ½ acres with my husband, Dennis. We sell mostly at farmers’ markets in northern Virginia. I attended my first ASCFG meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina, and have relished the connections with other cut flower growers, as well as their steadfast support. The ASCFG provides an important channel for my passion that exists beyond my farm, my crew and my customers. I want to play a larger role in the organization to help spread the word on the value of buying domestic cut flowers.

Prior to farming, I worked at the Environmental Protection Agency for 20 years, heading up a multi-agency effort to use a common database of nomenclature for all living organisms. It was a huge challenge, bringing several federal agencies to the table to agree on this multilayered, complex system. It was successful and is still in use today.

I am running for office to show my wholehearted support of this great organization that has helped me succeed in the wonderful world of flower farming.



Congratulations to Members Celebrating Ten Years with the ASCFG!



Cynthia Alexander



Josie Crowson



Andrea Gagnon



Joyce Holzapfel



Deborah Hurley



Barbara Jewell



Larry Johnson



Ella King



Carol Larson



Marian Maloney



Jerry Meyer



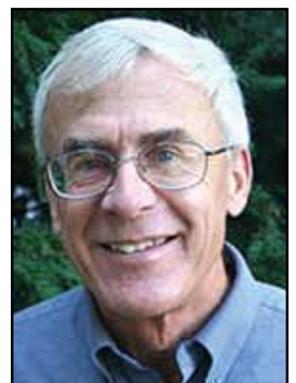
Joe Schmitt



Tammie Stanley



Quinton and Carolyn Tschetter



Chris Wien

The ASCFG Welcomes its Newest Members

Nancy and Haley Abramson, Rooster Ridge Farm, Aptos, CA

Susan Barganier, Greenville, AL

Jan Barker, The Garden House, Lawton, MI

Hope Bloesch, Vashon, WA

Anja Bruland, Blomsterhagen på Abildsø, Oslo, Norway

Susan Bruss, Olli's Farm, Hartwick, NY

Lizabeth Cardella, Collie Flower Farm, Woodstock, IL

Billie Clifton, Sunflower Cottage, Middletown, VA

Rachel Dixon, Dogwood Farm, Pescadero, CA

Doug Dobecki, The Sun Valley Group, Arcata, CA

Stephanie Hall, Sassafras Fork Farm, Rougemont, NC

Rebecca Headd, London, England

Celeta Hickman, The Ujamaa Agricultural Coop., Pittsburgh, PA

Ederina Housley, The Housley Corp., Rehoboth, MA

Kim Kiec, Front Royal, VA

Sandra Laubenthal, Peterkort Roses, Hillsboro, OR

Theda Little, Baton Rouge, LA

Chad Miller, KSU Dept. of Horticulture, Manhattan, KS

Melissa and David Palmer, Florum Flower Farm, Titusville, NJ

Linda Parkowski, Walnut Hill Flowers, Frederica, DE

Norman Peterkort, Peterkort Roses, Hillsboro, OR

Phil and Diana Plant, Solar Hills Gardens, Vacaville, CA

Susan Poneman, Heavenly Hydrangeas Floral Design, McLean, VA

Sonya Sappington, Nine Acre Farm, Skillman, NJ

Nancy Schultz, Flower Crossing, Dalton City, IL

Kelly Sullivan, Botanique, Seattle, WA

Angela Tomey, Little Boy Flowers, Nevada City, CA

Niels Van Noort, Our American Roots, Woodland, WA

Kevin Vincent, Lafayette, GA

Rita Wehner, Peace Flowers, Campton, KY

Michelle Wiggins, Concord, MA

Ben Wrenn, The Peony Patch, Reidsville, NC

Mel Heath 1943-2012

Mel Heath, owner of Bridge Farm Nursery in Cockeysville, Maryland, passed away this spring. His friend Dave Lines helps us remember Mel and his generous spirit.

Melville French Heath II left us on April 12, 2012. A heart attack. A sad surprise. A bad day for us all. At 69, he seemed too young to go.

First and foremost, Mel was a gentleman, in the finest sense. One who fell in love with growing beautiful flowers, particularly specialty cut flowers. Perhaps it was a midlife crisis that started his interest, not unlike many other ASCFG members.

Some time in 1996, Mel Heath joined a yet-to-be-named group of cut flower growers in a meeting at the Maryland Department of Agriculture. He was enthusiastic and he wanted to know everything about growing cut flowers. Shortly after that gathering, Mel came to our flower farm to visit—and to pump me for information. He wanted to learn absolutely everything: soil, cover crops, best varieties and where to get them, mulch, fertilizer, soil tests, labor, harvest, selling, and on and on. He stayed all day. That evening, he left with seeds, plants, catalogs, and a thick pad of notes.

