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The **Cut Flower**

Q U A R T E R L Y

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

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Cover photo courtesy of
Kathy Dudley, The Bloomery

*How can one help shivering
with delight when one's hot
fingers close around the stem of
a flower, cool from the shade and
stiff with newborn vigor?*

- Colette

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An Election Year? Who Knew?

Dave Dowling



Have you heard? It's an election year for the United States. That's right, but just about every year is an election year for the ASCFG. The Board of Directors changes a little bit each year as members' three-year terms expire. The cycle is staggered, so that experienced folks will be on the Board as new Officers and Regional Directors are elected to it.

See the candidates and their bios—as well as information for the Cut Flowers of the Year—on page 34 and please vote in the election later this summer.

There seem to be a few new faces each year when your Board meets to guide your association into the future. Without these fresh faces and fresh ideas, the ASCFG would probably still be printing a newsletter in black and white, producing a ten-page member phone book, and the office staff would be relying on mailed paper ballots for the election.

Instead, we have our amazing magazine, *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, the only periodical dedicated solely to growing cut flowers. We have a new searchable Member Directory in the Members Only section of the ASCFG web site. And our Election Ballot arrives in an online newsletter with a simple electronic ballot. You can vote in your pajamas. No hanging chads, no long lines at the polls, and no campaign signs littering the lawn out front. (Unless you put them there yourself.)

Speaking of voting in your pajamas: This year, your ASCFG National Conference is being held during the week of the U.S. Presidential Election. Be sure to use your state's absentee or early voting method to cast your vote. Then head to the ASCFG Growers' School and National Conference, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, November 6th through the 9th. We've made sure the ASCFG fun ends on Tuesday in time for attendees to watch the election night results. Just don't stay up too late celebrating or commiserating, whatever the case may be. The buses leave Wednesday morning for some great tour stops. We will not have a "blue" bus or a "red" bus (although the losing political party may have a few party buses for sale...) ASCFG tour buses are nonpartisan "flower" buses. Please keep your on-bus discussions flower related.

No matter who moves into the White House next January, we all have the same dreams and aspirations for our cut flower farms and businesses. We want to produce great products and be able to sell them at a fair price, making enough money so that we can do it all again the following year, all with a work/life balance that some days seems impossible to achieve. Some of us are on autopilot, where the business is just humming along and doing fine. Some may be working hard at expanding and increasing

business. Others may be just squeaking by, barely making ends meet.

Whatever your situation is, or what your goals may be, streamlining your business to be the most efficient it can be is one of the most important things you can do to insure continued success. Something as simple as cleaning all the buckets *before* you need them can save time and money in the long run. Creating a marking system to indicate which flowers went into the cooler first

can increase quality and reduce the amount of flowers that get too old to sell. Developing a planting schedule and sticking to it can increase sales because you'll have flowers ready when you need them.

If you look around your farm, there are probably dozens of things that could be done different, and better. You just need to identify those things, and then make the conscious decision to carry through with the changes needed.

See you in Grand Rapids!

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Kathy Dudley, The Bloomery

by Jodi Helmer

Eighteen years ago, Kathy Dudley got a phone call that changed her life: She was living in Tuscaloosa and working at the University of Alabama when her mom called from Butler, Pennsylvania, to tell her the local flower shop was for sale.

“I thought it would be so fun to own,” she recalls.

Dudley inked a deal to purchase the business, packed her bags, and moved back to the East Coast to start her new life as a florist. The Bloomery opened in 1998.

Although she loved working with customers to create beautiful wedding bouquets, funeral flowers and special event arrangements, Dudley often had trouble finding certain blooms and, when she was able to order the flowers she wanted, the stems arrived wilted or damaged.

To improve the quality of the flowers she sold at The Bloomery, Dudley worked out a deal with her parents, local vegetable farmers, to rent a plot of land to grow her own cut flowers.

“My first goal was to grow products that, as a retailer, I couldn’t get,” she explains.

Dudley focused on growing flowers that were too seasonal or didn’t ship well along with unique specialty blooms. Her first cut flower harvests included parrot tulips, upright fuchsia, succulents, and herbs like mint, sage and basil for cut foliage and filler.

“We’re not growing 10,000 sunflowers a week,” she says. “We do grow sunflowers, of course, but we’re more of a boutique type of farm.”

Until 2010, Dudley juggled the retail shop and the flower farm, working overtime to make sure both endeavors thrived. The stress proved—well, stressful, and she made the decision to close the retail shop and focus on the farm.



Sowing the Seeds of Success

Becoming a full-time flower farmer opened up new opportunities for The Bloomery.

Dudley expanded the farm, growing cut flowers ranging from dahlias, celosia, lavender and larkspur to kale, broomcorn, grasses, and grains. She rented additional space, growing flowers on a half-acre field, a 2,500 square foot greenhouse, and a 5,000 square foot outdoor space to grow flowers in pots.

Growing more flowers—and having more control over what she was growing—proved equal parts gratifying and frustrating.

“I look in the seed catalogs and see all of these beautiful things and want to grow everything and I just can’t,” she explains. “As a retailer, any flower I wanted, I could get. If I wanted tulips in July and I was willing to pay the price, I could import them from Holland. Here, I have to wait.

“When you’re growing flowers, you have to learn to respect nature and the calendar,” she adds. “It’s a great lesson in patience.”

When it came to building the business, Dudley did not wait around.

The Bloomery operates a small CSA with up to 25 subscribers per session. In the beginning, it was a 20-week subscription that ran from May to September. Over time, it morphed based on customer feedback and currently operates as four seven-week sessions; there are also options for aloe plants and a dahlia package in August and September.

Dudley understood how to calculate the cost of goods and manage budgets, which was helpful as she transitioned from retail to wholesale sales and had to adjust her pricing to reflect the new business model.

Dudley also sells flowers to Whole Foods Markets and, thanks to relationships she developed through the floral shop, began supplying flowers to wholesalers. Perhaps the most surprising supporters of the farm are other retail florists.

“A lot of flower shops in the local area didn’t want to buy from [the farm] when I owned the retail shop because I was competing with them,” she says. “Now, florist retailers are more receptive.”

Business in Bloom

But building The Bloomery hasn’t been easy.

Dudley, who has an MBA in business strategy, notes, “My business background is one of the strongest assets I brought into this. It’s given me confidence.”

For starters, Dudley understood how to calculate the cost of goods and manage budgets, which was helpful as she transitioned from retail to wholesale sales and had to adjust her pricing to reflect the new business model.



“I can’t charge a premium price to sell to brides but my costs are lower,” she explains. “My time is equally valuable.”

Running the numbers also helped her understand that her costs were lower without the overhead of a retail shop.

Behind the scenes, the dollars and cents made sense but Dudley had to make sure that the public perception of The Bloomery remained positive. Her experience with branding and customer relations was invaluable when she shifted her business from a retail floral shop to a farm—and having a unique name helped, too.

“The Bloomery is a name that could be applied to anything and it has very good brand recognition,” she explains. “It helped make the transition seamless.”

Having farmer parents also helped ease the transition to full-time cut flower grower.

“There are so many nuances to understanding soil, pests, weed management, fertilizing and the nutrients plants need to thrive and it can be overwhelming,” she admits. “My parents are my constant. I can ask questions and get answers; if I didn’t have them, I’m not sure I would have been able to make it.”

But Dudley did make it and The Bloomery is thriving.

“I used the retail store as a stepping stone,” she says. “Being a grower isn’t just about picking beautiful flowers; it’s about what goes into the business before and after the flowers are harvested; for me, as a grower, I think my time is better spent now. I’m happier.”



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Slugs and Snails in Cut Flowers

Stanton Gill

Scientists who support the concept of global warming have been telling us to expect more violent weather swings. They are right on the money so far, with the floods in Texas in early June. And from the end of April to early June, the Northeast experienced one of its longest rainy periods in several decades, with more than 10 weeks of rain and continuous cloud cover.

This wet, overcast period did not make many cut flower growers happy, as it increased the incidence of botrytis, and resulted in an explosion of slug and snail populations. With the heavy rains on most weekends, and plant and cut flower sales weak, many growers had material stacked up in many greenhouses waiting to go to the fields, making perfect conditions for slugs and snails to flourish.

Eons ago slugs and snails moved from the oceans to land. These migrating sea creatures adapted to feed on terrestrial plant material with their rasping mouthparts. They thrived in areas with abundant moisture. Snails kept their protective calcium-based shell that protected them from predators in the oceans. It was kind of like traveling with a camper that you can pull back into when you are tired or need protection from the elements.

Slugs were a little more adventurous, and their protective cover was reduced to a small mantle plate on their dorsal side. This gave them more mobility than snails, who were encumbered with their shells. When slugs are threatened with drying winds or by a human with a salt shaker, they pull back and try to squeeze as much of their body as possible under the protective mantle cover.

How to Deal with These Slimeballs

When we saw populations increase in our Maryland greenhouses and cut flower operations, we went to the Queen of Slugs, Robin Rosetta of Oregon University Extension. She told me that slugs were “The gift that keeps giving when you have high moisture abundance.”

She also pointed out that not all slugs are alike. Some species prefer cooler temperatures, some prefer warmer. A grower can successfully treat one species, and miss another species not yet emerged from the soil due to temperature or seasonal preferences. Just as with insects, it’s useful to identify species, to become more familiar with timing, preferred habitat, etc. Robin suggested one of the better tools for this purpose: Terrestrial Mollusca Tool. <http://idtools.org/id/mollusc/index.php>

Once detected, many snail species can trigger quarantines in horticulture operations. A common species inducing this reaction is brown garden snail, *Cornu aspersum*, originally a European species, now established in many areas of North America.

Finding slugs and snails may be slightly challenging. They both prefer darkness or dim light provided by evenings, or overcast or rainy days. Slugs hang in dark, moist places protected from the desiccating sun. You are going to have to lift flats and pots to find the slugs or snails.

After you identify the species of slug or snail you have in your greenhouse, the next step in reduction is sanitation. Most are decomposers. Feeding them leaf debris and cuttings will increase their survival. Slug populations can be reduced by eliminating their breeding and hiding places.

Unfortunately, as greenhouse operations get backed up with plants or in the landscape, creating dense plantings, ideal conditions for these pests are also created.

The goal is to reduce the shelter for slugs. Placing plants on raised benches can help increase air circulation around the flats and pots and make conditions less conducive.

In cut flower operations, as much as possible, try to remove logs, pots and other debris from the area. Encouraging toads in the garden helps reduce slug populations. Lightning bug larvae feed on slugs in the gardens.

Slime, excreted by the Mollusca, is indisputable evidence of presence of slugs and snails. Slugs are in the class called Gastropoda. Their beaklike mouthparts cause rasping damage to foliage. Stringy damage, particularly in the interior of a leaf, versus the edge, is often found with their feeding.

Good News for Biological Control

In late March I attended the International IPM meetings in Salt Lake City, where I met with Dr. Parwinder Grewal of the University of Tennessee. We worked with Dr. Parwinder in 2006 and 2007 trying to find a beneficial nematode called *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* that attacks slugs and snails. *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* has been found in California. This find might open the door to bringing a product with this beneficial nematode here from the U.K. This nematode enters the slug or snail through its breathing opening, feeds on its interior, and excretes a deadly bacterium that kills its host.

Check out the South African winery where 900 ducks are released every morning to clear the vineyards of slugs and snails.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/ducks-south-africa-vineyard-2016-4>



Robin Rosetta commented, “Fortunately, the folks at UC Riverside have found the *Phasmarhabditis* nematodes and there is work to see a product develop.” She was not sure at which stage they are. It will be great to have another tool in the tool kit. Rory McDonnell, who found the nematode, has been hired by Oregon State University to be the new “Slug and Snail Czar.” Robin also commented that “Along the Oregon Trail are slime trails too numerous to count.”

BugLady Suzanne Wainwright-Evans says, “The nematode for slug control is still not registered for use in the U.S. BASF has applied for the permit but nothing yet. Also, it was found only in California so no one knows if it will be labeled in other states.”

How About Drying Them Out?

These wise words came from Oregon: “Desiccation is your friend in the war on slugs.”

Morning irrigations, drip irrigation, and fast-draining media help to reduce some of the issues with slugs. Being a dry grower has its real benefits in a soggy season when it comes to slug and snail control.

In outdoor cut flower operations, rain is not in our control but reducing habitat that stays moist during rains (weeds, loose soil, moss, liverwort, etc.) near plants makes life harder on the slugs.

Traps in the Nursery and Landscape

Cut flower growers with time on their hands, or avid gardeners with lots of energy, can place boards or other flat objects on the soil in the garden. Each morning remove the slugs from beneath the traps, and destroy them. The slugs, not the traps. Beer or yeast in a can? Many articles mention placing a can in a

landscape and placing beer in it to attract slugs. This does attract them and they can drown in the liquid, but the can needs to be emptied regularly. This is probably not practical in most cases. You may have better uses for the beer, especially if you are suffering heavy financial losses.

Chemical Control

Chemical control is frequently necessary during extended rainy periods. For best control, apply the molluscicide, usually a pesticide mixed with a bait formulation.

Iron phosphate works well. Some growers have combined iron phosphate with a spinosad product, and chelated iron products such as Ferroxx. Evaluation of the efficacy of these treatments should be determined by a cessation in feeding damage. Suzanne Wainwright-Evans commented that “Iron phosphate product really needs the EDTA in it to make it work.”

Older materials that are still effective include Mesurool and Metaldehyde mixed with bait products. If used in the landscape, make sure the baited material is placed under a board or trash can lid to prevent pets from contacting or ingesting the bait. Metaldehyde affects the cells involved in mucus production, leading to eventual dehydration and death. It works best in conditions when snails have been out feeding (warm periods with high humidity), followed by hot, dry weather. It breaks down rapidly in moisture or sunlight. Snails and slugs might recover if wet conditions reduce their dehydration.

Methiocarb (Mesurool) interferes with the nervous system. This molluscicide works better under cool, damp conditions but is a restricted-use pesticide.

Eventually the weather will turn to sunny and dry, and the snails and slug problem will dissolve, unless you’re growing in high moisture climates such as southern Florida, or western Oregon or Washington State. In that case, move—or learn to live with slugs and snails.



Stanton Gill

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I Had Lunch with Michelle Obama!

Rita Jo Shoultz

Since the early 1900s, the First Lady of the United States has hosted a spring luncheon for the spouses of all Congressional members. It is a huge social event, with entertainment provided by Grammy Award winners, and is literally a red carpet affair. I was among of cadre of flower growers and designers who decorated the venue for this year’s event.

Oh, What a Night!

Technically, I guess it should be “Oh, what a morning!” since we started at 3:00 a.m. I had been in the Washington Hyatt Ballroom before—actually at the podium with President Reagan—so I was surprised when this time I entered and it had grown in size. Maybe that was just a misconception, because what I saw immediately was 160 round tables, a very, very long promenade and another very, very long head table. Our task was to install beautiful bouquets so that no matter where you looked, you would see American Grown Flowers. Luckily, there were some really talented and energetic people standing right there with me.

