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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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Frank Arnosky

A Dog in This Fight

Here in Texas, when it looks like you are about to be pulled into some mess that you want no part of, you'll say "Whoa, I don't have a dog in that fight." That doesn't mean that we wouldn't like to hang around and watch the proceedings. But don't drag me into that scuffle.

My wife, Pamela, and I have been involved with the ASCFG for almost 20 years. Back in the day, when Pamela, and then I, served on the Board, the issues facing the group were very different. Getting the ASCFG on firm financial ground was always an issue. Building membership was vital. The research Foundation was just being set up. The *Quarterly* was printed in one color, and there were some heated discussions concerning whether we could afford to go to full color. That was a fight I did have a dog in, and I am glad to see that the *Quarterly* has become the finest trade organization magazine that I know of. We can all be proud of that.

One thing that hasn't changed is that the ASCFG is first and foremost an educational organization. The Growers' Schools and Regional Meetings are like boot camp for new growers. The National Conferences are a great forum for all growers, big and small, to meet and exchange ideas. And therein lies the strength of this organization. We learn from each other. I know of no other trade organization where growers will so freely share what they know. According to a recent article in *GreenProfit* magazine by former ASCFG board member John

Friel, trade organizations across the green industry are losing members. Not the ASCFG! I am glad to say that the ASCFG continues to add members.

My one concern is that over the years I have perceived a subtle division between "small" growers and "big" growers. I can't tell where that line is, or even where our farm fits (we sell to grocery stores in four states, but we have an on-farm market and do wedding

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flowers, too). It is easy to believe that what affects one group doesn't affect the other. It is easy to say "I don't have a dog in that fight". But we do have a dog in that fight. That which affects one segment of our industry affects us all.

Many of us are fortunate enough to look our customers in the eye and greet them personally when we sell flowers. Many of us sell to florists, or at farmers' markets, or maybe we design wedding flowers. Pamela and I do all of the above. But regardless of who our customers are, we sell in an industry where there is constant downward price pressure from imported flowers. We must work hard to market our flowers.

As Ralph Cramer says, "Everything is marketing and marketing is everything." Fewer than 20% of Americans ever buy flowers at all. That leaves 80% of the country as an untapped resource. There is plenty of market out there, but we have to get the word out.

I can see that in the next couple of years, the ASCFG is going to be asked to take a larger role in national issues affecting locally-grown flowers. The ASCFG is not, and I believe shouldn't ever be, a marketing or promotional organization. But we also can't sit by and watch the proceedings. The importers have a mighty big dog.

In the meantime, the ASCFG will continue to do what it does best. We have two Growers' Schools planned for this year, one in March in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and another in conjunction with the National Conference in Wilmington, Delaware this fall. The *Quarterly*, the Bulletin Board and the website will continue to bring you the best information in the business.

I have to thank Polly Hutchison and the outgoing Board members for leaving the ASCFG in such a great position. You've made my job easy. To the current and incoming Board members, I look forward to working with you all. And of course, thanks to Judy Laushman and Linda Twining at the ASCFG office for being such professionals. It will be a fun couple of years on the Board.



'Meguru'



'Tugela Gem'



'Tugela Jewel'

Eucomis 'Meguru'

Selected for its strong stems and pure color. Flowers open creamy white, then as flowers age they turn green with a dark center in the florets. This variety will not fade when grown under high temperature, as is the case with pink and purple selections. Expect to pick 18-24" flowers with 2" green top bracts. Flower stalks are green.

Eucomis 'Tugela Gem'

This is a true gem of a flower with very strong flower stems and a rich gradient of flower colors on the same stem. We prefer to pick flowers when they are fully open to have rich color and strong stems. This variety can be grown outdoors even in wind-prone areas. Expect to pick 18-24" flowers with 3" light bronze top bracts. Flower stalks are deep bronze.

Eucomis 'Tugela Jewel'

From thousands of seedling this is the first time we have seen a flower color with so much red pigment. The flowers open light pink then deepen with age to a rich rosy red. This is a truly unique color combination. We prefer to pick this flower late to get the richer colors and good stem strength. Expect to pick 18-24" flowers with 3" reddish bronze top bracts. Flower stalks are reddish purple.



'White Finch'

Orlaya 'White Finch'

2½ - 3½" pure white flowers with an intricate, lacy pattern. Full, well-branched plants with strong, upright stems are easy to grow. The clusters of star-shaped, green seed pods also make a unique bouquet addition. Long bloom time—summer to fall.



'Aromatto'

Basil 'Aromatto'

The tallest cut flower basil in our trials, 'Aromatto' has sturdy, purple stems, dark purple flower bracts, and purple-green bicolor foliage. Use as a filler or accent flower. Foliage has serrated edges that are varying shades of purple to green. Organic seed.

Yarrow Colorado Mix

Classic mix, now available as organic seed. Great combination of desert canyon colors. 2-4", flat-topped flower heads in shades of red, rust, beige, rose, yellow, apricot, and white on 24" stems. Compact, upright habit.



Colorado Mix

Celosia 'Red Flame'

Vibrant, dark red flowers with burgundy stems and foliage. Long, up to 31", multiple stems support long-blooming, 2-4" flowers. Organic seed.



'Red Flame'

Celosia 'Eternity Improved'

Vibrant color was a clear standout in our trials. Prolific, 3-5" long spiked, scarlet plumes on 14-26" stems. Radiant color holds well as both a fresh or dried cut. Long-blooming with multiple stems. Pairs well with 'Sylphid' celosia.



'Eternity Improved'

Rudbeckia 'Cherokee Sunset'

Large double flowers in a mix of rich, sought-after colors. 4-5" blooms of orange, yellow, bronze, and brown are produced all summer long. Productive, heat-tolerant, and low-maintenance cut flower. AAS winner.



'Chim Chiminee'

Rudbeckia 'Chim Chiminee'

Whimsical blooms shaped like the broom of a chimney sweep's brush in a range of rich colors. The world's first quilled rudbeckia is heat tolerant and the multi-branching plants are excellent for cutting. Four- to six-inch blooms in shades of yellow, brown, and gold.



'Cherokee Sunset'





Amaranthus ‘Pony Tails’

Long, pendulous tassels of pearly red sway gently in summer breezes. Exotic flower ropes are perfect for adding interest to cut arrangements fresh or dried. Ideal as a field-grown specialty cut flower. Mature height approximately 36”.



‘Pony Tails’

Flowering Cabbage ‘Surga no Hatsuhi’

Its tall, upright habit and compact flower head make it a nice addition to cut flower bouquets. Central light pink zone deepens to rose under cooler temperatures. Bright, creamy ring around the center is surrounded by dark green leaves. Growers can determine flower size by adjusting plant spacing. Mature height approximately 28-32”. (Note: late, heavy feeding may dull foliage color).



‘Surga no Hatsuhi’

Campanula Champion Pro Series

High-yielding series producing slightly smaller flower heads than ‘Champion’ but more blooms per stem for better color impact. Its smaller-sized flowers, firmer flower petals and thinner, flexible stems weigh less, making for easier transport. Valuable filler material that is striking when combined with other mixed arrangements or stunning as a single bouquet. Mature height approximately 24-36”. Colors include Deep Blue, Lavender, Light Pink, Pink, White and Mix.



Champion Pro Series

Cosmos Fizzy Series

Large, semi-double flowers are centered with yellow around ruffled petals. Tall plants with fine, ferny foliage bloom throughout the summer and make an ideal addition for cut flower work. Mature height approximately 36”. Colors include ‘Rose Picotee’ (white with a deep rose edge) and Formula Mix (includes Pink, Deep Rose Pink, Rose Picotee, and White).



Fizzy Series

Delphinium Energy Series

Unique spray-type habit with large, well-opened flowers. Plants are very uniform in both growth habit and color. Very little stem breakage. Classy colors for specialty cut flower work. Plant height is approximately 30” from fall sowing and 16” from spring sowing. Colors include Blue, dark blue with no hint of reddish undertones; Pink, light clear pink with no hint of bluish undertones; Mix, blue and pink.



Energy Series

Delphinium Fashion Series

Plants display excellent branching while maintaining a balanced shape for cut flower arrangements. Performs well as a spring crop from fall plantings. Plant height approximately 30” from fall sowing and 20” from spring sowing. Fashionable colors include Blue, dark pure blue; Lavender, clear lavender; Marina, mid-blue flowers without reddish tinge; Sky, clear sky blue; Mix includes all ‘Fashion’ colors.



Fashion Series



Fizzy Series ‘Rose Picotee’

*'Croma Lavender'**'Venus Pink'***Delphinium 'Totty Tall Sky'**

Pale, sky blue flowers make a great filler for tying other blues together in arrangements. Stems are extra long and strong. Plant height is approximately 32" from fall sowing and 24" from spring sowing.

Sweet William Sangora Mixture

Very floriferous plants in a wide color range of lacy flowers, many with intricate markings. Excellent choice for cut flower work. Blooms in spring after overwintering. Mature height approximately 20 inches.

Lisianthus 'Croma Lavender (IV)'

Elegant, highly double rose-form flowers of glowing lavender are a nice complement to a wide range of colors. Produces many flowers per stem. The thick petals and sturdy stems make it easy to handle and transport. Outstanding quality for professional cut flower growers. Mature height approximately 40 inches.

Lisianthus 'Falda Salmon (II)'

Gorgeous, uniquely fringed, single salmon flowers. Great choice for making voluminous cut flower bouquets. Thick petals and sturdy stems make for easy shipping. Mature height approximately 40 inches.

*Spencer Ripple Mix**'Bridal Silk'***Lisianthus Soiree Series**

Early to medium type displaying large, (3") fully double flowers with fringed petals. The long and strong stems offer a high percentage of undamaged buds and shoots. Saves labor and adapts to a wide range of crop regimes. Professional cut flower for shipping, greenhouse and open culture for local market. Plant height approximately 32" from fall sowing and 24" from spring sowing. Colors include Pink Flash, elegant pink-flashed pattern; White, pure white.

Sweet pea Spencer Ripple Mix

Unique blend of striped, mottled, veined and flecked bicolored petals. Ruffled blooms are very fragrant. Great novelty cut flower for production of mixed bouquets. Vines to six feet.