And then there were those long telephone calls in which Mel would ask questions about flower growing for hours.

In the 1996-1997 "Maryland Cut Flower Growers" flyer, Mel had a simple listing: "Bridge Farm Nursery - wholesale May to October. Elegant variety of annuals and perennials."

Bridge Farm Nursery was a former horse farm in Baltimore County's Hunt Valley. Mel transformed it into lush crops of flowers. The paddocks became rows of peonies. The pastures were plowed and the soil improved by incorporating many successive plantings of buckwheat. He planted acres of woodies: hydrangeas, willows, viburnums, winterberry, red twig dogwood. Mel loved bulbs and perennials, especially

crocosmia, Dutch iris, and dahlias. Delphiniums thrived under his hand. He converted much of the stable into a large walk-in cooler. He bought a brand new potato digger for his tractor, just to dig his dahlias in the fall.

Within a few years, Mel was taking full page color ads in the ASCFG Buyers' Guide.

He truly loved growing cut flowers, all of them. He once told me that a Baltimore wholesaler suggested that he grow only statice because it was a product that the wholesaler needed in large quantity. But Mel said no. He couldn't possibly grow only one type of flower, because it would have been boring and he would have hated it.

Over the years, Mel gave back much more than he had received. He hosted many farm tours for the Maryland Cut Flower Growers, the ASCFG, and the University of Maryland extension service. He taught classes on cut flower production. He freely shared his plants with others. He served as President of the Maryland Cut Flower Growers, which recognized him as Grower of the Year in 2008.

Above all, Mel was a friend. A friend who was always friendly and happy to see you. He made others feel appreciated. We will miss him.

Dave Lines, Dave Lines Cut Flowers, La Plata, Maryland



Judy Laushman

Everything Old is New Again

In celebration of 75 years of *GrowerTalks*, the folks at Ball Publishing's *GrowerTalks* have reprinted articles, photos and other tidbits from past issues. Two recently caught my eye.

The piece on this page was written by Vic Ball (son of Ball Seed founder George J. Ball) in 1949. He exhorts flower sellers to “doll up” their cut flowers with a cellophane sleeve, and for that extra touch—“another angle”, as he calls it—include a card in each sleeve, listing the grower name and the flower cultivar.

Today growers spend time creating attractive marketing packages. Customized sleeves can be printed with the producer's logo and contact information. Flowers sold at grocery stores are accompanied by photos of the farmers who grow them, and their children helping harvest them. Farmers' market vendors add colored tissue paper and wrap those sleeves in matching raffia. Today we call that “added value”. To Vic Ball it was common sense.

Describing what may have been an early form of a flower subscription service, Carl Ball reported in 1951 that a florist was delivering “seasonal surplus flowers” to his customers for \$1.00. The writer called this an example of “efforts to cultivate the use of flowers in the home, pulling some of the emphasis off the ‘feast or famine’, special occasions type of business.” See this piece on page 33.

Sounds a lot like current, and past, floral industry programs designed to promote everyday purchase and use of cut flowers and other plants, to the American consumer. This flower seller created a one-man game plan. Without the internet.

In 2012, ASCFG members use online forums to discuss charges for delivery to florists, weddings and events, and their own established subscription services. Rates are a bit higher than \$1.00 per trip, but growers are still looking for ways to make their flowers as relevant to buyers as possible.

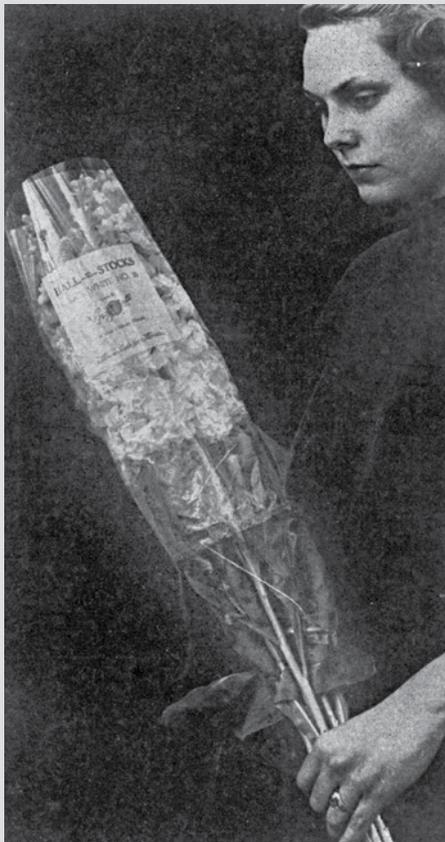
Fritz Bahr, in what many growers consider the first bible for floriculture, his *Commercial Floriculture*, wrote “I am convinced that the future of the florist business rests entirely in our own hands. In no other part of the world is there a better chance to develop this industry than here, or a better market.”