There was a bit of silence before we all took a breath and started what appeared to be a fully orchestrated plan. Even though we all had never worked together, everything seemed to click. I’m sure that was due to our excellent leadership team, the breathtaking American Grown Flowers, designed by Andrea Gagnon and Daavid Reed, and another volunteer with

endless energy, Michael Novobilsky. They were both from David Beahm Experiences; they had to be a bit tense as the day after this event they were doing the Knot Dream Wedding.

The first time I entered the holding area, the scent of literally thousands of fresh flowers arranged in the most breathtaking bouquets overwhelmed me; I was ready to set up my tent and live there forever. But that lasted only a few seconds before the parade of nine 4-tiered carts started rolling out to the elevators to their destinations. As the carts rumbled past I thought of the number of growers who had contributed the flowers for this huge undertaking, and was humbled by their generosity and the overall magnitude of our assignment.

In December when our group, Certified American Grown, did a fly-in to promote American Grown Flowers to our illustrious leaders in Washington, D.C., on the very last day at the very last hour, five of us were invited to the Congressional Club House. I’m reluctant to admit I had no clue. However, it became clear quickly that we were going to be allowed to provide the flowers for the First Lady’s Luncheon.

As soon as we left the Club House I called Piet Wierstra in Oregon and asked if he would donate peonies for the occasion as I would not have any at the time. He said yes but to coordinate with Martin Mesker, his broker. I’m sure the same thought was going through everyone’s mind “Where do we get enough American Grown Flowers

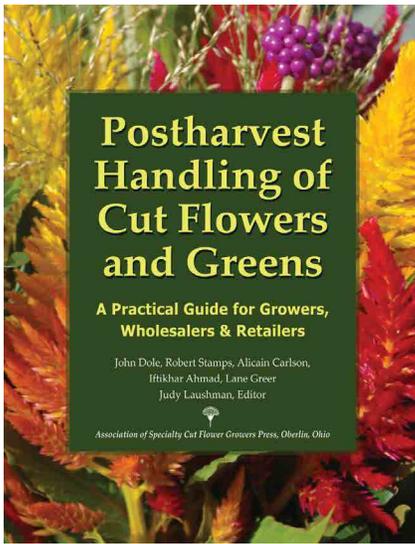
donated for the occasion?” But as we all know, American flower farmers are generous.

As we all worked in this huge room, so huge we often lost track of each other, I saw in the distance Slow Flower’s Debra Prinzing working quietly on the promenade. Beautiful in her own right, Diana Roy of Resendiz Brothers Protea is another one of those who works quietly just getting things done. Kasey Cronquist seemed to be having a great time. I don’t think I saw him one time without a huge grin.

For me the experience was invaluable: not only the excitement of such an auspicious event, but meeting new folks in our industry, making good contacts for future business, and the satisfaction of being a small part of a beautiful accomplishment. I knew this was a huge step in our campaign to have only American Grown Flowers in the White House. As a Council member of Certified American Grown, I encourage flower farmers to become involved in this organization. The rewards are superb and the cause is worthy.

How do you measure success? The first meeting for the 2017 First Lady Luncheon has already happened at the Congressional Club House. And guess who has been invited to provide the flowers?

Rita Jo Shoultz is the owner of Alaska Perfect Peony in Fritz Creek. Contact her at ritajo@alaskaperfectpeony.com



Here's a taste of what you'll find in the book to be published by the ASCFG—*Postharvest Handling of Cut Flowers and Greens*.

Zinnia

General information: This quintessential garden flower has steadily increased in popularity to become one of the most important field-grown cut flowers. *Zinnia violacea* (formerly *Zinnia elegans*) is available in a broad range of colors, lacking only true blue. Bicolors and green zinnias are also available. Be sure to select cut flower types as many compact garden zinnias are available. Zinnia is generally field grown, but can be grown in high tunnels, especially in cool climates.

Stage of harvest: Harvest full flowers as soon as the stem below the flower is rigid to reduce broken head.

Expected vase life: What is the vase life of zinnia? This should be a simple question, but to quote Janet Foss “Sometimes they last and sometimes they don’t.” Cut zinnias are sensitive to bacterial stem rot, microbial growth in the vase solution, and proper dosing of floral preservatives (see below). While any one of these factors can reduce vase life, commercial holding solutions increase vase life and should be used.

In North Carolina State University trials, over a dozen zinnia cultivars have been tested, and vase life for most cultivars was 7 to 14 days. A few cultivars such as ‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’ and ‘Uproar Rose’ lasted much longer, up to three weeks. Dozens of cultivars have been evaluated in the ASCFG National Seed Trials, where growers reported an average vase life of 7 to 8 days for most of the varieties, with individual growers reporting anywhere from 3 to 16 days. ‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’ and ‘Uproar Rose’ were reported to last an average of 8.3 and 9.3 days, respectively, with individual growers reporting 6 to 12 days.

Grower, wholesaler, and retailer treatments: First, make sure buckets are clean, cutters are clean, and fresh solutions are used when handling cut zinnias. Commercial hydrators can be used immediately after harvest for a few hours, but do not leave flowers in too long. Slow release chlorine tablets are particularly effective and stems can stay in the solution for longer. After hydration, place in commercial holding solutions, which will increase vase life by one to five days for most cultivars and should be used. However, zinnias are sensitive to overdosing; do not leave them in flower foods with sugar for more than two or three days.

Storage and shipping procedures: Zinnias should not be stored for more than a week in water, and never stored dry, as they often won’t rehydrate. There are many reports of zinnias being sensitive to cold storage temperatures. Experimentally, cut zinnias can be held for a short time (1 to 2 days) at 33 to 35F (1 to 2C), but longer storage results in damage, which shows as brown spots on the petals. To be safe, store at 40 to 45F (4 to 7C).

Ethylene: Ethylene has no effect and 1-MCP and STS use was not beneficial.

Foam: Foam will shorten vase life by one to several days

Comments: As if the postharvest challenges were not enough, the neck under the head is hollow and stems should be handled carefully to avoid bent neck.



‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’

For the most complete information on the performance of several zinnia cultivars, and postharvest handling test results, spend some time at North Carolina State University’s Cut Flower Page <https://cutflowers.ces.ncsu.edu/cut-flower-cultivar-trials/>

American Floral Endowment Intern Scholarships

John Dole
North Carolina State University



Finding the right intern for your farm can take some time. Fortunately, the American Floral Endowment (AFE) has instituted two intern scholarship programs that offer great opportunities for both students and employers in floriculture. The AFE collects applications from students and works with them to select a business with which to intern. Upon completion of the paid internship, the students receive a substantial scholarship. These programs are especially important considering the number of academic programs around the country that require students to complete an internship. Information on the internship programs, including videos and intern reports, can be found at: <http://endowment.org/internships/>

Vic & Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program

This program gives students the opportunity to gain practical floriculture or horticulture experience while training at a commercial production greenhouse or nursery.

Students will intern away from home for three-, four- or six-month periods, and upon completion of their paid internship, will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 (three months), \$3,000 (four months) or \$6,000 (six months).

Mosmiller Intern Scholarship Program

Interns train at a leading retail, wholesale or allied trade operation for a period of 10-16 weeks, acquiring valuable on-the-job work experience. Upon the successful completion of their paid internship, interns will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$2,000.

Applications for both internships are reviewed twice a year. The deadlines for submitting applications and supporting materials are March 1 and October 1.

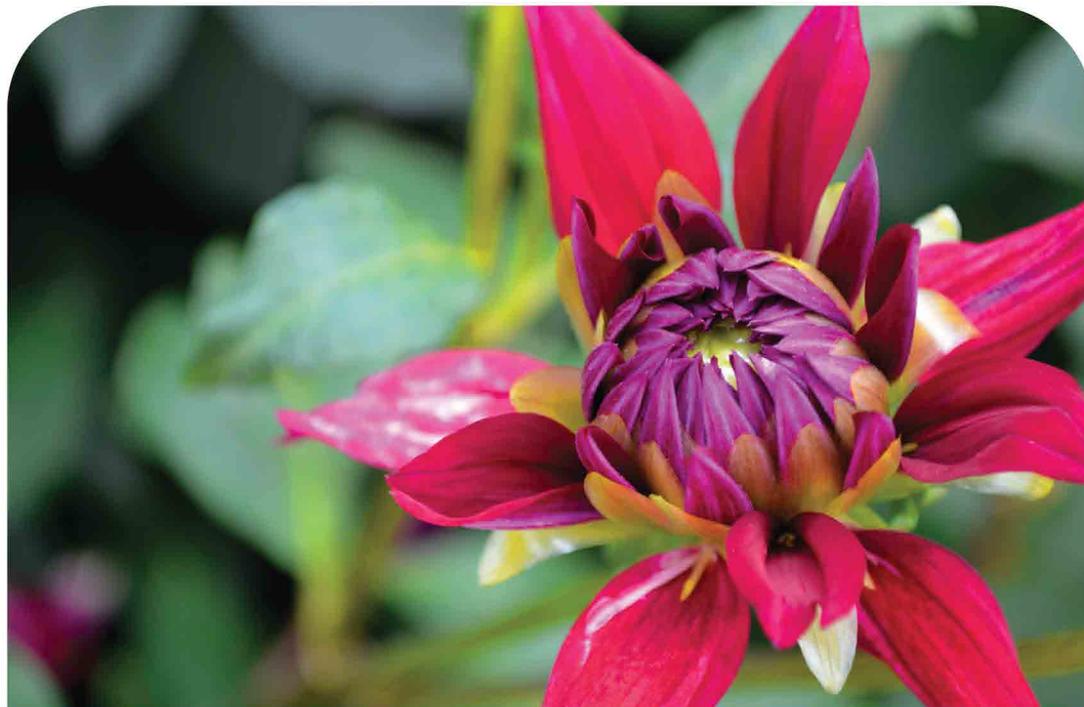
Becoming an AFE Intern Employer

The programs are a great opportunity for businesses to receive interns and have their internship programs publicized. The student applications are reviewed by the AFE to select those with the greatest potential. Thus, employers have a chance to work with some of the best floriculture students in the country. The AFE is always looking for host employers. More information can be found at:

http://endowment.org/ball_employer/
<http://endowment.org/mosmiller-employers/>



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Fazed by Zinnia Spots?

This May Be Why

Margery Daughtrey

Zinnia leaf and flower blight caused by *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *zinniae* (*X. c. zinniae*) is so familiar today that it is rarely studied. Luckily, it causes only localized spotting and none of the systemic effects found with the bacterial diseases of geraniums and begonias caused by other (different) *Xanthomonas* strains. All too often, though, this bacterial disease of zinnia steals the profitability of one of the most popular bedding plants by causing ugly spots on leaves, stems and flowers.

This bacterial disease was first noted in Italy in 1929 and the pathogen was identified in southern Rhodesia in 1949. It was first found in North America in Ohio and North Carolina in 1972. Over time it has been found in many countries around the world, including Australia, Brazil, India, Malawi and Sierra Leone. Recently, it reappeared in Europe and first reports were also published from China and Korea, where the disease caused conspicuous symptoms on garden plantings of zinnia. In the United States, this disease is seen often in gardens and occasionally in greenhouses, particularly towards the end of the production season when temperatures are warmer.

Symptoms

Infections caused by *X. c. zinniae* first show as tiny, watersoaked spots on leaves or petals, just a few millimeters in diameter. There is often a yellow halo around each individual roundish lesion. Symptoms tend to appear first on the lowest leaves. Older spots may be larger, angular, brown patches bounded by the leaf veins, which may dry to a tan color.



Under disease-conducive environmental conditions (warm and humid) new spots will begin to appear only 4 to 8 days after bacteria have splashed onto the leaves—imagine how fast the symptoms can multiply in greenhouses with overhead watering in late spring! In a plug tray, infection may appear first on cotyledons, which may dry up and fall away. This means that the presence of the bacteria may go unnoticed until the environment changes and there is another wave of symptoms on older plants.

Seed Transmission

This bacterial disease is so persistent in the flower industry largely because the pathogen may contaminate the surface of seed. The bacteria may also be harbored within organic debris associated with poorly-cleaned seed. Almost forty years ago, Dr. David Strider at North Carolina State University worked extensively with this disease, demonstrating conclusively that it was seed-borne. He also attempted to find effective controls, and determined that a seed soak in 10,500 ppm sodium hypochlorite (the active ingredient in bleach) would disinfest zinnia seed effectively. Seed companies are generally loath to do a seed treatment that will lower germination even slightly: it is hard to choose between preventive disease management and a predictable, near-perfect seedling stand. Strider ruled out streptomycin seed treatments because they caused a temporary chlorosis and stunting of zinnia seedlings, and ruled out hot water soaks because the effective temperature for eliminating the bacteria significantly reduced germination.

Environmental Factors

The bacteria are favored by warmth and are able to grow at temperatures as high as 95°F. Often the problem escapes notice early in production, only to cause symptoms on zinnias being finished in pots for later-season sales. Symptoms are frequently noticed just as plants begin to flower. The disease is also regulated by moisture availability: water splash from irrigation, crowding and poor air movement will encourage disease development and spread. During dry periods in the garden, the disease will be quiescent, whereas rainy summers cause the disease to be all too evident.

Host Range

The bacterial leaf and flower spot of zinnia is a disease that we have thought of as host-specific, but modern studies have shown this to be only a partial truth. This disease has been seen to occur naturally only on zinnia, but Chinese researchers recently observed symptoms on *Aster tataricus* (tatarian aster), *Rudbeckia hirta* (black-eyed Susan), and *Bellis perennis* (English daisy) when they inoculated plants with *X. c. zinniae* collected from spotted zinnias. None of the 19 non-asteraceous plants they inoculated developed symptoms. Most alarmingly, studies in Ohio have shown that tomato can also be a host; cabbage, lettuce, pepper, and radish plants inoculated under the same conditions did not develop symptoms.

Management

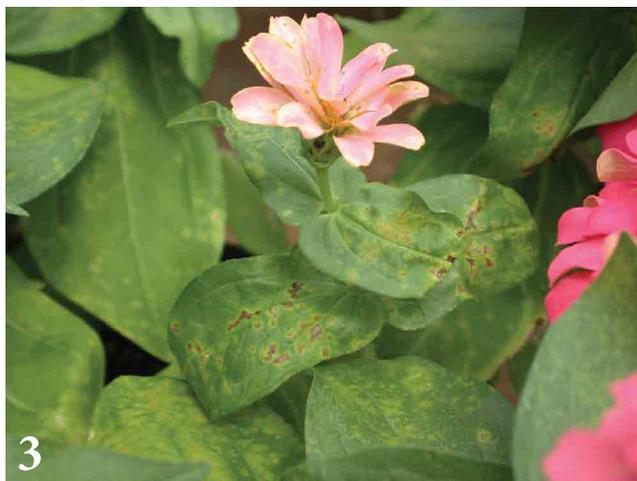
Until there is a rainbow assortment of *Zinnia elegans* bred to be resistant, the key to managing this disease is to tightly control the pathogen in the seed production fields or to treat the seed after harvest to remove bacterial contamination. Over half of the commercial seed lots tested in the early 1970s were found to be contaminated at a low percentage with *X. c. zinniae*, but seed quality appears to have vastly improved in this respect. Once the spots show up in a greenhouse zinnia crop, the only recourse is to discard the plants showing symptoms and treat the rest to fend off the disease.