Stock 'Venus Pink'

This spray-type stock is an excellent cut flower with strong, straight stems and small leaves. Its full blooming, dense spikes of deep pink flowers are fragrant and make an excellent choice in flower arrangements and single bouquets. Doubles are selectable on cotyledonary leaf. Mature height approximately 30 inches.

Poppy 'Bridal Silk'

Glistening, pure white petals are accented with yellow anthers at center. First separate color selection in field-grown poppies. Perfect for a direct-sown, field-grown cut. The silky petals are a welcomed color choice for all—white or mixed bouquets. Mature height approximately 20 inches.



'Falling in Love'

Poppy 'Falling in Love'

Semi-double and fully double blooms in many shades of red, salmon, pink, coral and white in bicolors and picotees. Very floriferous producing three-inch silky blooms. Can be field grown for a cheery addition to cut flower bouquets. Mature height approximately 30 inches.



'Garland Orange'

Marigold 'Garland Orange'

Garland-type marigold used to make garlands and for many ceremonies and festivals. It delivers continuous flowering for big crops of large (4") deep orange blooms with fluted petals. Long stems are strong and somewhat flexible, bending outward at an angle from central stems. Easy to grow and adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions. Approximate plant height is 28-24" under short days and 48-60" under long days.

***Venidium fastuosum* (Cape daisy) 'Orange Prince'**

A longstanding variety with silky foliage and large, bright orange flowers with black central rings. Tolerates heat and drought making it useful as a cheery summer cut flower. Mature height is approximately 32 inches.

Calla 'Santa'

A classic bridal cut flower. First time in commerce from seed, offering a clean, disease-free start. Flowers of the purest soft white are shaped like a spouted vase with a single golden anther inside. Long-lasting petals have a thick waxy texture. Glistening, dark green foliage and sturdy stems. Mature height as a cut flower is approximately 24 inches.

Zinnia 'Pop Art Golden and Red'

A novel, long-lasting cut flower variety. Large, golden yellow blooms are carried on tall stems and are flecked and splashed with bright red markings. Each medium-sized, double bloom is completely unique. Mature height is approximately 24 inches.



'Pop Art Golden and Red'



'Orange Prince'



'Santa'



'Sky Dance'



'White Lightning'

ALCEA Rosea-Hybr. Spotlight Series 'Radiant Rose'

Though, we think we've got the latest and the best breeding with the Spotlight Series, we can't claim to have been there first with our affection for hollyhocks. (The Neanderthals beat us to that. Excavations in Iraq uncovered remains of hollyhocks that were 60,000 years old.) The saucer shaped, radiant pink blooms of 'Radiant Rose' join the distinguished company of other single colors, among the Spotlight Series, 'Mars Magic' in red, 'Polarstar' white, 'Sunshine' yellow and 'Blacknight' purple-black. The Spotlight-Series is perennial (not biennial) and will flower during the first season when sown early. Hyper-cleaned JET® rubbed seed improves germination and allows for successful machine sowing.

Salvia pratensis Ballet Series 'Sky Dance'

The Seven Sages of the 6th century B.C., also known as the Wise Men of Greece, were known for their sage advice. The easy-to-grow, first year flowering meadow clary sage, *Salvia pratensis* 'Sky Dance' is a wise, perennial seed choice. Medium green, wrinkled, oblong-shaped and aromatic leaves produce packed basal rosettes, but that's not the only buzz. Tones of pale blue-purple seem to ebb and flow through the distinctively hooded flowers from June to August, and continue for up to two months. A late summer to early fall bloom is possible. The softly light blue 'Sky Dance' completes

the Ballet Series including 'Rose Rhapsody', pale pink shades; 'Swan Lake', pure white, 'Sweet Esmeralda', intensive dark pink; and 'Twilight Serenade', blue-violet.

Vernonia noveboracensis 'White Lightning'

Jelitto welcomes *Vernonia* 'White Lightning', a distinct ironweed like no other, with showy clusters of fluffy, pure white blossoms, and consistently grown from seed. Gardeners know the durable New York ironweed and appreciate the towering species for its purple blooms, in late summer and early fall. 'White Lightning' is the first pure white flowering form among all regularly purple flowering *Vernonia* species. Native in the United States from New Hampshire to Alabama, the insect and disease resistant species, a great source of bee nectar, is widely adaptable, even in moist soils. The tan to rusty colored seed heads in the middle of autumn are a bonus of 'White Lightning'.

Delphinium 'Cobalt Dreams'

The Delphinium is one of three new additions to our New Millennium collection. Semi-double blooming plants stand at about 48 inches tall, and bloom June to September depending on where you are growing them.



'Radiant Rose'



'Cobalt Dreams'



Sunflower ‘Vincent’

Daylength neutral, better length under short days, more flexibility in programming. Round, overlapping petals form sturdy flower heads that hold up better during transport. An extra ring of petals provides a more attractive, upward-facing flowers. Deep orange color with a green heart.



Lisianthus ‘Mariachi Yellow’, ‘Mariachi Blue’

Extra double, large, camellia-like flowers, two inches in diameter. Thick petals for long-lasting shelf life and easy transportation. Group 2/ standard quadruple flower ideal for winter sowing and summer harvest. Plant height is 30-38 inches. ‘Mariachi Blue’ is a vivid blue and a consumer favorite. ‘Yellow’ is a soft buttery yellow which combines well with blue, pink, white, and red flowers.



Aster ‘Bonita’

Pompon type; flower centers completely fill in. Two-inch flower size, similar to ‘Matsumoto’. Flowers are held at a perfect angle for maximum impact. Fusarium resistance similar to Matsumoto, one week longer crop time.



Lisianthus ‘Arena III Blue Picotee’

A new color to the Arena series, ‘Blue Picotee’ has good stem length and branching. The picotee edge may become smaller under high heat conditions. The Arena series is less sensitive to short stem length under long-day conditions, is less sensitive to rosetting in plug cultivation, and has very double flowers on strong stems. The colors that make up the series are classified by group, with group I being the earliest to flower, group IV the latest.

*‘Super Magic Pink’***Lisianthus ‘Super Magic Pink’**

Early flowering, ‘Super Magic Pink’ has bright pink petals that make extra large, double flowers. Pink joins the other 5 colors in the Super Magic series. The series features a top flowering habit with large flowers and high quality stems.

Snapdragon Legend Series

This new series is a Group I-II snapdragon. Legend is ideal for extra-early winter production. Its desirable features include strong stems, dense flower spikes and strong petals. Stem length is 36 to 52 inches/91-132 cm, depending on time of year.

*‘Limoncello Summer’***Sunflower ‘Limoncello Summer’**

An addition to the outstanding Sunrich series, ‘Limoncello’ has unique bicolor petals that are orange close to the disk and lighten to lemon at the petal tips. The color contrast may differ depending on climate conditions. ‘Sunrich Limoncello’ has a dark disk and is similar in growth habit to ‘Sunrich Orange Summer’.

*‘Premier Orange’***Sunflower ‘Premier Orange’**

With excellent uniformity and vase life, Orange joins Lemon and Light Yellow in the Premier series. Extra early, the series offers a very short crop time of approximately 45 to 50 days to flower from sowing under long-day conditions.

*‘Arena III Blue Picotee’**Legend Series*



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Mariachi® Lisianthus

- Extra double large, camellia-like flowers
- Thick petals for long-lasting shelf life and easy transportation
- Ideal for winter sowing and summer harvest



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'Anastasia Dark Green'

'Anastasia Dark Green'

Blooms first week of October. This large deep green spider retains its green color throughout the season without additional shading. With strong straight stems and durable blooms, it works well in arrangements and will be an asset to the show table. May be grown as a disbud or a spray. Tall.



'Feeling Green'

'Feeling Green'

Blooms toward the end of October. A glowing green pompon that gradually fades to a beautiful mint color as it develops into a ball. It is a vigorous grower with many blooms and long laterals making it desirable as a cut flower or fine NCS terminal sprays. Grow as a spray. Tall.



'One Scoop'

'One Scoop'

A delightful anemone which will make a wonderful, showy addition to your garden or to the show table. It also will work nicely for bouquet work. It can be disbudded for larger flowers or will have multiple blooms per stem for cut flower growers. 'One Scoop', which looks like a scoop of ice cream in the middle of a bowl, was graciously made available for our catalog by the breeder, Tony Dorman. Medium height.

'Saba'

Blooms first week of November. This exotic-looking mum is a unique cut flower with long laterals. It features stunning ribbon-like dark purple petals edged in white with a lime-green center. It performs well either as a disbud or spray for design work. Tall.

'Saffina'

Blooms toward the end of October. 'Saffina' is a stunning, vibrant quill with a radiant green center. The petals are a fiery orange with yellow tips. It is best grown as a disbud, but is still useful in bouquets and floral arrangements even if it is not disbudded. Tall.

'Savanna Charlton'

Blooms toward the end of September. This large, light pink, early-blooming disbud will especially delight northern growers who worry about an early frost. It is a fine example of an exhibition type bloom for show or garden display. Best grown as a disbud. Medium height.



'Saba'



'Saffina'



'Savanna Charlton'



Hydrangea macrophylla
'Hokomano' Everlasting®
Noblesse PPAF

Hydrangea Everlasting Noblesse is one of the newest selections from this amazing line of great performers. Crisp, celery green flowers are brightened by white centers with complementary purple eyes. As blooms mature, the white is not as prominent, turning a more saturated green. A strong grower, with remarkable flower power, *Noblesse* is a lovely choice for a garden setting, while doubling as the perfect cut flower for weddings and other important events.



'Hokomano'

Echinacea Confections™ 'Honeydew' PPAF

Honeydew is a surprisingly refreshing new color in double coneflowers. It really stays green and provides a much-needed hip and comforting color to the bright summer garden color palette. This is one heck of a well-branched plant with super thick, amazingly strong, straight stems in the trials and for that reason, it will make a lovely cut flower. The 3" wide blooms make quite a statement in any arrangement.



Magical® White

Callicarpa Magical® Purple PPAF

Clusters of violet-purple fruits adorn each strong, upright stem of this new beautyberry. The amazing number of fruits in each cluster makes for a strong accent to late summer and fall florals. Plants are super easy to grow and the fruits are larger than *Callicarpa dichotoma*.