These are the same thoughts expressed in virtually every issue of every horticulture and floriculture periodical – and online message – which crosses my desk (and computer monitor). The good news is that ASCFG members are undoubtedly up to these tasks.

GrowerTalks, October 1949

“Try Cellophane Flower Wrapping By Vic Ball

On the competitive wholesale markets of our day, the grower's problem is always to present his stock to the buyer looking just a shade more “buyable” than the next fellow's. Of course, good growing, good varieties are 99% of the battle. But you'd be surprised how much a 1c [sic] sheet of Cellophane can doll up a bunch of Snaps, Stocks, or Poms. Stems, flower size, general quality being equal, you can be sure the Cellophane wrapped stock will sell out before that not wrapped—or wrapped in paper. It looks nice, and it reflects that little added care on the part of the grower to get his stock to the user in better shape. ... Another angle—you can put a little 3 x 5 inch slip inside the Cellophane so it will show thru [sic]. This can be an attractively printed label giving the grower's name, the variety.”



Welcome to the Growers Supply Wholesale Partnership Program - We are looking forward to being your one-stop shop for growing, gardening and nursery needs. As a member of the ASCFG, you are now able to enjoy these membership benefits.

Preferred Wholesale Pricing on Growing Supplies

15% to 20% average discount on most products.*

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Further discounts on bulk purchases mean even bigger savings!

Competitor Price Matching

We want your business! We match or beat competing prices on all "like" products.

Personal Service and Single Point of Contact

Call our Wholesale Partnership team directly at extension 133. We want to earn your business!

Faster Shipping

We will expedite your orders through our system and always communicate tracking information.

No Sales Tax

Delivered to your door without the extra cost of state sales tax.**

Flexible Financing Options

Including 0% interest, \$0 down, no payments for 6 months.***

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2% merchandise rebate when purchases exceed \$5,000 over a 12-month period.

No Commitment or Expiration

There will never be any membership fees with this program and once enrolled, you stay enrolled.



What's next?

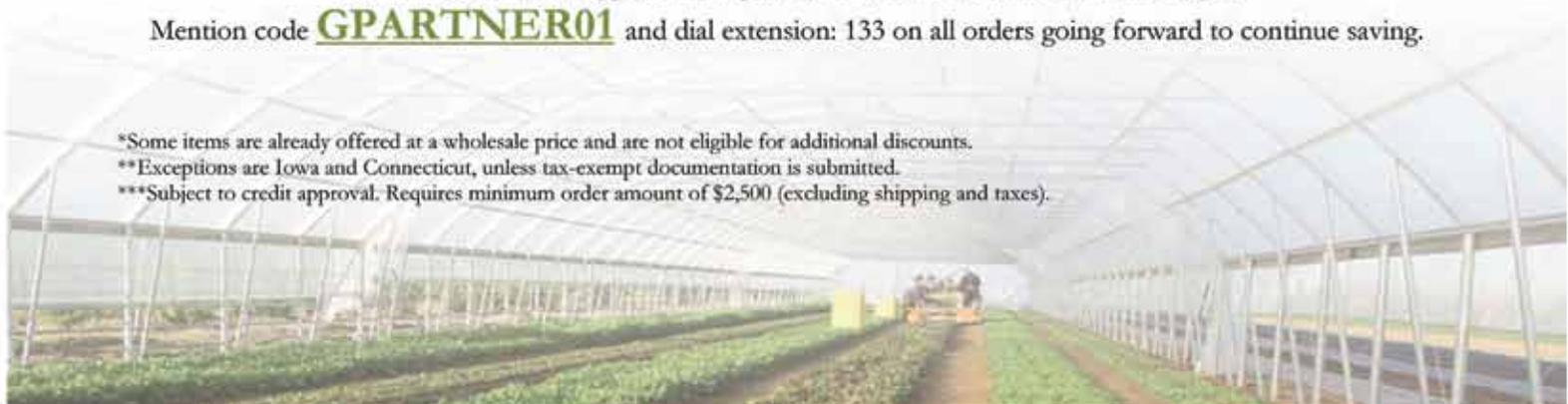
Take a look through our wholesale catalog and let's get started. Call **1.800.476.9715 Extension: 133** or email wholesale@GrowersSupply.com to place your next order and receive a free gift!

Mention code **GPARTNER01** and dial extension: 133 on all orders going forward to continue saving.

*Some items are already offered at a wholesale price and are not eligible for additional discounts.

**Exceptions are Iowa and Connecticut, unless tax-exempt documentation is submitted.

***Subject to credit approval. Requires minimum order amount of \$2,500 (excluding shipping and taxes).





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



2012 National Conference and Trade Show

Tacoma, Washington
November 12-14