Few treatments are available for bacterial disease control: copper fungicides give some benefit if the bacterium has not become resistant, but many of them leave a conspicuous residue. Another option is the biological control *Bacillus subtilis*, which may be applied as various formulated products in alternation with copper sprays. Keeping leaf surfaces as dry as possible is critical for getting control of a *Xanthomonas* outbreak. Subirrigate, use trickle irrigation or water carefully by hand early enough that foliage dries before nightfall; space plants well and have good air movement in the greenhouse. Now that we know tomatoes may be infected by this bacterium, it would be wise to grow zinnias apart from tomatoes, lest the inoculum be shared from one crop to another.

Monitoring can be very valuable, particularly in the first two weeks after seeding: watch plug trays closely for any sign of spotting and pull out contaminated trays. It is best to get a disease diagnosis before disposing of quantities of plants: the *Alternaria* leaf spot can look similar to the bacterial leaf spot, and preventive treatments are different for the two diseases. In the landscape, control of bacterial leaf and flower spot is best done by planting resistant or non-host plants—and choosing open, sunny sites to grow zinnias.

Margery Daughtrey is Senior Extension Association at Cornell University's Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center. Contact her at mld9@cornell.edu

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Photos courtesy of Colleen Warfield

1. Infections caused by *X. c. zinniae* first show as tiny, water-soaked spots on leaves or petals. There's often a yellow halo around each individual roundish lesion.
2. Symptoms tend to appear first on the lowest leaves.
3. Older spots may be larger, angular, brown patches bounded by the leaf veins, which may dry to a tan color.

Clarification on zinnia leaf and flower blight from Chris Beytes

From *Acres Online* May 17, 2016

The May *GrowerTalks* had a fine Pest Management piece by pathologist Margery Daughtrey on zinnia leaf and flower blight (page 78).

The folks at PanAmerican Seed and Sakata wanted you to know that not all zinnias are created equal when it comes to susceptibility to diseases, and they penned the following note and asked if I'd share it. So I am:

“Something that growers may not be aware of is that the Double Zahara and Double Profusion series of zinnias are highly resistant to not only *Xanthomonas* leaf blight, but also to powdery mildew and *Alternaria* blight. These interspecific hybrids, known as *Zinnia marylandica* (syn *Z. hybrid*), are a cross between the highly susceptible *Zinnia elegans* and the highly resistant *Zinnia angustifolia*. The built-in resistance means that chemical control measures for these three leaf spot pathogens are not necessary for *Z. marylandica*, saving growers both time and money. In fact, some of these treatments may actually be detrimental to plant health. This is in stark contrast with *Z. elegans*, which more or less requires that control measures be deployed when growing this crop; however, most breeder/producers of *Z. elegans* do their best to mitigate the presence of seed transmissible pathogens.”

Yoga

for Growers - Part Three



By Jeriann Sabin
Bindweed Farm

We are all farmers, right? So chances are you have experienced some sort of back pain on occasion, or may even have some constant nagging back pain. It seems like every task on this farm involves some sort of back-wrenching maneuver.

Unfortunately RT and I are part of a particular ASCFG demographic—farmers over fifty who have farmed over 20 years—yikes! (Actually RT will be 60 very soon, but he is much older than I, two years at least.) We farm five acres, producing half a million stems per season. Known for sunflowers, we raise over 15 thousand stems of these “mankillers”. I have never weighed a full bucket of suns but I know they are a hernia in the making, and without some therapeutic yoga and a couple of excellent part-time employees we would never survive the season.

Every time you lift anything over fifteen pounds incorrectly—bending over and lifting rather than squatting and lifting with a straight back—your back and core muscles must strain to accommodate the lift. After hours of bending and cutting, and then a few more hours processing flowers for the cooler, lifting and hauling buckets full of water and flowers, your muscles can swell and become inflamed. Continuous overuse and misuse may actually cause muscles and tendons to begin to fray.

Yogis believe that practicing yoga helps restore the body to its natural state; not exactly the fountain of youth, but it works for us. The following exercises are therapeutic and restorative in nature. They are not meant to build or strengthen

the back (that is for another article) but are a way to undo some of the damage a busy flower farmer does each day. I am not a physician so please check with your doctor if you have chronic back pain, diagnosed back issues and/or ruptured or bulging discs. I have listed the exercises in a gentle flow to relax, warm and restore the spine, so to get the full benefit do them in order. You are welcome to pick and choose, find what works for you and your body. All you need are loose clothing, a rug or yoga mat, a chair, and fifteen minutes.



Knees to Chest

Lying flat on a rug or yoga mat, draw your knees up towards the ceiling and, placing your hands on your knees, move your knees in a circular motion. Rotate your knees in both directions, clockwise and counter clockwise. The position of your knees corresponds with your back, so the part of your back that is directly under your knees is the area being “massaged”. During tulip season, RT may pull 500-600 stems a day. He is tall and has to bend over to work in the cramped conditions a greenhouse presents. He is usually leaning over a tulip bed with his back at a 30-degree angle, and even though each pull is not a big thing, after hundreds of repetitions and the little give at the end of each pull, his lower back can seize up. To keep his back in shape he may make a hundred knee circles every day!

Egg Beaters

Bring your knees towards the ceiling again; now make circles with your knees in opposing direction, circling outwards, like an egg beater. Reverse direction, circling your knees towards each other. Continue as long as needed to relax and unwind your lower back.

For a deeper massage for your lower back, cross your ankles and grab your toes with your peace fingers and make big circles with your knees in both directions. This offers me great relief. I make the

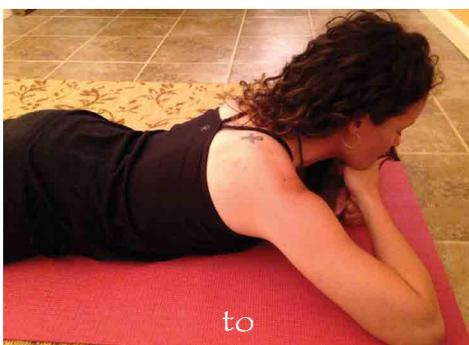
deliveries, so I have super active strenuous days on the farm, and then long days sitting and driving. This simple exercise is a lifesaver for me because it works out and massages the muscles connecting my lower lumbar to my glutes.

Open Book

Bring your knees together, kneecaps towards the ceiling, and gently let your legs fall apart, away from each other, like an open book. You can reach down and rest your hands just below your knees on your shins or thighs and let gravity and the weight of your legs press your back into the mat and gently release your hips. Relax and take ten long, even breaths. This is a passive exercise—let gravity do its thing, just breathe and chillax. Close your eyes and imagine your spine melting into the mat, each vertebra being supported by the floor, and the weight of your legs creating a comfortable opening in your hip joints. If you have had a hip replacement, this one may not be for you. Check with your physician first.

Cat-cow

Gently roll on to all fours. Take care to stack your shoulders over your wrists and your hips over your knees. Take a big breath, and as you exhale begin to arch your back like a big Halloween cat, pushing your spine upwards, and let your head drop naturally. Lift up through your thorax, letting your shoulder blades separate and make space between your blades and spine, push the floor away with your hands. Now inhale and reverse the position. Beginning at your navel, let it



drop towards the floor, scooping out your back, begin arching your chest, moving up and out, finally lifting your head and tailbone, and letting your jaw go slack. Move between the two poses with the natural flow of your breath. Do as many as you like. A physical therapist told me this is the most beneficial exercise anyone could do for the back each and every day.

Car Door

Return to a neutral back, on all fours. Swing your hips to the right, just like you were closing a car door with your hips, and turn your head to the right and look at your hips. Now move back through neutral and swing your hips to the left and look over your left shoulder. Repeat this exercise, flowing with your breath several times.

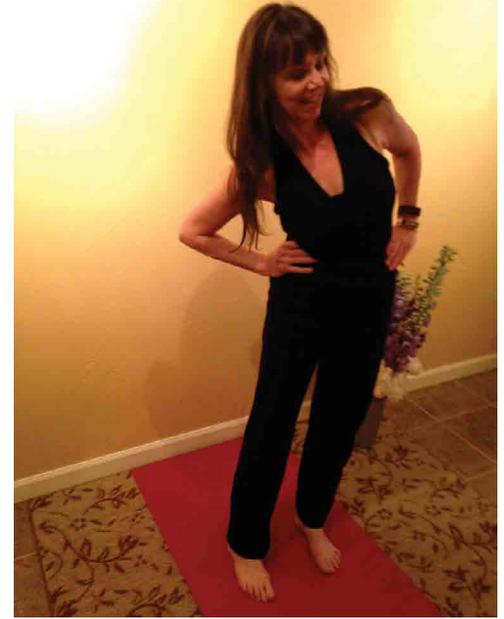
Crocodile to Cobra

This is another passive exercise to loosen your lower back and gently create flexibility. Take it in steps, listening to your body at each step. If you feel uncomfortable or challenged that is okay, go for the good stretch. If you feel pain, that is the signal to stop immediately.

Crocodile: Lie on your tummy with your arms crossed in front of you, parallel with the front of your mat. Place your chin on your hands and breathe. If this is doable, move on to the next step. If you feel really challenged just hang out here for a few minutes each day until you are ready for the next increment.

Next step, make a fist and rest your chin on it. Stay here for several breaths. If this is doable, let's move on. Make two fists and stack them upon each other and





rest your chin on top of them. Relax here for several breaths and decide if you are ready for the next step.

Place your elbows on the floor and rest your chin in your hands, relax here and evaluate your lower back and thoracic area. If you are not feeling stressed or any pain, gently move your chest forward and up, sliding your hands right under your shoulders to help you balance, look down at the floor in front of you so you do not compromise your neck. Congratulations—you are in cobra! Hold your cobra for three breaths and release to the floor. Rock your hips side to side to release any tension and inhale to cobra three or four more times.

Peanut Butter Jar

Come to a full standing position. Feet right under your hips, tailbone down, shoulders back and away from the ears, chin parallel to the floor—this is mountain pose. Put your hands on your hips and shift your right hip way out to the right, now swing your hips to the back, sticking your bottom out and leaning forward a bit to accommodate and balance. Continue swinging to the left and then shift your hips forward, arching the back for balance. Imagine you are scraping the sides of a giant jar of peanut butter—or nutella—with your body. You’ve got it! Just continue making huge circles with your hips and get all that peanut butter. Then switch directions and get all the rest.

90 Degrees

Return to mountain pose, and fold forward at the hips, knees bent, head and neck relaxed, hands dangling down, like a rag doll. Move your hands to your shins or thighs for support and then inhale your knees straight and bring your back up to make a 90-degree angle with your body. Focus your gaze on the floor, keeping your head in line with your spine, and reach the crown of your head forward, elongate your spine and try to make it flat, like a tabletop. Exhale and release to rag doll position. Repeat several times, inhaling and exhaling.

Modified Downward-facing Dog

If you have ever taken a yoga class you’ve done a downward dog or two. It is my favorite pose but it is not for everyone. I have modified it here so you can get the benefits of the stretch in a safer environment since I am not right there with you. You can do it just about anywhere, and believe me, I do!



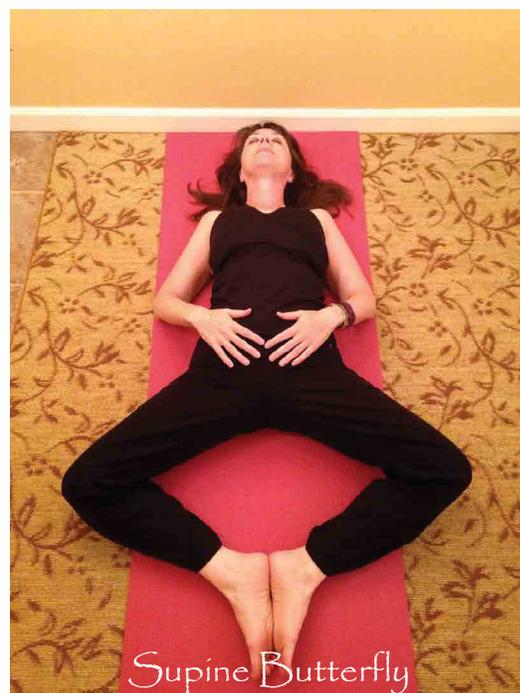
You can use a chair, a table, or even a tractor, just about anything that is sturdy and secure and the right height for you. (For our photo shoot we used a small stool.) Re-establish mountain pose; standing a few feet behind the chair, place your hands on the chair and back up so you can replicate a 90-degree pose, supporting yourself with your hands on the chair. Stretch and breathe. If this is comfortable for you and you desire a deeper stretch, back your feet up until the stretch is really satisfying. Keep your head in line with your arms and just stretch. This pose will lengthen your spine and open your chest muscles, releasing your upper back and shoulders. It should feel amazing; if it does not, move forward and work into the pose over time.

Legs on a Chair

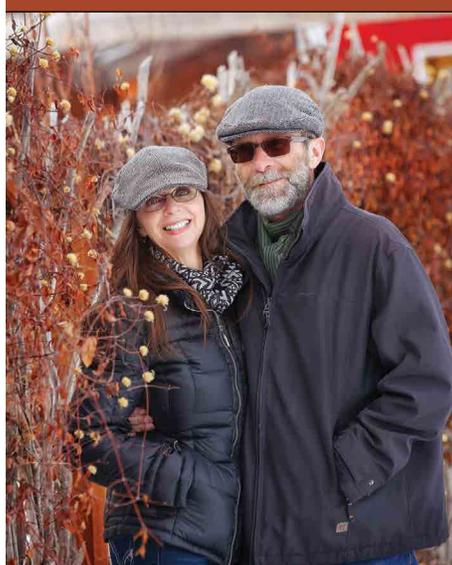
Yep, this pose is exactly what you think it is. Return to the mat, lying on your back. Move your buttocks as close to the chair as needed to rest your legs, with bent knees on the chair. You want your knees and legs at a 90-degree angle. Again, just relax and breathe deeply and let gravity and your body do the work. Your body is a miracle and will tell you what it needs. So still yourself and listen for a change.