'Honeydew'

Callicarpa Magical® White PPAF

The numerous, long-lasting pure white fruits of this new beautyberry selection will blend perfectly with late summer golds and purples and the jewel tones of autumn flowers. The strong stems stand upright and do not flop, even though the stems are clothed in massive clusters of fruits. The fruits on this new selection do not gray or fade.



Magical® Purple

Symphoricarpos doornsbosii

Magical® Melody PPAF

Blueberry-sized, pearly pink fruits on long, well-branched stems make this the perfect cut fruit for late August weddings. *Melody* is white blushed with pink and will become more pink as the nights get cooler in early fall. Not many fruits come in blushing pink, so if your blushing bride isn't so pink, but wants a hint of color, this snowberry may be the perfect fit.

Eryngium Magical® Purple Falls PPAF

Huge clusters of rounded, steely-purple, thistlelike blooms cover each stem of this newly bred cut variety. Multiple clusters allow for tall, layered looks or you can divide the stem into smaller pieces for individual rounded clusters for small tabletop arrangements. Mix these with burgundy, orange and lime green for the perfect fall combo.

Eryngium Magical® Blue Falls PPAF

Each stem is a bouquet with this steel-blue sea holly. The flowers are traditional in shape, but with a nearly iridescent blue collar (bracts) surrounding each bright blue globe. Bracts are softer than normal, so there's no worry of someone poking herself, which can be a problem with other sea hollies. Pair Blue Falls with creams, pinks and lime green for all summer color or jewel tones for a fall event.

Rose Magical® Bullet PPAF

Medium sized and numerous, these fire engine red rose hips will add sprays of color to any arrangement. Each stem has hundreds of long-lasting hips, providing weeks of color for the consumer. The bright red color of this new rose hip selection will complement both fall and winter bouquets.

Rose Magical® Pearls PPAF

Super shiny orange-red hips are held strongly in sprays containing hundreds of fruits per stem. The small, pearl sized fruits are perfect for fall arrangements and winter weddings. The branches of this robust plant are sturdy and will hold the fruits upright, even though they are loaded from top to bottom.

Rose Magical® Gold PPAF

Perfectly hued for fall bouquets, these small golden orange hips are plentiful and strong. Each stem is a spray of hundreds of fruits and the sturdy branches hold the fruits upright, providing depth and dimension to floral art. Mix 'Magical Gold' with purples, burgundies and other jewel tone-colored flowers and foliage for a stunning display.



Magical® Purple Falls



Magical® Blue Falls



Magical® Pearls



Magical® Gold



Magical® Bullet

2013 ASCFG CUT FLOWER SEED TRIALS

JOHN M. DOLE, INGRAM MCCALL, HALLEY M. GRANITZ,
ALICAIN CARLSON, AND JUDY M. LAUSHMAN

The top-rated performer in this year's trial was not a flower, but a fruit: Pumpkin-on-a-stick (Genesis). This well-named *Solanum* has dark stems decorated with very cool-looking miniature "pumpkins". The fruit are technically eggplants and carried on stems that averaged 22 inches long, ranging from 16 to 36 inches long. Plants produced an average of 2½ stems per plant. Vase life is very long, to the point of obnoxious. We finally threw out the last of the stems in our trials after two months. Trialers loved them for their

striking orange color and unique shape. The negatives were equally strong: thorns, thick stems that can be hard to use in foam, and pest-infested foliage. The latter is not too much of an issue as the foliage needs to be removed to show the fruit better. One trialer reported harvesting the stems with both ripe and unripe fruit for a different effect.

Open-faced snaps appear to have arrived and are holding their own against the regular snapping snapdragons. We tested two open cultivars and one regular cultivar. All three cultivars did well, producing about 7 stems per plant, and averaging about 18 to 20 inches long. The top-scoring cultivar was 'Trumpet Pink' (PanAmerican) receiving the top scores for its soft pink color, vigor, productivity and earliness. Snapdragon 'Chantilly Velvet' (Takii) was also well received for its rich orange red color, strong stems and productivity. Snapdragon 'Purple Twist' (PanAmerican) had the traditional shape, but a most unusual color with a combination of rosy purple and white. Here in North Carolina the flowers started white with purple stripes and were almost completely white when the weather

warmed. Other trialers noted that the flowers were almost completely purple in cool weather. Not all trialers liked all of the color combinations.

We had two crested celosias in the trials and one plume type. The crested celosias were 'Bombay Green' (Kieft) and 'Bombay Orange' (Kieft). The Bombays were bred for single-stem production in mild greenhouse conditions and that was evident as most trialers harvested one stem per plant. 'Bombay Green' stems averaged 17 inches long and 'Bombay Orange' averaged 19 inches; trialers reported a range in stem lengths from 6 to 34 inches. The short stems reflect that fact that Bombays can be sensitive to stunting in the flats and cold temperatures outdoors. The Bombays did well for some trialers, however. Regarding 'Bombay Green' one trialer said that "Will be growing for sure in 2014, my favourite in the ASCFG trials this year." and another wrote "This was one of the few that we needed more plants of, everyone loved the color." For 'Bombay Orange' the color was popular as well as the stem consistency. The plume celosia was 'Red Flame' (Genesis); it produced an average of around 7 stems per plant that were about 19 inches

long. Trialers commented on its great color that contrasted well with the dark foliage and its multiple side shoots. It apparently also held its form and color well as a dried flower.

We had five ornamental peppers in this year's trials from the Cornell Pepper Breeding program. The data and comments are listed in the trial report below and Chris Wien provides more details in his report on page 40.

Although the ASCFG trials are not the best test for larkspurs, 'Cannes White' (Takii) did quite well with its long spikes of pure white flowers on sturdy stems. Trialers reported an average of 2½ stems per plant that averaged 19 inches long.

Dianthus continues to be a staple field cut flower and we have had many cultivars in the trials over the years. This year we have a new color in the Sweet series, which already has a large number of colors. 'Sweet Black Cherry' (PanAmerican Seed) worked well for some trialers with stems up to 24 inches long and up to 18 stems/plant. For others, dianthus does not do well in their area or cultural system, resulting in short stems, and this cultivar suffered the same fate.



Amaranthus ‘Elephant Head’ (Genesis) got plenty of attention for its great color, strong stems, and large heads. The latter characteristic was too much for some trialers who indicated the flower heads were too large to be easily used. Trialers harvested about 2½ stems per plant, which ranged from 12 to 48 inches long, averaging 23 inches long. The wide range in stem length is fairly typical for amaranthus, with some folks consistently getting tall, robust plants. For those having problems with getting good stem length, be sure to transplant when seedlings are young and rooted just enough to hold the plug together. Delaying transplanting may cause small flower heads.

In summary, we had 19 cultivars from four companies and Cornell University. Based on trial results, the top five commercially available performers are automatically nominated for the ASCFG Cut Flower of the Year. The rankings are based on the combined ratings score: market appreciation + repeat again + ease of cultivation. Thus, from the 2013 trials celosia ‘Red Flame’, dianthus ‘Sweet Black Cherry’, solanum ‘Pumpkin on a Stick’, and snapdragons ‘Trumpet Pink’ and ‘Chantilly Velvet’ are nominated for the Cut Flowers of the Year and will join other nominations from ASCFG members.

Interpreting the trial results:

The numbers reported are averages of all the respondents and many factors will affect the success of any plant species. Our participants are growing and harvesting the trial plants in a wide variety of ways. After looking at the average, check the range of responses listed below each number to see how the cultivar performed at its best and its worst. If the range of responses in the ratings is narrow and high, i.e., 3-5 or 4-5, the plant was a winner for most of the respondents and is likely to do well for you. The ‘Repeat Again Rating’ is particularly important because it indicates if the trialer would take the time, money, and space to actually grow the cultivar again. Review the trial results carefully. If a cultivar sounds interesting but did not appear to do well, try it anyway. The cultivar may work well for you.

Acknowledgments: A hearty thank you to all of the 16 evaluators who returned their trial reports and to the seed companies for providing such great cultivars. Congratulations to Allison Smith, Hunny Bunny Honey and Flowers, for being the first trialer to return the evaluations. We would also like to thank Blair Lane, Luna Gu, Diane Mays, and Iftikhar Ahmad for assisting with the NCSU trials. In preparing the report we have edited the participant’s comments for space and clarity; apologies if we’ve altered the tone or content of anyone’s comments.

PARTICIPATING SEED COMPANIES

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
Ithaca, New York
hort.cals.cornell.edu/research/labs/chris-wiens-research-page

GENESIS SEEDS LTD.
Ashalim, Israel
www.genesisseeds.com

KIEFT-PRO-SEEDS
Venhuizen, Netherlands
www.kieft-pro-seeds.com

PANAMERICAN SEED
Chicago, Illinois
www.panamseed.com

TAKII SEED
Salinas, California
www.takii.com

PARTICIPATING GROWERS

JANET BACHMAN
Riverbend Gardens
Fayetteville, Arkansas

BARB JEWELL
Island Meadow Farms
Prince Edward Island, Canada

CHRISTOF BERNAU
UCSC Farm & Garden
Santa Cruz, California

INGRAM MCCALL
JOHN DOLE
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina

TANIS CLIFTON
Happy Trails Flower Farm
Dennis, Mississippi

ED PHILLIPS
Field and Flower
Piedmont, South Carolina

CALVIN COOK
Arrowhead Dahlias
Platteville, Colorado

JAMIE ROHDA
Harvest Home
Waverly, Nebraska

CONNIE DAM-BYL
William Dam Seeds
Dundas, Ontario

ALLISON SMITH
Hunny Bunny Honey & Flowers
Helotes, Texas

NANETTE DIETMEYER
Fox Ridge Flowers
Buckner, Kentucky

CHERYL WAGNER
Wagner’s Homestead Farm
Belleville, Michigan

DAVE DELBO
Dave’s Flowers
Elysburg, Pennsylvania

CHRIS WIEN
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

JANET FOSS
J. Foss Garden Flowers
Chehalis, Washington

SUSAN WRIGHT
Shady Grove Gardens
Vilas, North Carolina

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The number in a parenthesis refers to the number of respondents who made the comment. If no number is present, only one person made the comment. Comments by each individual are separated with a semicolon (;). Note: many respondents did not make specific comments on each cultivar and in some cases, comments have been shortened because of limited space.

AMARANTHUS

Amaranthus 'Elephant Head' (Genesis)

Good Qualities: Great color (5); Large heads (3); Strong stems (2); This form was a nice addition to the amaranth lineup and worth growing again, despite some issues listed below; This plant is a real eye-catcher, it is definitely the focal point in an arrangement; Grows quickly from direct seeding at various times during the season, dense flower heads; Great for large floral work, easy to grow. **Problems:** Flower heads can quickly grow to be too large (4); 'Elephant Head' was a good crop overall, but we had some inconsistency in stem length and in plant vigor, making for a fairly non-uniform looking crop; Not popular with florists, stems tended to fall as it aged, may need to net, did not pinch; It will topple without support, one customer told me it looked like someone was "giving you finger", I guess you could see it that way, but the plant is very unique!; Chunky look; I don't have the right customer base.

Similar Cultivars: None

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife, also drying; Like other amaranths, 'Elephant Head' had a wide harvest window and could be picked over a wide range of its bloom time (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: My customers are so-so on amaranth only because of the large size, some like it and some don't, the smaller heads are much more accepted; The sideshoots were much more usable, would be better if grown for fall arrangements, plants that were planted later were much shorter with smaller

heads making them more usable; Not a color or shape we need; With its dwarf plant habit, it is more of a bedding plant than cut flower type; I think it has its place, I am sure florists would love it!

CELOSIA

Celosia 'Bombay Green' (Kieft-Pro-Seeds)

Good Qualities: Wonderful true green color (6); Amazing number of usable side shoots, to be honest the big honkin' central stem with the huge crest has very limited use with us, it is certainly neat and novel to gaze at, but, what to do with it, I cut them before they got crazy large and was very pleased with the nice useable, realistic size of the any sideshoots, comparing to 'Bombay Orange', it won hands down. (Orange had 0 sideshoots); Great germination; A nice color that worked well with the other flowers we were harvesting at the same time, 'Bombay Green' did not dry as well as the other celosias in the trial, it held its form well, but the colors became dingy and washed out; Consistent plant habit and flower shape, size.

Problems: Did not grow after it was transplanted (2); Too short (2); Crop failure, first time growing Bombay, had beautiful plants in the greenhouse and set flower at 3 inches tall? after reading on Bulletin Board, found it was not a good idea to top, planted a few out but they didn't get any height; Because of our cool climate, we often have challenges with good stem length on celosia and gomphrena, 'Bombay Green' was no exception and we had to use all of the stems in our mini/micro bouquets; Cannot hold in plug trays; Stems tended to fall as it aged, may need to net; In the field it can get brown spots from bugs.

Similar Cultivars: 'Spring Green'

Postharvest Recommendations: Cut when needed, do not keep around long after harvest, do not put in cooler.

Comments: Will be growing for sure



'Bombay Green'

2014, my favorite in the ASCFG trials this year; Cannot grow the Bombay series, always hold too long in plug tray; This was one of the few that we needed more plants, everyone loved the color; Love the color if I could get it tall enough, willing to give it another try; Bloom 1st of Sept from 6/11 transplant date, the best of the bunch this year; This velvety flower can be used at any size from 2 to 8 inches.

Celosia 'Bombay Orange' (Kieft-Pro-Seed)

Good Qualities: Great color for fall (6); Great germination; A nice color that worked well with the other flowers we were harvesting at the same time, 'Bombay Orange' also dried nicely, holding form and color; Consistent in plant habit, size, and shape.

Problems: Did not grow once transplanted (2); Was very disappointed with this one, I ordered seed from Ball prior to the seed packets arriving from the ASCFG, I grew both, the Ball seed and the trial seed and had the same results, I am interested in hearing how others did, or if it was just me...all the celosia was treated the same; Crop failure, first time growing Bombay, had beautiful plants in the greenhouse and set flower at 3 inches tall? After reading on Bulletin Board, found it was not a good idea to top, planted a few out but they didn't get any height; Because of our cool climate, we often have challenges with good

stem length on celosia and gomphrena, 'Bombay Orange' was no exception and we had to use all of the stems in our mini/micro bouquets; Cannot hold in plug trays; Stems tended to fall as it aged, may need to net; Inconsistent head size, grown in low tunnel.

Similar Cultivars: None noted by trialers.
Postharvest Recommendations: None noted by trialers.

Comments: This was one of the few that we needed more plants, everyone loved the color and will definitely be on next year's list; Bloom mid Sept. from 6/11 transplant date; Colour is more of a burnt orange-red than clear orange; I hope I did not do anything to prevent this one from performing its best, I'm sure it's a good variety and certainly a great colour, could you pinch this perhaps?; I seem to always hold Bombays to long in plug trays and they never amount to anything for me.

Celosia 'Red Flame' (Genesis)

Good Qualities: Great color (3); Good stems (2); A bright, shining color that worked well with the other flowers we were harvesting at the same time, 'Red Flame' also dried nicely, holding form and color; Heads 2-3 inches in low tunnel, bloom Sept.; Head size, strong stems; Dark foliage is a good contrast to the bright red flowers, multiple side stems for extended harvest.

Problems: Flower shape and size are not consistent (2); Need support; Because of our cool climate, we often have challenges with good stem length on celosia and gomphrena, 'Red Flame' was no exception, but we still liked this cultivar; Tended to fall over as plant aged, stems were not as strong as other varieties, maybe should have cut stems sooner.

Similar Cultivars: Higyoko red stem; 'Kurume New Scarlet'.

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Added stem color to bouquets; Transplanted 6/11 and 6/17 now harvesting on 10/2 in low tunnel; I mixed this with other colors of celosia

or in mixed bouquets, it seemed to sell better that way.

DIANTHUS

Dianthus 'Sweet Black Cherry' (PanAmerican)

Good Qualities: Striking color (13); Strong stems (4); None (2); Large flower head (2); Productive (2); Well-liked by our customers and by our bouquet-making crew; Nice to see new colors coming along; Good, lasting flower, easy to germinate, easy to grow and had a fairly long harvest window; Long straight stems, beautiful dark red combines well with other colours, buds are useable as filler; Customers liked it, productive; Nice clean blooms, like the colour especially in the fall.

Problems: Stems were too short (5); I wish they were the same length as the Amazon Neon series; Stems were weak as compared to 'Sweet White', it might be good for fall, but it didn't sell for us in early season, we didn't sell any the first three weeks we had it available, yet I thought it was a wonderful color, the bloom heads are much smaller than white; Although people commented on the nice color they rarely wanted it in their bouquets, almost too dark of a color; I can see where some people might like more stem length, this would be helpful but not at the expense of a weak stem.

Similar Cultivars: Other Sweets.

Postharvest Recommendations: Good stripping of foliage to keep the water clean longer, especially if you are not using any water treatments; Chlorine; Always use Floralife in the water when first cut and after bouquets are made (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Friends started these for me in their greenhouse, seeded 2/2, transplanted to my garden 4/15, first cuts 6/7; Would be a good crop for tunnels; I liked the color but it was a hard sell to retail florist and event people; Rainy spring and summer led to rotting in the field; 5/14 transplant - bloomed 6/15, 6/13 transplant - bloomed 7/20, still blooming (10/2) in low tunnel - no frost yet; Liked this one a lot; People visiting our trials loved how dark the colour was: we call it "old Hollywood glamour red"; Stems were a little short, probably our hot weather, planted 5/20 with 6-inch spacing; I sowed half early and the rest later, I found that when the first sowing is blooming, there are so many other



'Sweet Black Cherry'

flowers to choose from, I don't always cut every stem, I like to cut it later in the season as it is more of a novelty; I cut and sold all of my late-sown Sweet series and will definitely grow again if seed becomes available.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant 'Pumpkin on a Stick' (Genesis)

Good Qualities: Persimmon orange color was very striking (5); Outstanding germination (2); Great for fall arrangements (2); Great postharvest life (2); Very easy to grow, these stems are eye-catching and everyone wants to know what the plant is, the sturdy purple stems are again, eye-catching; Unique fruit, fruit dry well; Stems could be harvested when the fruits were not yet colored, thus providing a different look, when fully mature, the fruit color contrasted to the black stems; Decorative pumpkins for the fall season; Nice size fruits; Unique size and shape, seasonal fall item; Numerous fruits.

Problems: The stems have thorns! (5); The leaves were ravaged by some insect, but you cut them off anyway to expose the little pumpkins on the stem; Fruit start only couple inches off ground, have to cut off some bottom fruit so you have a stem, foliage is ugly, should be removed, stems super heavy, need a good vase; We grew them in bulb crates, initially in the greenhouse and then outdoors when our greenhouse planting got infested with aphids, they seem to really attract the aphids, but once we moved them outside, delivered a single soap spraying, the natural predators cleaned up the plants fairly quickly, fortunately, this took place early in their life cycle and by the time we were harvesting, the early damage was no longer evident; Potato bugs; Some stems produced nice clusters of fruit while others only had 1-3 per stem, main stem is nice and tall and then the lateral branches are shorter and don't mature at the same rate as the

first stem, I cut them while the shorter stems were on the green side hoping that they may color up, I didn't want the tall stem to go bad; No problems.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: The fruit dry well so the stems can be put in a vase with no water and be just fine; Water not necessary; Floralife; Remove leaves (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: I love this plant and will grow it next season, my customers love it (except for the thorns); Farmers' market customers loved it! So unique, everyone

I love 'Pumpkin on a Stick' and will grow it next season, my customers love it (except for the thorns); Farmers' market customers loved it! So unique, everyone had to try!

had to try!; Leaves removed before sale, dry summer kept plants shorter than previous years; Florist don't know what to do with this, fall season just starting so no sales retail as of yet, just lookers, just cuttable 10/2 long season for the return in cool summer.