Supine Butterfly

Move the chair away, or better yet, have your partner/friend/spouse move it for you. Bring your knees up toward the ceiling once again and put the soles of your feet against one another. Now gently lower your feet and legs to the floor, pushing your feet away from your body until you are comfortable. Your feet and legs will make a diamond shape. Relax here and breathe deeply for five to ten minutes in this very restorative pose. If you are tight and feel uncomfortable in this pose, prop your knees up with some rolled-up towels or pillows. Close your eyes and imagine your spine melting into the mat, relax, and just breathe.



Artist Jeriann Sabin is co-owner of Bindweed Farms in Blackfoot, Idaho.
Contact her at jasabinart@aol.com

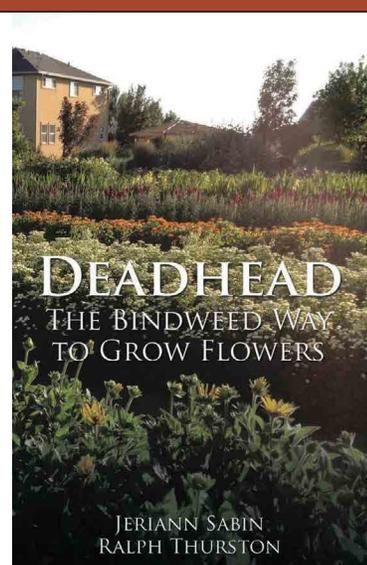


— DEADHEAD —

The Bindweed Way to Grow Flowers

Whether you're ready to take your business to the next level or you're starting your flower farm from scratch, this book can give you a leg up. Part handbook, part business planner, "Deadhead" will help you assess your resources, personal as well as physical, with chapters like the "Importance of Ignorance" and "Testing the Waters".

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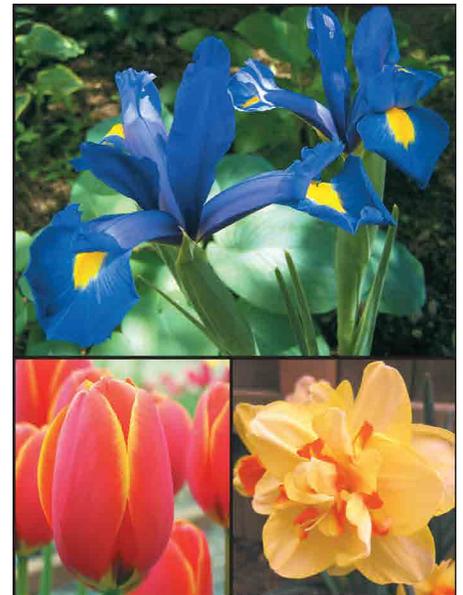
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Cut Flower Events

- July 6** Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting, Washington, New Jersey
- July 17** Field Grown Cut Flower Workshop, Hudson, New York
- August 1** Flower Farming Year Round, West Memphis, Arkansas
- September 14** UMD Cut Flower Tour, Westminster, Maryland
- November 6-9** ASCFG National Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan

NORTHEAST

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces



Diana Doll

StrayCat Flower Farm
diana@straycatflowerfarm.com

Greetings, everyone. At our spring meeting in lovely Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the ASCFG Board of Directors approved a one-time promotions account that can be used for outreach, promotion, and community building. We were prompted to be a part of such events by the proliferation of “mini meet-ups” going on in areas of the Northeast, where many growers are in close proximity and are eager to exchange horticultural and networking information relevant to their particular areas.

Funding may be requested for partial sponsorship of a non-ASCFG event for commercial cut flower growers, hosted by a non-profit organization such as the extension service or an established regional growers’ organization. Since this is a new initiative, we’re testing the waters to gauge interest and to create protocol for the future.

Qualifying events would need to include complimentary registration for an ASCFG representative (such as Regional Director or active member), time for the ASCFG rep to speak, time for the ASCFG video to be screened, and a table for handout material.

The first event to lay the groundwork for the promotions fund comes from Rock Steady Farm in Hudson, New York. On July 17th, they’re hosting a workshop at the Etsy headquarters based in Hudson, and a farm tour focused on high tunnel production in the afternoon. Chris Wien, professor emeritus at Cornell University and now the Executive Director of the ASCFG Research Foundation, will be doing the morning presentation. The Hudson Valley Growers Network is a loose network

of cut flower growers from New York City to Albany that has organized this training in conjunction with their local cooperative extension staff.

Another networking activity comes from Ardelia Farm in what we local folk call the “Northeast Kingdom” of Vermont. There have been discussions at ASCFG meetings about forming a study group to see if the formation of a cooperative to help in the marketing and distribution of our products makes sense on a regional level. The first step was to gather information via a survey forwarded to Nor’easters (spring 2016), so we have some data to consider. And the survey says...“I think my questionnaire raised more questions than it answered!” But it was a good place to start the conversation. Growers who are ready to wholesale to distributors—stay tuned!

Other models available to us via these member benefits include the Seattle Wholesale Growers Market, Fairfield Flowers in Madison, Wisconsin, and eCommerce software, custom-created for ASCFG members to post availability and take orders from wholesale customers.

Is “meet-up” about to become a new addition to the dictionary? The Atlantic Canadian growers had a meet-up earlier this spring, at Humble Burdock Farm in Nova Scotia. They hosted a group of mainly younger growers—lots of folks in their 20s and a few in their 30s, with a handful of folks in their (gasp!) 40s and 50s. It’s so encouraging to know that young folks are reviving the tradition of locally-grown cut flowers and local commerce. As we say often here at StrayCat, “You’re a rock star”!



Nova Scotia flower farmers met earlier this year.

At the spring gathering of the Atlantic Canadian Flower Farmers, the farmers’ market vendor training program was mentioned. I just wanted to share the link for it: <http://wholegreenheart.com/farmers-market/>

And check out this gem: BYOB Bring your own Boots! (and bagged lunch).



Best wishes during the peak of our season. Do access the Bulletin Board archives; there are generations of knowledge recorded there for your reading pleasure.

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia



Lisa Ziegler

The Gardener’s Workshop
lisa@shoptgw.com

Earlier this year I had the pleasure of hosting two ASCFG members here on my farm. Each had purchased a consultation package in support of the ASCFG Research Foundation at the auction held at the Delaware National Conference in 2014.

Maggie Kool of Maggie’s Specialty Cut Flowers came in from Michigan in the dead of winter, and we had a wonderful day of exploring her every question and concern. Maggie is in the planning and building stage of her business so she really wanted to discuss the bones of a small operation. I think Maggie is in the category that many of us are in—looking for a supplemental income doing what we love—growing and selling flowers and she has a desire and plans to do it well.

Maggie and I had a day of discussing seed starting, planting schedules, processing flowers, and where and how to sell them. She said she went away full, but I too benefited! It is always such a bright spot to hear fresh ideas and to consider perhaps there may be a better way of doing some chore you’ve done a certain way for years. How much I learn when we make the time to gather and these discussions happen.

Beverly Lacey of Blue Heron Farm, a seasoned grower from the mountains of Virginia, and her recent addition, farmer-florist Nina Zinsser Booth, came to visit in May. All systems were full speed ahead on the farm and we had a great day of exchanging ideas and filling in the blanks. Nina brings seven years of vegetable farming to the table, and is working toward building up the business to include local wedding work, a flower CSA, DIY brides, and florists.

Excerpts from the note Beverly sent following their visit: “Nina and I babbled the whole way home about all the ideas we picked up. Thank you for offering the visit to support the ASCFG Research Foundation and to pass on all the knowledge that you have accumulated. My main take-away from the visit was that our system here does a fairly good job growing crops and learning about what flowers work as cuts, but we are sorely lacking in the area of entrepreneurial ideas. Hopefully Nina will fill that niche, and your enthusiasm and ideas were just what we needed to get the dialogue going. Thank you, thank you.”

I learned and gained new friendships on both of these visits. Again I am reminded that we must stop and pause to consider how giving back impacts others as well as our own self being. While this was a mere tidbit of giving—it helped all around.

It is so easy to get sucked into a lonely hole out there on the farm by yourself: overwhelmed, hot, tired, crop failures, and perhaps broke. Then, more than ever is the time to gather together with other like-minded folks—meetings small and large are fountains of knowledge, inspiration, and energy.

It is so easy to get sucked into a lonely hole out there on the farm by yourself: overwhelmed, hot, tired, crop failures, and perhaps broke. Then, more than ever is the time to gather together with other like-minded folks—meetings small and large are fountains of knowledge, inspiration, and energy.

While in my beginning years of farming, I worked from sunrise to sunset six days a week and fell into bed at night wondering how in the world I'd get the work list done tomorrow. It never came on my radar to attend a cut flower meeting—who had the time or money for that? Then an ASCFG member invited and encouraged me to attend. What a game changer for my business!

This is your invitation and encouragement to attend meetings. Do all you can to get there; it just might carry you around that corner you'd never make it around standing up on your own.

SOUTHEAST

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee



Tanis Clifton

Happy Trails Flower Farm
cliftonchiro1@gmail.com

My column in the Spring issue of the *Quarterly* included messages I'd received earlier this year from several Southeast ASCFG members. Here are even more to share!

Loretta Ball, The Never Ending Flower Farm, Barnardsville, North Carolina

A few things that I am facing right now for our flower farm are:

- Trying to germinate bupleurum, delphinium, bells of Ireland, and nigella.
- Very sparse germination; I am trying several recommendations, but you can only buy so much seed!
- Succession planting plan: when and how much to plant. I think I will be able to do only two succession plantings this first year.
- How do I handle grocery store accounts while on vacation?

My biggest “aha moment” for last year was counting up the total sales from our little roadside you-pick flower: I made right at \$3,000.00! I was hoping for \$700, to cover the cost of seeds, compost, netting, and metal stakes. And this was on the honor system! I am looking forward to growing again and doubling our profit.

I am super excited about offering DIY buckets for brides this year. I feel more comfortable with my pricing and selling my flowers. I am a little concerned about the other flower farms in



Loretta Ball

our area; I want to keep my prices fair with theirs and do not want to cause conflict with our businesses. It seems there are little flower farms popping up everywhere in Asheville.

Laura Bigbee Fott, Whites Creek Flower Farm, Nashville, Tennessee

I'm a permaculture farmer. It presents lots of challenges, but it also sets me apart. I try to look at permaculture as a way of life. I feel like it imbues my designs—whether garden beds or wedding florals—with resonance and meaning beyond the life of the flowers.

Since I am pretty much a one-woman show, I need to fall-seed and direct seed as much as possible, especially since I am also concentrating on growing all (or at least the vast majority of) my perennials from seed. There is so much that can be fall seeded. I've done a ton of research to try and spread the work around the entire year.

I've been really fortunate that what little marketing I've done has really paid off. My biggest oversight was not having a better web presence, but we got a website up and running and I think it's really going to help. Now if I could just keep the blog posts coming! Actually, here is another thing — mass emails are REALLY hard to figure out! I've developed an email list from signups at my markets, but it's not as easy as it

sounds to send out an e-newsletter. If you send them out all at once, people's email programs will reject them. So it's been a steep learning curve to figure out the tech end of that kind of marketing.

I absolutely see my customers becoming increasingly interested in local flowers! But the education aspect of seasonal flowers is still a challenge. Somehow we've got to get people away from peonies in December and the like. I try to educate gently, but it's definitely an uphill battle.

I've had a weird thing happen three times this year and am just curious if anyone else has had it happen to them: People with money want to buy my knowledge and experience and have me create flower farms for them. It's so weird! One woman, a society maven, didn't even want to repay me! She just thought I would hand over my entire business model to her to replicate! Another was a young hipster tech millionaire who wanted me to build a 7-acre flower farm for him and he would repay me in flowers! The third one was the wife of a prominent surgeon who basically wanted the same thing as the hipster investor. All three would be in direct competition with my farm. And even though I was gracious and polite (inwardly I was shocked and appalled, I have to say!) none of the three of them "got it." Yesterday I got a call from a vegetable farmer at one of my markets who again, wanted a list of everything I grew and how I grew it and wanted a rundown of everything I've done in terms of marketing. I mean, I want to be helpful, but this is so weird!



Laura Bigbee-Fott

I referred all of them to the ASCFG and told them they could learn everything they needed to know from our wonderful cut flower organization. The Bulletin Board alone is worth the price of admission! I am so proud and pleased to be a member of this terrific organization. Also, *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, especially the reports of the ASCFG National Seed Trials, is just a font of information. Frank's articles are always so inspiring! His column in which he talks about how they started gives newbies like me so much hope!

Jonathan and Megan Leiss, Spring Forth Farm, Hurdle Mills, North Carolina

I LOVE the ASCFG! I think it is the coolest trade association ever and I love how the educational mission permeates all the discussions I have (mostly online) with other ASCFG members. Sometimes the cost of attending conferences is a challenge, but I know that no one is making money off of these and it represents the actual cost of putting on the event. And it is always worth it.

In spite of my comment about cost, it is actually scheduling, not finances, that is the main impediment to attending the conferences. I'm a firefighter and the fire department requires me to request vacation for the following calendar year in December, so sometimes if I don't know when the conferences will be it can be difficult for me to get time off. Plus, this year we are finishing our house construction, so we aren't doing much else. I really hope that in 2017 both Megan and I will be able to attend the National Conference.

I really appreciate the resources that ASCFG devotes to cut flower research and I feel blessed to be coming into the industry with the last two decades of information at my fingertips. I am sorry I did not apply for a Grower Grant this year. I had a project in mind but with us building our house there was too much going on for me to keep good records of the results. I hope to apply next year. I have a couple projects in mind; one related to spacing of single-cut stems in landscape fabric, and one related to solar greenhouse design.

One of the most exciting things we are trying on our farm is no-till farming and occultation. We first learned about this concept from Tony and Denise Gaetz at Bare Mountain Farm in Oregon. The topic was discussed further at the Athens meeting in 2015. Finally, Jean-Martin Fortier's book *The Market Gardener* really gets into the most depth. Basically, we are using 5mil



Bethany Cubino of Chasing Skies Photography

Megan and Jonathan Leiss

silage tarps as mulch to speed up the decomposition of organic residue and help eliminate annual and perennial weeds. We just started the practice so this will be our first spring seeing how it works for us. We have already learned a lot, however, and know we will get better at it as time goes on. We really want to use no-till practices on permanent raised beds and we think occlusion is the key to that. We are giving it the trial by fire, as we are having a huge problem with fescue in some of our beds. Smartweed is our next biggest problem. We hope to see noticeable tillth improvement and weed reductions in the near future.

We want to start a CSA this year and one of the challenges we constantly face is having enough foliage for design work consistently throughout the season. Some of our go-to foliages are mountain mint, hibiscus ‘Mahogany Splendor’, solidago, and bupleurum, as well as wildcrafted tree leaves (in the spring) and lespedeza. Some flowers (sunflowers, gomphrena) come with the top foliage intact and this does add to bouquets too. This year we are experimenting with gooseneck loosestrife foliage, and we are planting eucalyptus, ninebark ‘Coppertina’ and ‘Dart’s Gold’. In terms of annuals we are adding ‘African Blue’, ‘Mrs. Burns Lemon’, and ‘Aromato’ basil. We are excited about the basil but also worried that they might not tolerate floral preservatives well. We know we will need to experiment. In the long run we will add more perennial foliages, but for now figuring out which annuals to plant has been a challenge. We appreciate all of the excellent columns on this subject in the *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, including the ones from Tanis.

We had a huge surge in interest in our local wedding flowers this year. However, I can’t say if it is because of a trending interest in local flowers or because of increased awareness of our business in particular. We mostly get clients by word of mouth so as our business gets older we have more word-of-mouth exposure. What we, and I think other farmers are noticing is a huge interest in DIY weddings. Most of our weddings for this year are DIY or a DIY/bouquet combination. Once you factor in our time, DIY is more profitable than design work for us, so we really appreciate this trending interest.

While it isn’t sexy, the thing I am most excited about this year is QuickBooks. Finally we will have an easy and efficient way to keep sales records and analyze our income and expenses. This is a key for a profitable farm, and one that is often lost in the frenzy of farming. I hope to use this information, as well as other records I keep this year, to generate enterprise budgets for a few of our crops and products for next year. Sales to florists make up at least half of our business. This is both

a great success and challenge as far as marketing goes and it depends entirely on the personality of the florist’s buyer and our relationship with them. We have two florists who love our flowers and buy as much as they can. They love the quality, freshness and that we will always have “something different” from what she can get elsewhere. Another florist focuses on the price: he might pay a little more for a local product, but it really has to be within five cents of the commodity crop or he won’t consider it. However, we do appreciate that he tells us what price he is willing to pay. Sometimes, as is the case with sunflowers, we are able to find ways to grow more efficiently in order to lower the price and still be profitable. As we try to expand our florist clients, finding the balance between what is unusual and what is useful, what we can grow at their price and who will pay more for a local product, is the biggest challenge. However, the success is that our products speak for themselves. While we can’t always get the price we want, no florist has told us they aren’t interested in local flowers. I think the awareness of local quality is fairly widespread, at least in our area.

NORTH AND CENTRAL

Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan



Mimo Davis Duschack

Urban Buds City Grown Flowers
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My grandmother passed away at 103 years old this past May. One of her sayings was, “Girl, you are talking out of the side of your neck!” meaning a person is saying one thing, but doing another. Her passing made me reflective about my life and my business.

This year we successfully overwintered dahlias in our unheated high tunnel and hoophouse. We had our first blooms the second week of May and they have been coming on strong since. We were excited to see dahlias blooming three months early and in time for June weddings. They are solid money makers and it made us feel good that our experiment was a success. However, it also gave us pause. Dahlias in May?! Dahlias flowering at the same time peonies were in bloom? What

Perhaps having peonies and dahlias blooming together affects my own sense of time, and offends the flower child within me. Then again they are paying the bills. I guess this is just a conflict I will just have to wrestle with for a while.



month is it? This begged the question: are we undermining our efforts of teaching our customers about the importance of seasonality?

Let's think about this a bit. We are forever differentiating ourselves from the global flower market by offering the freshest blooms available grown locally, at certain times of the year. We have to explain to our florists, our farmers' market customers, and wedding customers that we don't offer a certain flower at a

certain time of year. Local stock in August? Not unless we grow in an air-conditioned greenhouse, and then you couldn't afford them anyway. Peonies in September? Nada. Zinnias in April? Nope. Part of the beauty of seasonal, locally-grown flowers is that they are available only within a certain window that aligns with a time of year. When they are here they are precious.

So when our customers saw the dahlias in May and early June they exclaimed, "Dahlias! Now?!?" On one hand it was great that they had that response because they are learning about seasonality, but on the other hand we wondering if we are warping their expectations of what local flower is available when. But why would this be a bad thing? We are already pushing the harvest time through season extension tools, and they are a necessity for any small farmer who must earn an income (like us and many of you). We educate the customers on how we are cutting ranunculus and anemone March 1 and

why the price is higher than the summer blooms, and we can do this with the dahlias too.

Everyone gets a broader palette to work with, and the global market ships them in anyway. And brides want dahlias no matter what time of year it is. There is money to be made with dahlias in June.

So what is the problem? Perhaps having peonies and dahlias blooming together affects my own sense of time, and offends the flower child within me. Then again they are paying the bills. I guess this is just a conflict I will just have to wrestle with for a while. What do you think?

The ASCFG Board worked diligently to design a fantastic program for the National Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We are thrilled to bring Ms. Erin Benzakein of Floret as a speaker to the conference. It is going to be fabulous! Don't miss it!

SOUTH AND CENTRAL

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah



Rita Anders

Cuts of Color

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I'm about to start building an ark, but I'm not because I know it's going to stop raining soon, and then we will be begging for it to rain again. As Frank Arnosky says, "Texas weather is drought with an occasional flood." The last few years it's been floods with an occasional drought.



These floods can certainly test your stamina as a grower and your growing structures. I've been growing in my greenhouses since the 1980s and the unending storms are showing the age of my greenhouses. As each week and each storm passes there is usually a question of "What now?"

Lots of these surprises could be softened by better maintenance but as a female grower, I tend to be more focused on what's in the structures than the buildings themselves, which is leading to some real issues.

We never meant for the greenhouses to last forever, but I'm not ready to throw in my trowel, so we are in major fix mode. We have a six-bay Agratech greenhouse, for which, if I

had done better maintenance and observation, I wouldn't have some major structural issues going on. The gutters, which we normally clean out once a year, have rusted through in several places and have to be replaced before we can even think about recovering. "No problem," I thought, "I will call the greenhouse manufacturer and get a few more pieces of gutter and replace them." Well, guess what—not so easy. They don't make this kind of greenhouse anymore. They switched designs so now I have to get more gutters made by a local machine shop. We've jumped



that hurdle and they are being made and soon will be replaced. My point here is, if you have gutters, check them for debris, low spots where they tend to hold water, and coat them before it's too late.

Our next problem is that many of the vertical support posts are rusted apart at the ground and strong winds can move them and cause sways in the gutter, collecting pools of water.

This is an easy fix for us as we get them level with a jack, build boxes around the supports, and fill them with bag cement. They stay in place, above the ground level, and don't rust off anymore. The fertilizers and moisture in the greenhouse can be very harsh on them.

We also have four 30' X 120' greenhouses, and over the years the bows have rusted off at the ground and when rough storms come through, the rusted bows will move out of place. We really don't have a fix for this but we have figured out a way to just make them stable enough to use as a shade structure for now by using steel posts and slick barbed wire to tie them to each other so they will stay in place. This house was our first tragedy for the spring when a storm totally ripped the plastic off.



It is now a shade house with broken bows. We have plans to rebuild this house, hopefully this fall.

The storms we have experienced have some real strength to them and manage to do all kinds of damage. One morning I walked out and the greenhouse that had a lot of my beautiful best crop of lisianthus in it had its top ripped off from the west side and was still connected on the east side. We had just



replaced the bolts on the side rails so it left the ones we replaced, and ripped the boards off that had old bolts. High winds can do some strange things. So we waited a couple



of days for the storms to finish and then on a quiet early morning pulled the plastic back over and reconnected to new side boards and, voila, back in business. Now it's not connected in the front or back but we pulled shadecloth over it since we need it now and it's good till fall when we can recover with new plastic.

You can't stop Mother Nature, but better maintenance would stop a lot of these issues from happening. I'm one of those who doesn't fix a problem until it is a problem, and that's not good. I should have taken more time on the structures and maintained them before they were in this shape. Now I want each and every one of you to go check those gutters, support poles, and bows, and stop issues before they become an issue. That old saying that hindsight is 20/20 is sure true.

When I'm not out fixing my problems, I'm looking for snakes and fire ant piles while trying to pick flowers in some of the grassy beds. The never-ending rain makes it impossible to keep up with weeding in the garden beds. My greenhouse beds, on the other hand, are nice and kept up because it's been so wet that we have plenty time to work inside since we can't work outside.

I've been spraying Zeritol on the zinnias and sunflowers to keep them from getting leaf problems with all the moisture, but it's also been a challenge to get a spraying done where it doesn't rain on them right after I spray. I have decided I would take the drought over all this rain. I also just got three kittens to help with controlling snakes from my daughter who has some snake-eating cats. My granddaughter is so funny. She says "Nana, the one cat will bring a snake up to the porch and here comes the other cats and they all just feast

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on the cat and voila it's gone." Her little facial expressions and hand gestures are so cute as she is telling the story so I'm sure hoping they work well for me.

Most of us post beautiful pictures of our flowers, but there are plenty of pictures of leggy seedlings that didn't get planted, or beds that were planted but all the seed washed away. Beds of seeds that rotted and didn't come up, beds of sunflowers eaten off by the deer, dahlia bulbs that rotted in beds, celosia seedlings that are in serious need of sunshine, and the list goes on. Yes, these are all my bad photos but we just keep plugging along.

Many of you are thinking, "Why exactly did I choose to grow flowers?" Each of you has a different answer and know it's very rewarding work, which I get so much pleasure from despite the hurdles.

The National Conference program is posted on the website. I hope to see many of you in Grand Rapids to polish up your skills at flower growing. Happy growing until next time.

WEST AND NORTHWEST

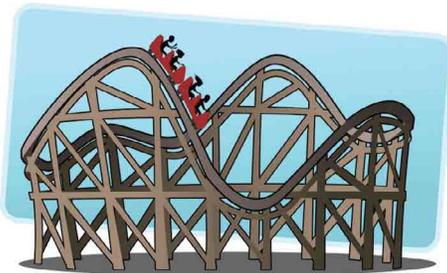
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Lennie Larkin

B-Side Farm
lennielarkin@gmail.com

The Up, The Down, The Absurdly Turbulent Roller Coaster Of Starting A Farm



We meticulously plan our farms and businesses, yet are at the whim of so many forces that could throw us off course. My approach for this year is to ride out the things thrown at me,

and try to laugh rather than cry at the absurdity of it all. In the place of news from all over the West and Northwest or practical how-to's, prepare yourself this edition to go deep into the (re-) building of B-Side Farm with some drama, hyperbole, and long-winded metaphors. As farmers, ours is a hilariously bumpy ride, and finding some composure and even footing amidst the daily ups and downs is a challenge.

November: Climbing Steadily

I signed the deal on the first of my new fields late last fall. I had just given notice at my job running Petaluma Bounty, a little educational farm I was at for three years before I realized my heart was in the flowers. B-Side Farm was about to be my full-time thang.

The new field was a great deal: a third of an acre in the back of a commercial kitchen and workshop space. I knew the property owner, and was able to get a fairly long-term lease: 5 years that could probably turn into 10 or more, enough to finally get some perennials in the ground. The building and beautiful grounds were perfect for the workshop curriculum I was building. It was great.

I got the land just in time to sow some cover crops and even shape a few beds for flower crops to overwinter. Ranunculus, anemones, and 20 peonies I had been carting around with me got in just before Thanksgiving. Felt good.

January: Hovering Up There

The plan was to stay and continue growing annuals on the half-acre where I lived, start to put perennials into the new third-acre half an hour north, and start to casually look around for a bigger piece of land to move the annual field in a year or two, once I grew the business a bit and put some new systems in place.

Seemed simple and slow-building and I didn't yet have to shed my training wheels. I spent a good chunk of the winter getting the back-end of the business going strong and preparing for more weddings and design work. If you build it they will come, people. I got my website looking great, took down bad quality pictures and asked my brides to put out the word, and the weddings started pouring in—I've got 18 on the books for 2016 after doing just 6 in 2015. I would keep the farm small-ish, focus on building my design skills and get those design dollars coming in, and then scale up the farm a bit down the road.

February: Up, Up!

While away on a trip I got a call from a friend who told me that there was a three-acre parcel of farmland that just came up for rent—literally across the street from my new perennial field. I knew the plot; it was farmed by some guys I kind of knew who had gotten a bigger field elsewhere. I took it as a sign, a chance to consolidate the farm and stop waiting to start building the larger farm I dreamed of in the future. I could jump in sooner and grow into the space over time.

I quickly called my friend Eliza to see about splitting the land; she was looking to start a small vegetable operations. I didn't need 3 acres—I didn't even need 1.5 acres but I knew

I could manage it. She wanted in, and things were quickly set in motion. We drew up a lease, settled on the terms, and were good to go. It was all happening.

February: A Slight Dip

The night before we were going to sign, I was in the car headed somewhere when Eliza called me and backed out of the deal. She had too much going on this year, too much debt, and had decided to stay another year at her job before going out on her own. Of course I understood, but of course I was bummed out.

I pulled over and thought for about 30 seconds, and then just listened to my gut and decided to take the land anyways. Three acres, plus the other small field across the street. This was pretty far from my original plan for 2016. But I figured I could cover crop most of the land, get to know the soil, build it, and have the option to rotate fields, something that hadn't previously been in the cards for me. It was \$2,000 / year for 3 acres—a good deal for insane Sonoma County, California, and I could just swing it with an small impending operating loan from California Farmlink.

March: Seatbelt On

I rode it out through the wet winter, and frequently sat in my car on the side of the road in the pouring rain staring at the huge field. It was a wet, low spot that floods even in a dry winter, and I knew it would be a late spring for me but the soil come May would be worth it.

Across the street in perennial land I watched the cover crop grow and the ranunculus and anemones sprout. And then the rain kept falling, and falling, and falling.

April: Downhill

It started to become evident that water was pooling in the pathways right next to where I had planted the peony roots. It continued to rise, until it sunk in that this was absolutely the worst spot for them—the lowest spot in the field with perhaps the most

compaction. I couldn't have known this but that's a lesson in itself and one of those that may only really be internalized by learning it the hard way: prep your soil well, learn your land, and certainly don't take a gamble and rush getting your nicest long-lived perennials into an unknown spot. There's just too much that could go wrong! So I dug out the peonies and potted them up until I could find the right spot for them (since we all know the only thing they love more than wet feet is being moved).

As for the big annual field across the street, it was completely swampen (a word that should absolutely exist). I scheduled tractor work, re-scheduled it, adjusted my sowing dates, and then adjusted them again. The land just wasn't drying out. We ended up not being able to get in there to disc and shape beds until May 15th—horribly late for this otherwise hospitable, dreamy northern California climate. (9B problems, I know, I know).

May: Making Lemonade (and mixing metaphors)

In the meantime, this meant that I had an extra month or so to head back across the street and really whip my perennial field into shape, as it had already dried out to perfect moisture. I hired a guy with a small tractor to get into the tight spaces of this backyard farm. I really wanted to get it ripped or somehow deeply cultivated, thinking back on the water that just sat there around the peonies and didn't seem be able to penetrate the subsoil. But we couldn't find the right solution—ripping it with just one or two shanks (the most his HP could accommodate) would require so many tight turn-arounds and funny passes that it would create compaction as much as it would undo old compaction.