IBERIS

Iberis 'Yael' (Genesis)

Good Qualities: This is a bedding plant due to the short stems, it flowers for months, when we had a dry spell in August and I didn't water them as often as I should have, the flowers died back, very nice bright white that was useful as a filler and contrast to the rest of what we grow; Nice bloom.

Problems: Too short to be a cut flower (3); We harvested whole plants, stripped some of the base and then used the whole plant as a filler/base for small bouquets,

a lot of space for not a lot of yield; Never grew well, started flowering in pack, never made it to the field.

Similar Cultivars: None listed by trialers.

Postharvest Recommendations: None listed by trialers.

Comments: It bloomed a lot longer than my other candytuft, I was surprised it lasted as long as it did, I'm hoping it is a perennial and will return next season!; Nice color and shape, too short, 6/18 bloom from 5/15 transplant date; We had a very rainy spring and summer, most died in the field, and those that did not die were too short to cut.

LARKSPUR

Larkspur 'Cannes White' (Takii Seed)

Good Qualities: Sturdy (4); Wonderful color (2); Size of head, full head of flowers; Vigorous plant; Good germination; Quick to germinate, full look; Good stem quality and fairly consistent stem length across the entire planting.

Problems: None; Bloomed same time as fall-sown direct-seeded larkspur; Browns quicker than most; No major problems that

are not already common to larkspur, we had a little bit of early damping off and some plants that bolted, even when their neighbors were perfectly happy.

Similar Cultivars: 'Other larkspurs; 'Qis White'; 'Sublime White'.

Postharvest Recommendations: Used Floralife; Just used plain water; Here again, good stripping is important to maintain clean water when not using water treatments.

Comments: Nice addition to bouquets; Stems were a little short in our hot weather, direct seeded 3/23; Much easier to grow larkspur by direct seeding in the fall.

LISIANTHUS

Lisianthus 'Arena II Blue Flash' (Takii Seed)

Good Qualities: Strong stems (2); Vigorous plants, great growth habit; Tough, drought tolerant, beautiful color,

multiple blooms, still have some in the field, withstood a flood, not one pest; Farmers' market customers liked the color, the friends who started the seeds in their greenhouse were pleased with the ease and said they can now rethink starting eustoma from seed rather than buying plugs; Beautiful colors; Tall, early, attractive blue streaks on white background; All cultivars were good in color and sturdy stems, size of flowers were good and many blossoms per stem. **Problems:** Color looks washed out (2); Color was not as good as 'ABC Misty Blue', color faded in our hot weather, once the weather cooled, color was better; Usually last to sell to florists; Needs support (floral netting) and probably does much better in a hoop house (which I don't have); Difficulty in germination, seeds arrived late for this season; None; Poor germination compared to other varieties; The pinks tended to take on a little lavender color at times, it wasn't anything that hurt sales.

Similar Cultivars: 'ABC Misty Blue'

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Planted in high tunnel 5/12 6-inch spacing, germination excellent—90% plus; Started in greenhouse 2/2, transplanted 6/4, grown outside in partial shade, still cutting 10/21, customers love lisianthus, I don't care for them; I love lisianthus but I have poor germination results when I grow from seeds since I do not have a greenhouse, the seeds arrived late for this season's germination and harvest, the few plants I did grow were short and had one stem per plant, I will plant them in my hoop house and see how they do next season; Cool season too short to allow second flush to mature in field, only partly harvested in tunnel; We had a cool, wet spring and early summer and we had the best lisianthus we have ever had in the field; Not really enough to compare well, planted 6/13, slow grower, bloomed 9/28 in cool summer low tunnel; Eustoma is always well

accepted at the market, people love the colors and the lasting quality of the plant and cut flowers; Chris Wien at Cornell noted 16-inch stems in the field and 22-inch stems in the high tunnel.

Lisianthus 'Arena II Light Pink' (Takii Seed)

Good Qualities: Pretty yellow (2); RUFFLED! the petals are adorably ruffled and the color is a really nice soft yellow that goes well with white and ivory, excellent for wedding work, seed germinated relatively "easy" for lisianthus, still spotty but at least 50% without any fuss; The frillier blossom edge was lovely.

Problems: Poor germination (2); Mine weren't very productive or tall, but I think that is due to a very late start; The off-white "yellow" color was muddy; None.

Similar Cultivars: None listed.

Postharvest Recommendations: None listed.

Comments: Germination was extremely poor and only one seedling made it through summer, they were planted 2/20, as of 9/18 they are approximately 6 inches in height and no sign of budding; Got the seed too late to make a real go of this since lisianthus are so slow to germinate and grow, I would take that into consideration when weighing my comments, I was actually impressed with how well it did considering the late start; All but six plants succumbed to a late killing frost, we had 80 degree days that sort of fried them, then a couple of killing frosts in early May.

Lisianthus 'Arena III Baby Pink' (Takii Seed)

Good Qualities: Excellent pink color (4); It wasn't the typical rosey pink of most lissis, very nice for wedding work; Super vigorous plants, great growth habit, great stems and foliage;



'Arena II Blue Flash'



'Arena II Light Pink'

Tall, productive, early; Strong stems; A visitor from California who does arrangements for events commented on the dark centers as something he hadn't seen before, I liked this in arrangements with dark burgundy dahlias, the friends who started the seeds in their greenhouse were pleased with the ease and said they can now rethink starting eustoma from seed rather than buying plugs; Great stems; Better for weddings than 'Arena Light Pink'; All cultivars were good in color and sturdy stems, size of flowers were good and many blossoms per stem. **Problems:** None (2); Very late, very short, all three lissi sown, planted and

grown the same, this variety was much shorter, it is blooming right now and I consider it late.... mid October, grown in field with no irrigation, planted through biodegradable black plastic, sown March 20, planted in field June 1, first stems harvested October 4, favorite thing about this one is colour and although short it was very healthy and usable in small bouquets; Color very soft, in the hot weather color almost had brown look, once weather cooled color was much better; Needs support (floral netting) and probably does much better in a hoophouse (which I don't have); Difficulty in germination, seeds arrived late for this season; The pinks tended to take on a little lavender color at times, it wasn't anything that hurt sales.

Similar Cultivars: None listed.

Postharvest Recommendations: Florallife (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).



Pepper 1-159252

Comments: I really liked the colour of this one, I would grow again if Ball Tagawa offers; Planted high tunnel 5/12 at 6-inch spacing, germination was 90% plus, color so different should have its place in floral work; Although rated as a class 3, of same maturity as its sister lines rated 2; Hard to tell lisianthus varieties apart, most look similar; Started in greenhouse 2/2, transplanted 6/4, grown outside in partial shade, still cutting 10/21, customers love lisianthus, I don't care for them; I love lisianthus but I have poor germination results when I grow from seeds since I do not have a greenhouse, the seeds arrived late for this season's germination and harvest, the few plants I did grow were short and had one stem per plant, I will plant them in my hoophouse and see how they do next season; We had a cool, wet spring and early summer and we had the best lisianthus we have ever had in the field; Creamy pink, late for a lisianthus late Sept, sowed 1/21, transplanted 6/13, bloom 9/27; Eustoma is always well accepted at the market, people love the colors and the lasting quality of the plant and cut flowers; Chris Wien at Cornell noted 18-inch stems in the field and 21-inch stems in the high tunnel

PEPPER

Pepper 1-159252 (Cornell University)

See Cornell-copia article for more information on these peppers.

Good Qualities: Tight clusters of peppers all along the stem, holds peppers well; These peppers are cherry-sized and are turning from yellow to orange as they mature, great addition to an arrangement!; High yield of long stems, attractive yellow globe fruits, one inch diameter, moderately attractive as dry stems; Peppers were upright and rounded in growth, had an interesting crown-like shape on top of the pepper.

Problems: Stems short, but usable; None that I have encountered; Slight drop of maturing fruits; Aphids were attracted to this pepper in the greenhouse, once treated and set in the field they were fine, however, prior to harvest we found blister beetles in abundance.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: Remove leaves as they wilt and use plain water, we do not use preservative because we put these in mixed bouquets and told our customers they could enjoy the bouquet and then eat the peppers if they wanted to (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Plants wilted after a week in water, hydrator not effective, worth growing again; We did not receive the seed until March 26, however, they were germinated April 8 with a 75% germination rate, they stayed in the cell packs until July 1, once planted they took off, plant formed one main stalk then branched, the branched sections were not very long, nor did they have many peppers in the cluster.

Pepper 10-441525 (Cornell University)

See Cornell-copia article for more information on these peppers.

Good Qualities: Beautiful green leaves with strong stems, multiple peppers turning red after cut; Nice clusters of peppers, good balance of colors; Bean-sized peppers are turning orange, this is a keeper, the stems are strong and it really adds to an arrangement in the fall; Tall, productive, thin upright yellow fruits, holds up in water without wilting; Pretty pale yellow color initially then changing as it aged.

Problems: Rabbits loved them; None that I see; Not attractive when dried, fruits discolor; Aphids in the greenhouse as seedlings, blister beetles at harvest.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: Lots of water and indirect light; Remove leaves first, plain water (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: At least 2 weeks with leaves on, in water, relatively late in our cool growing season this year; Although the overall stem length was 16 inches, we cut just above the branching and got only about 8 inches of length which was fine for short bouquets.

Pepper 13-441552 (Cornell University)

See *Cornell-copia* article for more information on these peppers.

Good Qualities: Beautiful green leaves with strong stems and multiple peppers turning red even after cut; Lime-colored cherry-sized peppers which turn orange as they age, long-lasting, easy to grow, look super in arrangements; Tall productive plant with many green fruits, turning red, stems moderately attractive when dried; Sorry, NONE, the pepper hung downward, looked like miniature bell peppers, not a good ornamental at all.

Problems: Rabbits love them; The peppers were too spread out on the stems for a good impact, the stems of this cultivar were weak; None that I could see, I got a late start getting these seeds into the ground so that they are now coming into good color (mid-October), this is not a problem though; Slow and late in this cool season; Aphids in the seedling stage.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: Remove leaves, plain water (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: There was very little transitional color on this cultivar, the peppers were either red or green; 1 week before leaves started to wilt, worth another look.

Pepper 16-441575 (Cornell University)

See *Cornell-copia* article for more information on these peppers.

Good Qualities: These peppers are bean shaped and sized, they are turning a light purple, they have strong stems and should look great in arrangements; Lots of different colors on this cultivar, purple, yellow, orange, and red, the peppers were nicely spaced on the stems, and the stems were very sturdy; Tall productive plant with multi-colored fruits, attractive.

Problems: None (2); Plants did not mature beyond 4-5 inches; Too short, peppers were upright, but not in large clusters, I was not impressed.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: Remove

leaves, plain water (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: This cultivar was our favorite of the ones we trialed; 1 week before leaves wilt in water, hydrator did not improve vase life, worth growing again; This pepper was too short to get any cuts above the fork, therefore, to get a cut we had to cut the whole plant.

Pepper 22-441530-2 (Cornell University)

See *Cornell-copia* article for more information on these peppers.

Good Qualities: These peppers are jalapeno shaped and colored. They are gradually turning a bright orange. They have strong stems and look great in fall arrangements; Tall and productive, showy plant with yellow round fruits.

Problems: None that I have encountered; Did not have good germination with this cultivar, the peppers were too spaced out on the stem for a good impact; Oldest fruits tend to drop near maturity of the plant.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: None listed by trialers (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Leaves wilt in less than a week in water.

SNAPDRAGON**Snapdragon 'Chantilly Velvet' (Takii Seed)**

Good Qualities: Awesome color (8); Strong stems (4); Very prolific (2): Good stems and growth habit; early, performed best in cool fall conditions; When pinched, the basal branching was well spread, allowing for easy harvest, also, not all stems were ready at once, but picked over a 15-18 day period, which helps when

**Pepper 16-441575**

you cannot do continuous succession plantings; Multiple usable stems for bouquet work after cutting initial stem, nice open florets, the flowers open to give it a unique look for a snapdragon, it blooms in the spring and the fall; Good for fall color, rusty faded red; Size of blossom; Beautiful open-faced florets, florets are large and well-spaced on the stem.

Problems: Didn't like the color in our hot weather, not as vigorous as 'Chantilly Purple', not as many stems per plant; Being a class 1-2, did not produce long stems and racemes in midsummer; Like other snapdragons, these plants eventually succumbed to rust; Did not seem to grow as well outside as it did in hoop house, definitely needs netting for secondary growth; Not very productive; Needs support (floral netting); None that I encountered; Spindly and sparse, had a good flush of flowers in the beginning and then they weren't as full as others I've grown; Aphids.

Similar Cultivars: Our customers really like the Chantilly form and 'Velvet' was a good addition to the lineup; Other Chantillys, not as robust as others

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Harvested 3 crops, 2nd and



'Purple Twist'

3rd were shorter, but still good for bouquet work, transplanted 4/15 high tunnel at 6-inch spacing; Started in greenhouse 2/2, transplanted 4/15, first cuts 5/31, still cutting 10/18; Sowed 1/18, transplanted 5/15, bloom 7/20, still blooming some 10/2 in low tunnel, red with orange tone; The colour changes when the temperatures get cooler, from bright to dark red, this is a good addition to the Chantilly series; Greenhouse grown; Chris Wien at Cornell harvested 33 stems, averaging 17 inches long when planted in the spring in the field and 13 stems, averaging 20 inches long from a fall high tunnel crop.

Snapdragon 'Purple Twist' (PanAmerican)

Good Qualities: Very unusual color pattern! (9); Productive (2); Strong stems (2); A local florist was in awe, worked well in arrangements; Good growth habit, stems; Early; Initially,

we had mixed response to the spotted/marbled appearance of 'Purple Twist', but I think the unique form really grew on our students and customers, very unlike other snaps we have grown, with standout qualities that make it well worth growing again; Multiple usable stems for bouquet work after cutting initial stem, nice open florets; It was unusual; Blooms in the spring and again in the fall; Quick to germinate, nice color except the speckled ones; Novelty striping!

Problems: Needs support (floral netting) (3); I didn't care for this one, I grew the same one from Ball Seed last year and it seemed to have a lot more colour than this one had, to be honest, I cut very little, there are lots of other nice snaps I would rather have, the blooms were not big or strong; None; Stems and racemes short, especially in heat of summer; Like other snapdragons, these plants eventually succumbed to rust; Aphids; Did not seem to grow as well outside as it did in hoophouse; Hard to use in a bouquet, short, not very productive, short vase life; It got rust awfully early in the season, which spread to all our snaps ending the season sooner than I hoped; too short in low tunnel; Plant grew "squirrely" and out of shape, didn't get much harvest all season, cut back plants but still didn't do much.

Similar Cultivars: None.

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife in water (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: I will not grow this one unless the 'in' colour palette requires!; Harvested 3 crops, 2nd and 3rd shorter, but usable in bouquet work, transplanted in high tunnel 4/15 at 6-inch spacing; Flower color pattern appears to vary with temperature: in hot conditions, florets have a pink base color with purple speckles; in cool weather, purple streaks are formed and may even broaden to make the whole floret purple; Greenhouse grown; Started in greenhouse 2/2, transplanted 4/15, first cuts 5/31, still cutting 10/18; I really appreciated getting to trial this snap and I loved the name; Good-sized flowers on the stalks; This started out as a really interesting variety, white with lots of purple strips as the season progressed the purple strips went away and the flowers were purple flecked instead, by mid July, there was no purple coloration at all; Some solid purple in the mix, looked diseased; The striping pattern changes with the temperature—it looks completely different in the fall than summer, both are fantastic! adds a whimsical element to bouquets; Chris Wien at Cornell harvested 16 stems, averaging 32 inches long when planted in the spring in the field and 20 stems, averaging 10 inches long from a fall high tunnel crop.

Snapdragon 'Trumpet Pink' (PanAmerican)

Good Qualities: Very pretty soft pink (10); Good strong stems (6); Used every stem; Vigorous; harvested 3 crops. 2nd and 3rd were shorter, but still good for market bouquets, soft pink color was great to work with; Productive, early; Fairly vigorous plants and good stem strength but otherwise this was not a big

standout; Pink color always sells in spring; Multiple usable stems for bouquet work after cutting initial stem, nice open florets; Popular for weddings, blooms in the spring and again in the fall; Quick to germinate; Constant bloom, liked that it mixed well with lots of colors; Love the open-faced florets too, spikes are filled well, evenly spaced.

Problems: Needs support (floral netting) (3); Rust (2); Not a problem, but did not come back like Opus; None; Probably a class 1-2; stems and racemes short in warm summer conditions; Aphids; Did not seem to grow as well outside as it did in hoop house; Not very productive; Most died early because of our wet spring; Short and spindly in the low tunnel, should do better in a high tunnel.

Similar Cultivars: ‘Chantilly Pink’ (2); Similar to Chantillys with better growth habits; Chantilly series.

Postharvest Recommendations: Floralife in water (See also postharvest article in this issue for more information).

Comments: Soft pink color (3); I used every stem of this one which surprised me, because the butterfly snap is not usually as popular cut, first 4 stems per plant July 4, early harvest for

us, sowed greenhouse March 28, grew in 50 cell trays, pinch all snaps, transplanted to field June 1; We loved this one; Best suited to fall plantings in our environment; I really wish breeders would focus on true resistance to rust for all new snapdragon cultivars, colors, forms, stem length are all good across the range, but organic growers really need rust resistance; Greenhouse grown; Nice fragrance, worked well in arrangements with other flowers I grow to sell at farmers’ market, started in greenhouse 2/2, transplanted 4/15, first cuts 5/31, still cutting 10/18. Customers loved this snap, they called it a salmon pink, it was a fun snap to grow; Good-sized flowers on the stalks; Sowed 1/18, planted out 5/15 bloom 7/10 low tunnel added mid-summer, still blooming 10/2; Very well-liked by customers; We did not support the snaps: they fell down in the wind and started to form multiple side shoots, which were shorter but more abundant; Chris Wien at Cornell harvested 33 stems, averaging 17 inches long when planted in the spring in the field and 11 stems, averaging 21 inches long from a fall high tunnel crop.

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2013 ASCFG Seed Trial Results. The first row of data for each cultivar is the average and the second row is the range of responses. Note when only one response is listed, either only one person responded for that category or several responded and all gave the same rating. The single highest score and the single lowest score in each category for each cultivar have been dropped.

Species Cultivar Company	Yield (stems/plant)	Stem length (inches)	Market appreciation rating ¹	Repeat again rating ¹	Ease of cultivation rating ¹	Average postharvest life (days)
Amaranthus 'Elephant Head' Genesis Seed	2.7 1-10	23.2 12-48	2.9 2-4	2.6 2-5	4.6 4-5	10.3 7-14
Celosia 'Bombay Green' Genesis Seed	1.5 1-9	17.2 6-34	4.0 3-5	3.6 2-5	3.9 3-5	10.3 6-14
Celosia 'Bombay Orange' Kieft-Pro-Seed	0.6 1-8	19.0 6-34	3.3 3-4	3.2 2-5	3.4 3-4	12.0 10-14
Celosia 'Flame Red' Kieft-Pro-Seed	6.8 2-18	19.3 7-21	4.2 1-5	4.0 1-5	4.3 1-5	11.8 8-14
Dianthus 'Sweet Black Cherry' PanAmerican	7.5 2-18	13.7 10-24	4.0 3-5	4.0 3-5	4.4 3-5	9.8 7-15
Eggplant 'Pumpkin on a Stick' Genesis	2.6 1-6	22.3 16-36	4.5 3-5	4.5 3-5	4.5 4-5	30.8 28-37
Iberis 'Yael' Genesis	1.0 1	9.0 8-12	1.0 1	1.5 1-3	3.0 2-4	9.0 7-10
Larkspur 'Cannes White' Takii Seed	2.6 1-6	19.0 12-30	3.8 3-5	4.2 4-5	4.0 3-5	6.5 5-8
Lisianthus 'Arena II Blue Flash' Takii Seed	2.3 1-3	13.4 8-30	3.9 3-4	3.4 1-5	3.4 1-4	13.3 8-21
Lisianthus 'Arena II Light Pink' Takii Seed	1.8 1-6	14.8 12-32	3.7 3-5	3.4 1-5	3.5 2-5	10.6 8-14
Lisianthus 'Arena III Baby Pink' Takii Seed	2.1 1-6	17.2 10-24	4.1 2-5	4.4 2-5	4.7 2-5	12.4 9-21
Pepper 51-59252 Cornell University	7.5 2-17	21.5 12-38	3.8 2-5	3.5 1-5	4.8 4-5	11.5 7-14
Pepper 10-441525 Cornell University	7.8 2-22	19.3 8-40	3.8 1-5	3.8 2-5	4.6 4-5	15.3 14-21

¹ 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the best. Market ratings are based on sales to wholesales, retailers, or final consumers direct.