So we decided to forgo that step. I wasn't excited about it but I figured some careful and thorough discing would be enough, and the plan was to really loft up the raised beds and have distinct trenches as pathways where water could drain in winter. Coupled with the benefits of the great stand of cover crop that had grown all winter long, I figured we were in the clear.

The discing got done and he made a pass or two with the tiller, a step I wanted to avoid if possible but the soil seemed to need it. And then he moved on to the bed



Water that pooled in the time I ran around fixing leaks.

shaper and my heart sank as I realized that it was simply an attachment on his tiller. To get the beds as raised and defined as I would like, we would have to do many more passes with the tiller, potentially exacerbating a fairly shallow hard pan I was already worried about. It wasn't perfect for the stellar perennial heaven I dreamed of. (Results are still pending on that one. Some crops will be fine and others might suffer come winter with soggy feet. For beds where I had planned particularly fussy crops, I got in there with a digging fork—not something I expected to do on land that had just been tractor cultivated, but so be it).

And then I spent a month filling the field with goodies: astilbe and astrantia, eupatorium, filipendula, eucalyptus, dusty miller, baptisia, columbine, mums, Japanese anemones, hellebores, sedum, and more.

Still May: Uh Oh

My deal to sow my transplants in the greenhouse at my old farm fell through as they ran out of space, so I scrambled for another solution and thought I had found a great one in a friend and fellow flower farmer's greenhouse just 30 minutes from me. I set up shop there on a number of days sowing thousands of seeds that I would pay her to water. It was a good and fair deal, she has the greenest of thumbs and a state of the art greenhouse.

But as the weeks went on and I had less and less time to go check on them, the texts and pictures she started sending me spelled danger. I had ridiculously low germination rates. We realized that our micro-climates were just too different for me to expect to be able to sow spring crops in April and May where she was. Schedules that had worked for me in years past were just not cutting it in her crazy heat.

By the time I got up there to assess the situation, it was clear that I would have only a small fraction of the plants I had planned. I had never experienced germination rates anywhere near this low. The big annual field I was so impatient to get into would have only a few trays worth of plants waiting for it.

I took a step back to regroup, move on to summer crops, and write off spring for this year, and direct sow more than I had planned. But not before I jumped into designer mode for a bit.

I fired up the generator for the first time, alone in the field as the monstrous roar filled my ears and I stood in what I imagined to be some low basketball stance with legs bent wide and arms outstretched, ready to pounce in any direction to fix a problem or save myself if something were to blow up (silly yet real irrational fear).

I clearly looked ridiculous.

(rock star extraordinaire) carried the flowers I had given her on stage and gave me the nicest shout-out I could ask for.

The next day was my first big wedding of the season and it went off without a hitch, reminding me that I could double-task with the best of them, and that all the months of meeting with brides and writing and revising contracts through the winter would really pay off as the design end of my business was proving to be the more stable of the two.

June: Up

It was time to finally get into the big field! I lucked out and got 20 yards of great compost donated—had it tilled in, beds shaped, and was ready to go.

In the grand tradition of urbanite turned bumpkin, I've still got a lot of friends in the city. I decided to invite them up to the farm for some beers, PB&J picnic lunch (the most hospitable I get), and some good old-fashioned farm work in the sun. I got about ten bites and promptly put people to work setting up a big chunk of my freshly tilled one acre. It was fun, it was just the moral support I needed, and we banged out some serious work.

We got drip laid out, fabric out on some, and sowed some last-chance spring seeds just in case they worked and the weather agreed: larkspur, poppies, phlox, ammi, grasses, bupleurum, and

Later in May: Upward Facing

I heard about a small Farm Aid benefit concert and dinner at a nearby winery and called on a last-minute whim to see if they needed flowers. They excitedly commissioned five big arrangements, offered to promote me, and comped me two VIP tickets to a show I could never otherwise afford. It was a night to remember: everyone oohed and ahed over the flowers, thanked me for farming (when does that happen?), and Grace Potter



Grace Potter carries Lennie's flowers on stage at Live Aid.

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even some more realistic beds of summer zinnias and sunflowers (crops I used to always transplant due to crazy weed pressure but thought I would give a go right in the ground in the new field). The day ended and I was elated—I had a real field now, not just an empty vast expanse of soil waiting for plants.

June: Bumpy Ride

It took a few days and the requisite five trips to the irrigation store to get water safely and soundly flowing from the well via pump and rented generator to the field, but it happened. Not great and by no means best or normal practice to have seeds sitting out in the sun in beds un-watered, but the soil was dry, the seeds buried and over-sown for good measure, the soil dry enough to store them; I figured some would live and some would scorch to death and I was just fine with that at this point.

I fired up the generator for the first time, alone in the field as the monstrous roar filled my ears and I stood in what I imagined to be some low basketball stance with legs bent wide and arms outstretched, ready to pounce in any direction



The annual field freshly shaped.

to fix a problem or save myself if something were to blow up (silly yet real irrational fear). I clearly looked ridiculous.

And then as it fired up and I remained crouching, I found no catastrophe, no exploding pieces, just glorious, wet, rushing water. Water! Through the main line to the header of this little section and then to my drip lines and my thirsty seeds: 20 beds, 100' long, 4 lines to a bed. I had a field! I was growing sh*t!

June: Down

I luxuriously slept in the following day, for with irrigation set up, 2016 had really begun, I had arrived and I would have flowers, even if sales began a month or more later than I had hoped. I drove out to the field just as the morning fog lifted and I could fire up the water just in time to keep the seed beds moist. I turned on the generator, nonchalantly this time, and sauntered over to the block I would be irrigating.

That's when the geysers began. One at a time, going down the lines as the water traveled. My jaw fell open and at first I thought I must have severely miscalculated the pressure capacity in my setup. But that didn't make sense—the lines didn't bust open or come off the header, these were just leaks. JUST leaks, 23 of them, overnight. And yes of course I counted, how else would I complain to you guys?

I realized that birds were the culprits—crows and smaller birds who I don't know by name (only by their thirsty little beak-sized bites). I've been career farming for only 6 years but I've seen some stuff in that time. I've never experienced this. BIRDS eating my DRIP. Does this happen to you all?

For now I've fixed the leaks. There are still new ones every day but not in those numbers. I'm hoping my presence at the field more and more will deter the birds, and I'm implementing the half-ass solutions of flashy tape on t-posts, remay on some beds (though I'm one of those farmers who avoids using remay at all costs because for some reason it drives me nuts). Next year I may upgrade my tape to something thicker than 8ml; this will also come in handy if I keep planting in fabric as I'm sure the gophers will go to town on the drip underneath (next month's rollercoaster, no doubt).

Present Day: Riding It Out

There continue to be little highs and lows that on a bad day can feel like this is all a mistake and on a good day make me burst into laughter. The horror of the realization that I'm about to have a huge bindweed problem, the saving grace of booking a few more weddings at the tail end of the season when summer work has died down, finding all the saved celosia seed that came from Frank via Mimo, and getting excited to jump into new varieties of summer crops, and so on and so forth with the good the bad and the ugly.

Looking at it all as a ridiculous cyclical tale of good fortune followed by comical mishap is, I think, serving me well for now.



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- Jillian Arquette-Gallagher**, Fruition Flowers, Newmarket, NH
Maria Baldwin, Our Local Foods, Charleston, SC
Chris Beks, Arctic Alaska Peonies, Fairbanks, AK
Candace Bell, Caldwell, ID
Gbomai Bestman-Johnson, gbomai Farms, Sandy Spring, MD
Deborah Billinge, Freehold, NY
Lauren and Blair Bishop, Love Lane Farm, Waynesville, NC
Nina Zinsser Booth, Blue Heron Farm, Nellysford, VA
Mary Jo Borchardt, Five Green Acres, Poynette, WI
Debbie Bosworth, Dandelion House Flower Farm, Plymouth, MA
Melissa Breed-Parks, St. Louis, MO
Kara Brewer, Chapel Hill, NC
Lindsey Capello, Pittsburgh, PA
Emily Carey, ETC Designs, Santa Rosa, CA
Shelley Chappus, Chappus Farm, LaSalle, ON
Claire Charny, Field & Florist, Three Oaks, MI
Barbara Cotton, Cotton Flowers, Kinnelon, NJ
Christine Covino, North Salem, NY
Chad Culbertson, Gray Court, SC
Allison DeRungs, Andover, MN
Angela Ebert, Blue Hill Flower Farm, China Township, MI
Julio Freitas, Kirkham & Company, Bozeman, MT
Stephanie Frisbee, Hopeful Acres Farm, China Grove, NC
Jason Funkhouser, Chateau Floral and Home, Darlington, WI
Michael and Catherine Genovese, Summer Dreams Farm, Oxford, MI
Liz Graznak, Happy Hollow Farm, Jamestown, MO
Norval K. Haile, Southern Shiloh Ranch, Abilene, TX
Maggie Hellbusch, Country Lane Gardens, Columbus, NE
Mary Inman, Spring, TX
Timothy and Diane Insinger, Sweet Dee's Blooms, Dushore, PA
Todd L. Jameson, Balanced Harvest Farm, Needham, IN
Amy Johnson, FlowerGardens, Clyde, NC
Suzanne Kacsos, Laughing Oaks Farm, Eugene, OR
Mary Kukla, King George, VA
Jack Lamb, Main Street Blooms, Northfield, CT
Jenny Lassen, Intervale Farm, Cherryfield, ME
Yam Malla, Greenstone Fields, Purcellville, VA
Kristi Metcalf, Little Hill Flower Farm, Wilton, CA
Jill Meyer, Wausau, WI
Beth Mort, Spokane, WA
Heidi Motz, Willow Lane Flower Farm, Mirror, AB
Gayle Myers-Harbison, Gayle Grows It, Lafayette, CO
Sarah Olman, Sprinkling Can Flowers by Sarah, Paw Paw, MI
Kellie Patton, Graton, CA
Laura Pickens, Jones, MI
John Polcyn, Spring, TX
Bernadine Prince, Blue Skies Farm Delaware, Georgetown, DE
Carol Rader, Churchville, NY
Lisbet Rauh, Princeton, MA
Katy Ripp, Mad Lizzie's Fresh Flowers, Cross Plains, WI
Robyn Roberts, Flowers From the Heart, Sandpoint, ID
Amy Rodrigues, Dahlia Shed, Middletown, RI
Shari Russell, Worthington, OH
Maria San Juan, Cheyenne, WY
Allison Schultz, Heirloom Floral Design, Bend, OR
Stacey Shanks, Pana, IL
Anne Sharp, Husser, LA
Paul Sorenson, Gravel Springs Farm, Union Bridge, MD
Linda Spradlin, Hamilton, OH
Elizabeth Stork, Leesa's Garden, Taylorville, IL
Molly Straebel, Traverse City, MI
Beverley Suckling, Annapolis, MD
Wendy Sweet, Sweet Home Specialty Cut Flowers, Hayden, ID
Elizabeth Tanner, Bonners Ferry, ID
Carlos Tinoco, Soldiers Grove, WI
Jessica Todd, Cut Flowers by Clear Ridge, Union Bridge, MD
Matthew Turner, Salt Farm Flowers, Ellsworth, ME
Dawn VanBlarcum, P&D Flower Farm, Indianapolis, IN
Wenda Vince, Sandyhillfarm, Napanee, ON
Rosie Warfield, Honolulu, HI
Louise Warner, Wild Imagination Flower Co., Peterborough, ON
Jessica Weatherford, Scenic Blooms, Oswego, KS
Julia Ann Wendelken, Nantucket, MA

These Members Have Been with the ASCFG for Ten Years!



Janet Bachmann



Missy Bahret



Marianne Battistone



Teri Berry



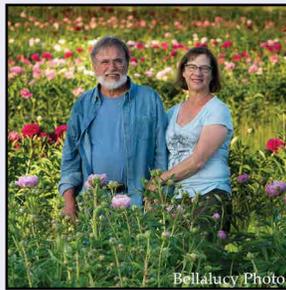
Marc Kessler



Linda Doan



Jason and Sheri England



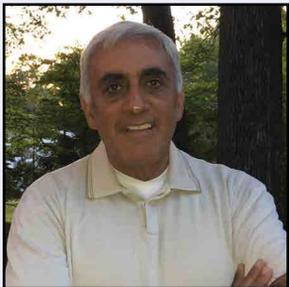
Sam and Helen Finazzo



Tony and Denise Gaetz



Paula Gilman



Baljit Grewal



Linda O'Connor



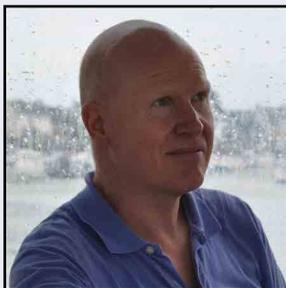
Tom Parker



Jamie and Norm Rohda



Rita Jo Shultz



Phil Van Dijk

Photo Unavailable:
Christine Hunt
Don Lareau
Alan John Mitchell
Daphne Yannakakis



Alice White

These ASCFG members have stepped forward to run for positions open on the ASCFG Board of Directors. Please review their information, and take just a few minutes to cast your vote when you receive an electronic ballot later this summer. Your participation is vital!

Secretary

Linda Doan

Aunt Willie’s Wildflowers, Blountville, Tennessee

Through the years, Roy and I have been in more organizations than we care to count. We often comment that the ASCFG is unique in that its main goal seems quite singular: to help folks be better flower farmers. When we joined 10 years ago we did farmers’ markets; now we do no markets, a few on-farm workshops, and about 45 weddings a year, with most business decisions guided by the knowledge base of ASCFG.

By providing varied educational opportunities and by putting its members in position to form community, the ASCFG has helped each of us be better at what we love—farming flowers. I’ve enjoyed watching new programs and directions develop and am pleased to serve as an ASCFG mentor to two bright young farmers. Most anything that I’m able to pass along to Sarah and Matthew I learned somewhere along the line through the ASCFG. Whether sharing dahlia netting like Bob Wollam or bridal bouquet wrapping like Jennie Love, the trickle-down effect is unmistakable. Plus, I dare someone to try to talk me out of any of my ASCFG flower friendships.

So, I’m quite pleased that someone thought I might be a good candidate to serve as Secretary. I would enjoy the opportunity to help the ASCFG build on so much good that has gone before towards even better things in the future.



Jeanie McKewan

Brightflower Farm, Stockton, Illinois, and Fair Field Flowers, Madison, Wisconsin

I have had the opportunity to own and manage Brightflower Farm since 2006. For 20 years prior to Brightflower, I had a stimulating and challenging career of starting and managing small businesses for other entrepreneurs. My decision-making skills and attention to keeping accurate records have been honed along the way, so that all facets of the business I am overseeing runs professionally and efficiently.

As Secretary for the ASCFG Board of Directors, keeping the meeting minutes is a new opportunity I am looking forward to perfect; participating in Board meetings is a way to give back to the ASCFG whose membership has greatly participated in the success of my business. I am always looking to add new challenges to my life and taking on the responsibility for keeping the ASCFG Board meeting minutes is a skill set I know I can accomplish with swiftness and accuracy to keep the Board running smoothly. Thank you for support to make this possibility a reality.



Treasurer

Brenda Smith

Smith & Smith Farms, Oregon & Nevada

Welcome from the Oregon Outback, the high desert of southeastern Oregon. The “real” flower growers are on the far west side of the state, and they are the really amazing growers. But that doesn’t make me any the less passionate for growing flowers, though my logic for choosing growing areas could be questioned.

I am half of Smith & Smith Farms; the other half is in northern Nevada, also not exactly the epicenter for flower growers! This is where my mother and nephew grow cut flowers and vegetables, and where I farmed full-time for 12 years before moving to Oregon. This year



marks 20 years for me at some level of growing flowers for sales. Flower growing over the last few years is my side business where I grow “Buckaroo Bouquets” for a subscription service. I am also the Director of the High Desert Partnership, a non-profit that promotes collaboration to solve land management issues along with some work at the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center for invasive annual grass research.

I was honored to serve as the ASCFG West and Northwest Regional Director from 2004 through 2009, and as co-chair of the 2007 National Conference, and would now be pleased to serve as your Treasurer. I spend a fair amount of time tracking budgets for grants and projects with my various responsibilities. It is with this experience I can pay attention to the ASCFG’s finances and help the Board of Directors continue to grow the organization while maintaining fiscal stability. Thank you for your consideration and I hope to be able to support the ASCFG as your Treasurer.

Northeast Regional Director

Carolyn Snell

Carolyn Snell Designs, Bar Mills, Maine

I grew up on the apple and poultry farm my great-grandpa started in 1926 in Buxton, Maine. My family now grows vegetables, herbs, plants, and fruit sold from our 25 acres, and at two farmers’ markets. Cut flowers have long been part of our repertoire, mostly mixed bouquets for farmers’ markets, and as I gradually took over the reins of the flower growing, Carolyn Snell Designs was born. We grow three and one half acres of field flowers, and more in greenhouses and hoopouses. I have been adding various crops and installing a few woodies to increase diversity and extend my season, as well as expanding my wedding design business. Joining the ASCFG was a real turning point for me. I have been amazed by the diversity of growers and generosity of knowledge and experience. The Bulletin Board, *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, and Regional and National Conferences have really helped me grow my business. I love the idea of helping the ASCFG continue to support growers, and keep connecting us across our sometimes challenging geography. I have learned so much from Chas, Polly, and Missy about growing and selling in our Northeast Region. I am looking forward to learning more and helping others.



Karl Vahrmeyer, Jr.

Green Park Nurseries, Ridgeville, Ontario

I have been in the nursery and flower business my whole life. You could say I was literally born into it. Over the years of family farming with my parents and siblings, farming has evolved from a curse as a teen; to a job in my early twenties; to a passion in my late twenties and early thirties. I am just a part of the big picture when it comes to Green Park Nurseries, Inc. What my parents started over 35 years ago as a nursery has now evolved into a family-run cut flower and ornamental branch operation involving five farms, two of my five siblings, and of course both my parents.

Although I’m a short-time member of the ASCFG, there has always been something I have learned each and every year. There has also been a time to teach each of those years; sometimes on stage at conferences, but also one on one behind the scenes, most of the time making many friendships along the way. All of this would not have been possible without this organization.

If given the opportunity to serve it would be a great way for myself to use what I have learned in the flower industry over the years to act as a teaching tool and stepping stone for others.

In closing I’d like to leave you this: It’s time for the youth and next generation to step up to the plate and to play a role in what the older generation has started for us.

Let’s keep the passion going.



Mid-Atlantic Regional Director

Lisa Ziegler

Gardener’s Workshop Farm, Newport News, Virginia

I hit the ground running with cut flowers in 1998 and have been running ever since. I absolutely adore every aspect of flower farming and being a part of this organization that feels the same. My membership has provided friendships that will last a lifetime, and has advanced my business in ways that I never expected.

I am a small urban grower who has sold in many different arenas over the years. I began wholesaling in 1998, then added farmers’ markets, a flower CSA, and bouquet subscriptions. In recent years we sold to two supermarket chains and expanded our wholesale route.

I see serving on the Board as my opportunity to give back to those who have given me much. The past few months I have served as the Mid-Atlantic Director after Jennie Love was elected Vice President. It has been an eye-opening and unexpected pleasure. The behind-the-scenes work going on in this organization to provide more tools and opportunities to the growing membership is both challenging and exciting.

I would appreciate the opportunity to continue serving as the ASCFG Mid-Atlantic Director.



Southeast Regional Director

Tanis Clifton

Happy Trails Flower Farm, Dennis, Mississippi

I joined the ASCFG in 2010 so that I could learn and grow as a flower farmer. That decision became a turning point for us and our farm. Without a doubt our farm would not be where it is today without the incredible generosity of knowledge and encouragement found within the membership of this organization.

Being part of this amazing Board of Directors has been a fabulous way to take part in moving the Association forward with great programs such as the mentor program, the wonderful new films, great conferences, members only Facebook page, and so many more benefits to members.

It has also been an incredible journey meeting and corresponding with members in this Region. We have some absolutely amazing growers and flower aficionados in the Southeast.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the Southeast Regional Director over the last two years. Not only have I been able to give back to the ASCFG but I, in turn, have grown immensely by being part of this awesome Board. There are so many more great things to come for members, and I would be proud to be part of them by serving another term as the Southeast Regional Director.



Val Schirmer

Three Toads Farm, Winchester, Kentucky

Hi, everyone! I’m a specialty cut flower grower near Lexington, Kentucky. I first joined the ASCFG around 2001, after starting our little flower farm with a great family friend...and then pretty much floundering around for two years. That first meeting in Texas showed me the power of branding (thank you, Pamela and Frank), which became the foundation for everything we’ve done since.

We grow on about 2 acres on two small farms, under low tunnels and year-round in greenhouses. There are three of us Toads. We sell at our local farmers’ market, to floral designers, and deliver weekly to businesses. In 2012 we started getting serious about design and do a handful of select weddings and events. It’s our third year doing on-the-farm workshops, which is a great cash generator, and we were flabbergasted when Martha Stewart named us one of the Top 10 Farmer-Florists in the country.



None of this would be possible without the ASCFG. My role has always been to grow our business—to go, to see in person, and then try out new ideas. Three years ago, I retired from the corporate world, where I was in charge of global communications. What I learned and put into practice those years has helped us grow our flower business, too.

So, this is what I think I can offer you — the 138 folks in the Southeast region, our nearly 1,000 members worldwide and what is already a great ASCFG Board: Uncovering and bringing together great ideas, sharing best practices, and getting better at marketing and helping organize great events (both large and small), so we can all keep learning and growing, getting better and better every year.

Cut Flowers of the Year

Fresh

- Dahlia ‘Café au Lait’
- Celosia ‘Kurume Orange Red’
- Daucus ‘Dara’
- Sunflower ‘ProCut Brilliance’
- Sunflower ‘Starburst Greenburst’

Woody

- Physocarpus ‘Diabolo’
- Cotinus ‘Royal Purple’
- Philadelphus hybrids
- Rose hips ‘Magical Gold’
- Thornless blackberry ‘Triple Crown’

Bulbs

- Tulip ‘Bell Epoque’
- Lily ‘Alusta’
- Lily ‘Eyeliner’
- Lily ‘Belonica’
- Tulip ‘Menton’

University of Maryland Cut Flower Tour



Co-sponsored by the ASCFG and the Maryland Flower Growers Association



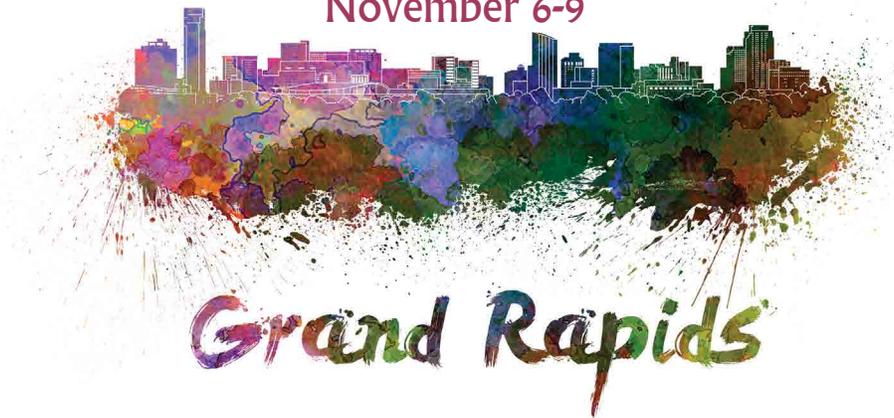
Featuring these speakers:

Brent Heath, Brent and Becky’s Bulbs
Richard Uva, Seaberry Farm
Chris Wien, Emeritus Professor, Cornell University
Karen Rane, University of Maryland Plant Pathology

Lunch included with registration. Afternoon tours of two cut flower farms in Hampstead.
For registration and more information, contact Suzanne Klick at Sklick@umd.edu

ASCFG 2016 National Conference

November 6-9



HOTEL

Doubletree by Hilton, 4747 28th Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan Make your room reservations by OCTOBER 14 directly with the Doubletree. Call (616) 957-0100 and tell them you're with the ASCFG for a room in the ASCFG room block at the \$119 rate. Or book online

TRAVEL

Fly into the Gerald R. Ford International Airport and take the hotel's complimentary shuttle.

GROWERS' SCHOOL

Sunday, November 6

Limited to 120 attendees.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Marketing: Quality, Constituency, and Charisma** _____

Mimo Davis Duschack, Urban Buds, St. Louis, Missouri

Before you sow your first seed, know where that flower will be sold. Mimo will explain how she markets to florists, wholesalers, and at farmers' markets. Covering topics from the first "cold call" to a buyer to becoming a cornerstone of your farmers' market, learn how to add the business sparkle that will keep customers coming for your flowers.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Making "Year Two" Count** _____

Lennie Larkin, B-Side Farm, Sebastopol, California

We all learned many lessons in the first year of operating our flower farms. And as we all know, many of those lessons learned the hard way often act as our best teachers as we master our craft. This session will focus on those first few years of growth, and how to incorporate wisdom learned through trial and error as well as advice gleaned from others into a robust, growth-oriented business plan. From marketing to plant selection to managing new land, Lennie will share her transition plans for B-Side Farm as she moves through year two in business.

10:30 – 10:45 a.m. **Break** _____

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **High Tunnel Basics: Getting the Most from This Valuable Real Estate** _____

Barbara Lamborne, Greenstone Fields, Purcellville, Virginia

You have it built—now what? What should you plant in there, and when? How do you maintain the best environment to keep those plants happy? How do you avoid sad soil? Barbara will share what she has learned growing in four tunnels for nine years.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch on your own** _____

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. **The Brightest Bulb in the Crate Demystifies the Procurement Process, and Talks Bulbs, Too** _____

Dave Dowling, Ednie Flower Bulb Company, Fredon, New Jersey

Learn where and how to get the stuff you need to make your farm grow. Get a clear explanation of the broker/grower relationship. Discover what bulb varieties are best for cut flowers and your bottom line. Learn how to choose the right bulb crop for your growing conditions and your marketing strategy.

2:30 – 4:00 p.m. **The Roots of a Great Farm** _____

Lisa Ziegler, The Gardener's Workshop, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Learn how your farm can become more self-sustaining and healthy with each passing season. Lisa will share the methods she follows for soil care and nutrition, pest management, and how-to include cover crops on your farm.

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. **Postharvest: The Last Talk of the Day, but the Most Important One of Your BUSINESS** _____

John Dole, North Carolina State University, Raleigh

The best postharvest practices produce the longest-lasting flowers. Learn the basics of proper postharvest handling to ensure your flowers keep your customers satisfied.

Dinner on your own _____



Be sure to apply for an absentee ballot for the November 8 election!
Visit the web site for your state's Board of Elections or Secretary of State to download an application.
They are also typically available at public libraries. Early voting is also available in many states.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS, BANQUET & AUCTION

Monday, November 7

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Special Guest Welcome

Dale Deppe, Spring Meadow Nursery, Grand Rapids

8:30 – 10:00 a.m. New Varieties Festival

John Dole, North Carolina State University, Raleigh

What have the breeders come up for cut flower growers? What works best for a wide range of growing conditions? What kind of vase life should you expect? No one knows better than John Dole.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. ASCFG Update

Learn the latest news from your organization.

10:45 – 11:45 a.m. Being the Face of Your Business

Erin Benzakein, Floret, Mount Vernon, Washington

Behind every beautiful cut flower is a flower grower with a story. Customers want to connect with and know their grower, yet many farmers hide behind their flowers instead of sharing themselves and their story. For Erin Benzakein, Floret's success catapulted when she stopped selling stuff and started selling herself and her little family's story. Starting with a small flower plot just 8 years ago, Erin now heads her own seed company, runs wildly popular on-farm workshops, and has authored a new book, Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden: How to Grow, Harvest, and Arrange Stunning Seasonal Blooms, due out in early 2017. Erin will give insights into how she has built her brand and grown her business plus share tips on how flower farmers can connect with consumers to sell themselves and their flowers.

Track A

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Cultivating Grower/Florist Relationships

Ellen Frost, Local Color Flowers, Baltimore, Maryland

Laura Beth Resnick, Butterbee Farm, Pikesville, Maryland

Ellen and Laura Beth present a terrific back-and-forth conversation about the unique relationship between farmer and florist. They will discuss the process of buying and selling, along with cross-marketing, and the do's and don'ts of any farmer/florist partnership.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Wedding Panel

Gretel Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio

Rita Anders, Cuts of Color, Weimar, Texas

Jennie Love, Love 'n Fresh Flowers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Check out this fantastic floral designer lineup - what a range of experiences and talents! Bring your own experiences to share and questions to ask, and soak up the knowledge.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Business Business Business

Gretel and Steve Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio

There's more to a flower farm than growing flowers. Listen to these two explain some of the things you'll need to be doing, besides growing great flowers. They will tell how they keep their business going while they deal with workers, florists, grocery stores, suppliers, paperwork, weddings, and more, all while still liking each other at the end of the day.

Track B

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. What's Making My Plants Sick?