2013 ASCFG Seed Trial Results. The first row of data for each cultivar is the average and the second row is the range of responses. Note when only one response is listed, either only one person responded for that category or several responded and all gave the same rating. The single highest score and the single lowest score in each category for each cultivar have been dropped.

Species Cultivar Company	Yield (stems/plant)	Stem length (inches)	Market appreciation rating ¹	Repeat again rating ¹	Ease of cultivation rating ¹	Average postharvest life (days)
Pepper 13-441552 Cornell University	8.3 2-15	21.6 10-41	3.4 1-5	3.4 1-5	4.4 3-5	14.2 7-21
Pepper 16-441575 Cornell University	7.3 1-22	21.0 12-35	3.4 1-5	3.2 1-5	4.0 1-5	12.8 7-16
Pepper 22-441530-2 Cornell University	6.6 2-12	24.6 18-36	3.3 1-5	4.0 3-5	4.5 4-5	11.0 7-14
Snapdragon 'Chantilly Velvet' Takii Seed	7.5 1-15	18.4 12-36	4.0 3-5	4.0 3-5	4.2 4-5	6.7 5-7
Snapdragon 'Purple Twist' PanAmerican	6.9 1-15	19.7 12-36	4.1 3-5	3.5 2-5	4.1 3-5	7.4 4-14
Snapdragon 'Trumpet Pink' PanAmerican	7.1 1-15	18.5 12-36	4.1 3-5	4.2 3-5	4.2 3-5	7.9 5-14

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POSTHARVEST TREATMENT OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWERS

North Carolina State University Report for 2013

Halley M. Granitz, John M. Dole, Julia Kornegay, Alicain S. Carlson, and Ingram F. McCall
Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University

This project was supported by the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Research Foundation, the NCDA Specialty Crop Grant Program, and numerous suppliers. The authors would like to thank Diane Mays, Blair Lane, Luna Gu, and Iftikhar Ahmad for assisting with growing and harvesting the cut flowers.

As part of the ASCFG's yearly cut flower trials, we conduct vase life studies on cultivars and varieties that show potential as future mainstays on growers' lists. This year, thanks to a joint NCDA and USDA grant, we also had the opportunity to evaluate some cultivars already widely grown in North Carolina. A total of 19 annual and perennial cut flowers from 12 different genera were evaluated for postharvest vase life.

What We Did

Trial varieties were planted sixteen plants per plot, four plots per variety. All marketable flowers were cut, measured, and recorded in the field up to three days per week. Up to 60 stems per variety were sorted into four uniform groups and bundled for postharvest vase life evaluation.

Bundles were placed into their first solution, hydrator (Floralife Hydraflor 100 Pretreatment at 1 ounce per gallon) or no hydrator (deionized water) for four hours. Then they were transferred to a second solution: holding solution (Floralife Professional Fresh Flower Food at 1.3 ounces per gallon) or no holding solution (deionized water) for 48 hours. Hydrators are intended to promote rapid water uptake and do not include sugar, while the holding solutions have sugar to promote long vase life. The four resulting treatments were:

1. Hydrator only (no preservative)
2. Holding preservative only (no hydrator)
3. Hydrator, then holding preservative
4. De-ionized water only (control)

Once pretreatments were done, each stem was placed in its own mason jar with 300 mL of deionized water to simulate conditions in consumers' homes. Temperature was kept steady at $68 \pm 4F$ with 200 fc light for twelve hours per day. Stems were checked daily and terminated once they reached an agreed-upon stage of expiration, usually when greater than 50 percent of petals were desiccated or heads bent over to less than a 90-degree angle. Vase life was recorded for all stems.

What We Found

Amaranthus 'Elephant Head'

This beefy, wine-hued amaranthus performed best with a holding solution, lasting an average of almost twelve days. Hydrating solution showed a lesser effect, extending vase life by less than one day.

Aster 'Lady in Black'

This is a large, mounding perennial aster with deep purple foliage and a fine texture. 'Lady in Black' is a nice filler with its dark purple leaves and multitude of tiny pink flowers. Expect it to last around nine days in the vase regardless of treatment.

Astilbe 'Fanal'

All our astilbes were happy with the cool, rainy spring this year and were quite prolific. This was the second year in the field for 'Fanal,' and it put on a beautiful show. 'Fanal' lasted a little over 5 days in water only, and an average of 2 days longer with a holding treatment.

Celosia 'Red Flame'

'Red Flame' is a sturdy dark carmine red celosia with leaves fading from purple to green. As expected, it has quite the lengthy vase life, with a vase life of 16 days in water only. Holding solutions increased vase life by more than two days.

Dianthus 'Sweet Black Cherry'

'Sweet Black Cherry' struggled with the wet weather this spring, and though it was not as prolific as it might have been in a better year, vase life was as long as we expected. We cut this dianthus when at least three florets were open. Its fragrant, deep purple flowers lasted an average of 15.8 days regardless of treatment.

Eggplant 'Pumpkin on a Stick'

Talk about bang for your buck! 'Pumpkin on a Stick' was worth the season-long wait. The unique, orange mini pumpkins just kept going in the vase. With an average vase life of just over 36 days, this Japanese eggplant cultivar is a must-grow for fall seasonal sales.

Goldenrod ‘Fireworks’

‘Fireworks’ is a perennial favorite in North Carolina. Its open habit and hardy disposition make it an easy choice for growers. The large inflorescence can be used as a filler flower. Using both hydrating and holding solutions increased vase life from 6.7 in the control to 9.1 days with both hydrator and holding solutions.

Lisianthus ‘Arena II Blue Flash,’ ‘Arena II Light Pink,’ and ‘Arena III Baby Pink’

This year was excellent for lisianthus in North Carolina. They thrived in the cool, wet spring and early summer. ‘Arena II Blue Flash’ flowers have a lilac color fading to white toward the center. ‘Arena II Light Pink’ sports a very pale, almost white flower with a deep maroon splotch in the throat. ‘Arena II Baby Pink’ is very similar to the other pink variety, but its petals are a tad bit darker pink. It also has a maroon splotch in the throat. All had similarly long vase lives, with ‘Arena II Baby Pink’ lasting slightly longer at an average of 12 days. ‘Arena II Light Pink’ and ‘Arena II Blue Flash’ averaged 11.2 and 10.6 days, respectively. As expected, holding treatments increased vase life by up to 3 days.

Pepper 1-159252, 13-441552, 16-441575, and 22-441530-2

These four peppers thrived and produced many sturdy stems. Peppers were harvested in late August when the fruit colored up, and terminated when peppers dropped or the stems turned black. They generally lasted a day or two longer with a holding solution, while hydrating solutions were generally deleterious to vase life across all four selections. 1-159252 had an average vase life of 14.5 days, 13-441552 lasted 14.5 days, 16-441575 came in at nearly 16 days, and 22-441530-2 was the shortest at 12.2 days on average.

Phlox ‘David’

‘David’ is a familiar favorite to many gardeners due to its higher degree of mildew resistance, and it makes a great cut flower as well. Its large, white, cloudlike panicles perch atop long sturdy stems. Vase life was, on average, 10.6 days. Hydrating and holding treatments had no significant effects.



Astilbe ‘Fanal’



Salvia ‘Caradonna’

Salvia ‘Caradonna’

This perennial salvia produces copious spikes of vivid purple spires its second year in the field. Most flowering occurred in spring and fall. A vase life of 8 days was observed in water only, and holding solution increased vase life around a day.

Snapdragon ‘Chantilly Velvet,’ ‘Purple Twist,’ and ‘Pink Trumpet’

We cut snapdragons until August here in North Carolina this year. The cool, rainy weather kept them going strong months past the end of their regular harvest season. ‘Chantilly Velvet’ and ‘Pink Trumpet’ are showy, open-faced snapdragon varieties. ‘Chantilly Velvet’ has crimson flowers in the traditional shape and sturdy, tall stems. ‘Pink Trumpet’ is a baby pink hue with an ombre effect, fading to white at the tips of the spikes. ‘Purple Twist’ is a horse of a different color, with white, traditionally shaped snapdragon petals accented by purple zebra stripes. Interestingly, flowers started out with bold purple accents early in the season and were completely white when the weather warmed. In water only, ‘Chantilly Velvet’ had a vase life of 5.0 days and ‘Purple Twist’ and ‘Trumpet Pink’ lasted 7.2 days. Holding solutions were helpful in all cases, increasing vase life a little over a day for ‘Chantilly Velvet’ and by 3 days for the other two cultivars.