Brian Hudelson, University of Wisconsin, Madison

"Dr. Death" made an appearance at last year's Grower Intensive in Madison, clearly having done his homework on cut flower diseases. Now is the time to take photos of your own problem plants; post them on the ASCFG Members Only Facebook page, and Brian will address these issues in November.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Picking from the Money Tree: Foliage Selections to Increase Quality and Profit

Mike and Polly Hutchison, Robin Hollow Farm, Saunterstown, Rhode Island

Look beyond the usual flowering annuals and perennials to add colorful variety and texture to your cut flower selections. Mike and Polly will share what foliage plants work best for them, and how to grow and use them.

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Perennials for Cut Flowers

MaryLee and Reed Johnson, Windswept Acres, Cecil, Wisconsin

Learn to grow, process, handle, and sell some perennials that should already be on your list, and a few you should be considering. MaryLee and Reed will share successes as well as failures so you can avoid some pitfalls. They have grown in North Dakota, Maine, and Wisconsin, and have more than 30 years of growing experience. Since 2000 they have transformed a 100-year-old dairy farm into a flowers-only farm, with over 25 field acres of perennials, annuals, and shrubs, plus a few greenhouses.

6:00 p.m. ASCFG Banquet and ASCFG Research Foundation Auction

CONFERENCE SESSIONS and TRADE SHOW

Tuesday, November 8

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Added-Value Farm Products: Could They Be for You?

Lisa Ziegler, The Gardener's Workshop, Virginia Beach, Virginia

Think beyond dried flowers and weddings! Learn how Lisa grew a profitable business from her flower farming experiences, from speaking and writing to developing a line of products to offer on her online store and at events.

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Scaling Up the Farm

Gretel and Steve Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio

Heidi Joynt, Field and Florist, Chicago, Illinois

Lennie Larkin, B-Side Farm, Sebastopol, California

You've made it through the first years of cut flower farming. Now what? Learn from these innovative and growers how they successfully took the next steps.

10:30 – 12:00 p.m. Secrets of Germination Revealed

Erin Benzakein, Floret, Mount Vernon, Washington

Jeanie McKewan, Brightflower Farm, Stockton, Illinois

Lisa Ziegler, The Gardener's Workshop, Virginia Beach, Virginia

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. Cut Ornamental Branches

Karl Vahrmeier, Jr., Green Park Nurseries, Ridgeville, Ontario

Karl will talk about the ornamental branches and flowers that should be on every cut flower grower's list. Karl is a second-generation flower farmer who, with his father, has transformed their farm from potted tree and shrub production to nothing but cut ornamental branches and cut flowers over the past 15 years. Look for the inside information that everyone wants to know: how to grow, which varieties are best, when to harvest, how to prune, and how to package the final product.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. IPM for Cut Flower Growers

Stanton Gill, University of Maryland, Ellicott City

Lots of IPM experts can advise you on pest control—on vegetables, turfgrass, nursery stock. Stanton's research and field experience with field and greenhouse cut flowers makes him the go-to guy for all things pest-related for ASCFG members.

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Trade Show and Reception

Here's your chance to meet representatives of your favorite suppliers face to face. Find out about new products, catch up on your orders, and develop strong connections you can count on all year

TOURS

Wednesday, November 9

Spring Meadow Nursery

Ottawa Glad Growers

Walter's Gardens

ASCFG Mentor Program Connects Northeast Growers

Erin Dake, Main Street Blooms. Northfield, Connecticut

We have really won the flower lottery here at Main Street Blooms by being a part of the mentor program for the 2015-2017 seasons! What a fabulous resource of wisdom, experience and flower enthusiasm. As we are entering the second season of production, many questions and concerns arose from the first season and I am beyond grateful to have Missy Bahret from Old Friends Farm in Amherst, Massachusetts as a mentor.

We had exchanged several emails during the winter months which helped prepare me for planning this coming crop, as well as focusing on better marketing and management. The winter months added reflection on where I wanted the farm to be in the next few years. Missy guided me to looking into holistic management and weighted decision-making. Together with my co-owner and husband, Jack, we were really able to get clear headed and more organized (kind of!) about what goals we are looking towards.

This season is also a big one for us here at the farm as not only are we growing flowers, but, Jack and I are overjoyed to be growing a little baby as well! It has been quite the journey so far, as I'm sure many (female) farmers can relate to the interesting and busy schedule of propagating and planting, mixed in with prenatal appointments and getting ready for a newborn. Our little one is due in about one week (as I write this...) and Jack and I wanted to visit Missy before his arrival. Thankfully she had time in her schedule for a tour and chat. It was wonderful, and of course, very inspiring to be on their property!



Mentor Missy Bahret with Mentees Erin Dake and Jack Lamb

Despite the fact that it was quite possibly the windiest day of the year so far, it was remarkably beautiful and the wind made it quite an exhilarating experience! However, I doubt her workers felt the same! Being able to observe and absorb how other farmers grow and cultivate their crops is a gift. It was very helpful to see what she had planted and what was growing and it really made me reflect on our crop schedule and what our money makers were in the field. Missy was extremely thorough and had a great deal of patience for our never-ending stream of questions! I also find much comfort in the fact that she is also a mother, and her advice and suggestions have been valuable as we enter this new stage of family and farming.

Reading flower books, articles, blogs, and magazines is informative and very helpful, yet there is nothing that can really compare to setting foot on a flower farm and being able to have such an invaluable resource first hand. It made me think that Jack and I really need to get out of our little neck o' the woods and take some mini-adventures to other farms again! Why hadn't we been doing this the whole time?!

I left Missy's farm with a renewed feeling of hope and motivation. My eyes were open to new techniques of growing as well as different crops to grow. I know that it takes years to build up a profitable and successful flower farm and now I finally feel as though I have the patience and strength to actually do it! The mentor program is a godsend and I know it will hold us accountable for giving our farm the 110% that it deserves.

Shopify Update



Paula Rice of BeeHaven Farm in Bonners Ferry, Idaho, was one of the first ASCFG members to sign up for the Shopify program modified specifically by the ASCFG for cut flower growers. She recently updated us with this report on her use of the software:

“Just want to say that all my florists LOVE the Shopify system. Often, when you swing by the florist shop, you get just whoever is there to come out and look at the van. With Shopify, the owners typically open the email from me, and the orders are much higher.

“Overall, my sales are much higher and EVERY person loves the visual pictures. I am currently working on procedures for my employees on bunching and entering data. We will then create orders using Shopify for everyone that has pre-ordered, pulling from our Shopify inventory to create those orders and send a fulfillment email to them.

“I feel so...professional. But mostly, it's a process that I can put in the hands of employees so that I can go out and continue to “passionate” on the farm. The real problem with this insatiable passion (flower farming) is creating procedures so that, once you have something working, other people can come behind you and turn what you've done into money—while you go off and play with something else. Shopify does that for me. I'm happy.”

Looks like the system is working like a dream for Paula, and it will probably do the same for you. If you'd like more information, contact us at mail@ascfg.

Rosanne 1 Green

Rosanne

Lisianthus

Elegant Impressions

Our beautiful Rosanne 1 and Rosanne 2 are bred for more buds and branching, thick flower petals, strong stems and excellent shelf life. Their sturdy stems, durable flower petals and top flowering hold up well during shipping and at retail. With attention-commanding colors, rarely seen in other series, Rosanne 1 and Rosanne 2 are sure to amaze even the most selective customer. Contact your preferred provider to order.

SAKATA[®]
sakataornamentals.com

NEW! Rosanne 2 Deep Brown

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ON-FARM RESEARCH

What are some of your most vexing farm problems?

Wouldn't you like to investigate solutions yourself?

It's not too early to think about applying for an

ASCFG Grower Grant. See the Research tab

at the ASCFG web site for guidelines.

We're Here to Help!

Judy M. Laushman



Effective web sites require almost constant change, and ours is no exception. As the needs of our members evolve, we update our public and private pages to keep pace.

Most recently is the addition of a “search by zip code” function in our online Flower Search. Now buyers looking for fresh, local flowers can even more easily find your farm and your flowers. Log in to Members Only, and choose the purple “Update Your Member Page” box.

No matter what size your farm, where you’re growing or what you’re growing, it’s likely that someone out there—a wholesale buyer like this one, a small retail florist, or a sister in Ohio wanting to buy flowers for her four other sisters in Nebraska—is much more likely to find you only if you take advantage of the “power of the ASCFG website”.

While you’re in Members Only, take a few more minutes to poke around the other member services. Back issues of this magazine are searchable to 2003. You can spend way more than a few minutes watching videos of speaker sessions from ASCFG meetings going back to 2010. Next time you see Linda Twining carefully balancing a video camera in the front row of the conference room, be sure to stop to thank her.

She’ll be taping the sessions at this year’s National Conference in Grand Rapids as well. If you haven’t checked out the schedule on page 38, be prepared to be dumbfounded; it’s a pretty spectacular speaker lineup. We’ll see you there.

Update Your Member Page

It’s right there in the top left corner. Log in to your unique page and edit as necessary. Scroll down to the “Where to Find My Flowers” section, and choose “Click to Add/Edit Markets, Stores, Businesses”. Be sure to include the zip codes for all of your outlets.

Why do we keep harping on these reminders to update your online profile?

Because we receive messages like these from potential buyers:

“It does not seem many of your members have updated their portfolios, and I am wondering if there is a better way for me to locate growers for items we are looking to purchase. I oversee the procurement for our wholesale locations, and can assure you that if your website was current and maintained we could use it more often as we are sourcing products and new vendors. I realize growers are always busy; however the power of the ASCFG website is what is going to bring clients to your members.”

ASCFG 2016 National Conference

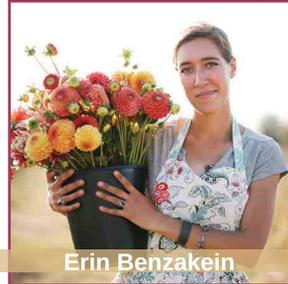
November 6-9



Gretel & Steve Adams



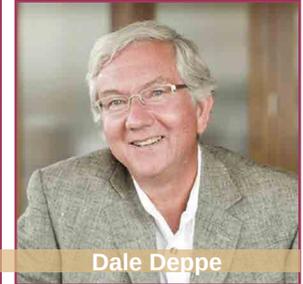
Rita Anders



Erin Benzakein



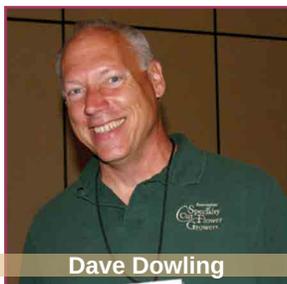
Mimo Davis



Dale Deppe



John Dole



Dave Dowling



Ellen Frost



Stanton Gill



Brian Hudelson



Mike Hutchison

Learn from these Experts!

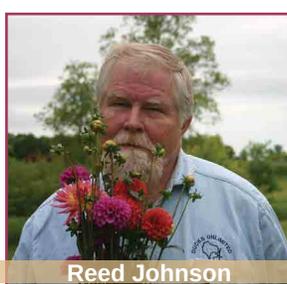
Association
of
Specialty
Cut Flower
Growers



Polly Hutchison



Mary Lee Johnson



Reed Johnson



Heidi Joynt



Barbara Lamborne



Lennie Larkin



Jennie Love



Jeanie McKewan



Laura Beth Resnick



Karl Vahrmeyer



Lisa Ziegler



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

Join the New ASCFG Members Only facebook Group!

Debbie Thornton
April 1 at 10:48am

I just want to thank ASCFG for all the hard work in addition to running farm etc. I especially appreciate the videos from the conferences for those that can't attend. Thank you to all the speakers. I'm enjoying the presentations from Baton Rouge. A big thank you to the board members for putting it all together.

Jessica Hall
April 4 at 5:22pm

Speaking of anemone can someone explain the variance within the panda variety. Both the blush one that is closed and the white fully opened one came as panda corms. I want more of those blush colored ones! Any else see this? Pardon the dewey look they were just sprayed with crowning glory.



Laura Dison
March 31 at 11:13am

Any recommendations for a summertime living mulch to sow in my walking paths? Can anyone talk about their experience with white clover for this purpose? Zone 7. Thanks!

Dave Dowling Get in touch with the Amoskys They are Blanco Texas growers that have purchased a farm Minnesota just for growing peonies ship back to Texas.
<http://www.facebook.com/Amosky-Family-Farm/>

Nicole Schenkel-Zureikat
March 28 at 3:14pm

My ranunculus are coming in - leaves have had some issues which I thought was frost damage, but maybe disease instead. Now many flowers have light speckles. Does anyone recognise this problem?



Jeriann Sabin With a little help from a hoophouse, you can overwinter Dusty Miller and Sage Berggarden for greenery. Freesia has similar growing needs as anemones and ranunculus, too.

Debbie Bosworth
Yesterday at 10:48am - Cedarville, MA, United States

I just received my members packet so I thought it was a fitting time to pop in and say hoidy from my backyard flower farm in Plymouth, Ma I've been a gardener for 25 years and I started growing cut flowers in 2012. I fell in love and launched my boutique floral business last summer. I love providing local flowers for Eco conscious couples. I'm looking forward to learning and sharing with all of you 🌸

Tanis Clifton
March 25 at 11:25pm

I need to order some Felco #2 . Anybody know of a good source at a good price? Best price I can find is \$43.90

Lisa Mason Ziegler We use the smaller blocker almost exclusively- 2" sweet peas, and other larger seeds. Here is my FAQ for more details:
<http://www.thegardenersworkshop.com/faq-seed/>

FAQ: Seed Starting with Soil Blocking
FAQ: Seed Starting with Soil Blocking Share I have soil blocking since the beginning of my flower farm
[THEGARDENERSWORKSHOP.COM](http://www.thegardenersworkshop.com)

Bailey Hale
March 29 at 7:54pm

I am looking for brand recommendations of 128 and 72 c They must be heavy duty for multi season use and self s tray). Deep cells are also appreciated.

Joe Schmitt You can take measures to prevent plants from freezing wherever they are. I have a cheap (\$20) milk house heater in each of my cold frames. In addition to that I use Tak-Foil as temporary insulation on nights when the temps are in the 20's. Add a remote temperature monitor and you can check on your plants from inside your house.

Joe Schmitt I store larkspur seed in the freezer as well, but I also don't moist prime it a week in the fridge (not freezer) before sowing. To do this, measure out the seed you'll need (1), put it in a sandwich bag, add a tiny amount of water, massage the seeds in. See More

Lennie Larkin
March 26 at 9:30pm

This here is a ninebark question. I have some gallons that I had left for dead last year, now sprouting new growth. Worth planting or will they always be stunted? Woodies are somewhat new territory for me. Thanks!

Jennifer Wilson
March 24 at 7:24pm

I got a little ahead of myself on this one. I was just trying to get a pretty photo of our Easter centerpiece posted so people could start ordering. I just set the oasis down in the container and assumed I'd be able to find a plastic liner that would fit later on. I still can't find one. Any advice? I've also got similarly sized wooden trays. They're about 12" long and 8" wide.