Genus 'Cultivar' or species	No Hydrator, No Holding (water only) (days)	No Hydrator, Holding (days)	Hydrator, No Holding (days)	Hydrator, Holding (days)	Stems Treated per treatment	Statistical Significance?
<i>Amaranthus</i> 'Elephant Head'	8.9	12.0	9.6	11.5	15	No
<i>Aster</i> 'Lady in Black'	8.3	9.7	10.2	9.4	15	Yes
<i>Astilbe</i> 'Fanal'	5.4	7.7	5.8	7.4	15	Yes
<i>Celosia</i> 'Red Flame'	16.0	18.5	13.8	16.5	15	No
<i>Dianthus</i> 'Sweet Black Cherry'	15.9	16.1	15.5	15.5	15	No
<i>Eggplant</i> 'Pumpkin on a Stick'	38.0	41.5	33.5	31.6	15	Yes
<i>Goldenrod (Solidago)</i> 'Fireworks'	6.7	8.4	8.5	9.1	15	Yes
<i>Lisianthus</i> 'Arena II Blue Flash'	8.8	11.9	10.0	11.9	9	Yes
<i>Lisianthus</i> 'Arena II Light Pink'	9.3	12.3	11.1	12.0	9	Yes
<i>Lisianthus</i> 'Arena III Baby Pink'	11.1	12.8	11.0	12.9	11	No
<i>Pepper</i> 1-159252	10.8	12.6	9.1	10.7	15	Yes
<i>Pepper</i> 13-441552	16.7	15.5	11.3	14.3	15	Yes
<i>Pepper</i> 16-441575	15.8	17.5	13.9	16.5	15	No
<i>Pepper</i> 22-441530-2	11.1	13.2	10.1	14.6	15	No
<i>Phlox</i> 'David'	10.8	11.1	9.9	10.6	15	No
<i>Salvia</i> 'Caradonna'	8.7	9.7	8.9	9.2	15	Yes
<i>Snapdragon</i> 'Chantilly Velvet'	5.0	6.3	5.0	6.5	15	Yes
<i>Snapdragon</i> 'Purple Twist'	7.2	10.0	7.1	10.5	15	Yes
<i>Snapdragon</i> 'Trumpet Pink'	7.2	10.0	7.1	10.5	15	No



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What Our Members Tell Us

Thank you for a terrific meeting in Wooster! The speakers were inspiring, the flow was smooth, the facility top notch, and the question and answer session was wonderfully engaging!

Barbara Lamborne,
Greenstone Fields,
Virginia

I just wanted to let you know that the Flower Search tool on the web site is AMAZING. People from all over the U.S. ask me all the time where they can get local flowers and I always refer them to the Flower Search. It's such a great resource. Thank you!

Alicain Carlson, North Carolina State University,
Raleigh

I'm so happy to be part of this great group. It's a bunch of "glass half full" people, easy to feel the love. Thanks for everything!

Janet Walrath,
Creative Haven Flowers,
Washington

I needed inspiration, and encouragement, and I got it! I am so impressed by the wealth of resources the organization has. I know I can't do this without you and all the myriad ASCFG devotees! I have already learned volumes from the Bulletin Board and *The Cut Flower Quarterly*.

Amy Priestley,
Labor of Love Flower Farm,
New York

The Growers' Business School was the best one I ever attended. It has led me in another direction, again! Everyone was so generous with their knowledge, again! Thank you for pulling it off.

Cathy Rogers,
Bloomin' Joy,
New York

Flower Power Among Friends: Capital Flower Growers

Dave Dowling, Barbara Lamborne, and Bob Wollam

ASCFG members can make a real impact on the number of cut flower imports. Combining floral product through cooperative wholesale operations is one way to take back some of the 80% of flowers currently shipped into the United States. Inspired by grower/wholesalers in Seattle and Wisconsin, three ASCFG members created our own hybrid wholesale operation in the Washington, D.C. metro area—Capital Flower Growers, LLC (CFG). Last November marked the completion of our first season of operation. We have unanimously declared it a “great start”. After just one season, from May to November, each of our overall sales increased, adding new customers each month and increasing revenue with virtually no marketing expenses.

It all began at the 2012 ASCFG National Conference in Tacoma. Barbara and Dave were there (where was Bob?), and visited the successful Seattle Wholesale Growers Market. Later we talked to members of Fairfield Flowers, a local flower growers’ co-op based in Madison, Wisconsin. These were the inspirations that sparked Capital Flower Growers.

Getting Started

At first, we definitely wanted a permanent warehouse space. Designers and florists needed to SEE what we had. We thought we found it in Georgetown, of all places. More than two thousand square feet—including a cooler—full access via a private alley, and a very reasonable rent. The owner, whose son is a farmer, understands farmer budgets, loves flowers and was willing to give it a try. Alas, Georgetown, being one

of the more upscale areas of D.C., had zoning restrictions prohibiting wholesale operations of any type. This was a big setback after months of negotiations, but we were determined.

Being typical farmers, we did much of the work to get CFG started ourselves. We started with a small investment and huddled often to work out the details. We hired an attorney to create our legal structure. We opted for a Limited Liability Company to create a business that would be separate from our individual farms. CFG is operated as a “pass-through” company with no income itself; all revenue goes through

to our individual farms. We created and mailed a postcard using Vistaprint, an online supplier of marketing services, introducing CFG to a purchased list of all florists and designers within 50 miles of Washington, D.C.. Facebook was easy. We created our website using WebPlus-X5 software, an easy-to-use web design application. We used MailChimp, an email marketing service provider, for our weekly email availability list, which includes photos of each flower along with

pricing. We devised a system for receiving and allocating orders and delivering the goods. And it all worked. Most of the time.

Here is a breakdown of our costs:

- LLC Legal Fees \$1045
 - Domain name registration \$16
 - First three months web hosting \$9
 - Market mailing list \$53
 - Postcard and postage \$166
- Total \$1,289



Bob Wollam, Barbara Lamborne, and Dave Dowling

How We Pulled it Together - Together

We realized it would be cost effective if we made the deliveries ourselves, and figured all we needed was a parking lot with a farmer-friendly owner. That is when Hana Newcomb of Potomac Vegetable Farms offered the use of her vegetable stand, four miles from the Capital Beltway, and almost an equal distance for each of us. The Newcomb family has a legacy of supporting farmers. Every Wednesday morning we meet there for our drop off, switching buckets and stems. Each of us covers a delivery area and off we go. For delivery, we pay ourselves \$.55 per mile from our meeting location, to our customers, and then back to our farm. To cover this expense and others, each farm pays 5% of its gross sales.

Every Thursday we have a conference call to talk about what product each of us has, and to update our MailChimp availability message. We then sit back and let the orders come in by email or phone. A big challenge is that we would prefer to sell our product at our farmers' markets where we get higher prices, so we must judiciously save stems for our wholesale customers. We use Google Drive to compile the orders, entering each customer's order as we receive them. Monday afternoon we have a second call to divvy up the orders. We keep tallies on the spreadsheet because our goal is to distribute the sales evenly among us. This has been challenging at times, as Bob gets the lion's share of the orders because of the demand for dahlias. We harvest on Tuesdays, keeping in close contact with each other in case we discover that we don't have quite enough of something, or if the quality is not up to our standards.

Educating our customers and gaining their confidence requires skillful and effective marketing. Converting customers who are accustomed to getting flowers in boxes into buyers of seasonal flowers delivered in water can be the biggest challenge. We strive to

provide what they want for as long as they want, and hope they see the value of buying from us despite the seasonality.

This year we often did not have enough flowers for the demand, especially for non-flowering products like dusty miller and eucalyptus. As each of us prepares to expand what we grow next season, we



need to coordinate some of what we grow. Fortunately, we have other sales outlets for our flowers: farmers' markets, CSAs, grocery stores, and other wholesale customers.

We are still on the lookout for cheap warehouse space, something that may not exist in our area, but we can dream. If we find such a facility, we will likely need to have other growers join us. If we don't, we will continue next season with the system used this year. While our



model has very low overhead, it might be challenging to expand with such a manual approach.

Has it Worked?

We three are friends and it was scary going into business together. Fortunately we found that we complement each other quite well. Dave is the brains of the operation; he's tech-savvy and seems organized. Barbara serves as a catalyst, moving things forward and keeping Bob and Dave in line. Bob is the dreamer and schemer, but more importantly he grows an enormous amount of beautiful product.

Having a customer like Ellen Frost of Local Color Flowers in Baltimore is a great asset and ensured that our first season was successful. Ellen has long been committed to using only locally-grown, seasonal flowers in all her work, years before there was much demand for it.

Working together, we created a larger, more complete inventory for our customers. This in turn has helped each farm sell more flowers. We see this as a step forward to taking back some of the 80% of the floral market U.S. growers have lost, especially if it inspires other farmers to do the same.

Be sure to attend the Wilmington Conference in October to hear more about cooperative wholesale efforts. You may be inspired to start your own!

Bob Wollam owns Wollam Gardens in Jeffersonton, Virginia, Barbara Lamborne owns Greenstone Fields in Wheatland, Virginia, and Dave Dowling owns Farmhouse Flowers and Plants in Brookeville, Maryland. Collectively they produce flowers on more than 13 acres, and have been growing from seven to twenty two years. Barbara is currently the ASCFG Secretary; Bob and Dave are both former ASCFG Presidents. For more information visit capitalflowergrowers.com

Identifying and Managing Rose Rosette Disease in Cut Roses

Alicain Carlson and Michael Munster,
North Carolina State University

Some of you may have noticed odd-looking growth on your field roses in recent years. The symptoms may be due to rose rosette disease (RRD). This disease was first identified in the United States in the 1940s and has become more common over the last three years or so. It is now known to be caused by a virus vectored by a microscopic mite. It can affect all hybrid roses, including the Knockout Series, and many species roses. Read on to find out how to identify, prevent, and manage this disease.



A rose with RRD showing the juvenile red coloration, flexible shoots in a witches' broom, and hyperthorniness.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Symptoms of RRD can vary depending on the variety of rose involved. They include elongated flexible shoots, proliferation of shoots leading to “witches’ brooms”, excessive development of thorns (soft or not), leaf deformation, retention of juvenile red coloration in shoots, flower abnormalities, decreased cold hardiness, and plant death. Not all symptoms may be present in any given plant. In particular, shoot proliferation and leaf deformation can be misleading, since these symptoms can be caused by exposure to low doses of the herbicide glyphosate. If you observe these two symptoms alone, do some sleuthing to see if drift might have occurred. Diagnosis is usually based on symptoms, with confidence levels ranging from definitive (when hyperthorniness is seen) to tentative. There is a molecular test that can be used to confirm the presence of the virus that causes RRD so check with your local extension agent to find out if it’s available in your area.

Cause and Spread

RRD was only recently proven to be caused by a virus, but it has long been known to be transmitted by the microscopic eriophyid mite, *Phyllocoptes fructiphilus*. These are not the same as the more familiar spider mites. Small size makes up for their lack of wings,

and these mites can be carried about on air currents and perhaps by other insects. According to Star Roses and Plants/Conard-Pyle there is no evidence that RRD can be spread by pruning or cutting tools, but it is a good general practice to sanitize knives and shears frequently during pruning operations anyway. Of course propagating from infected plants or grafting onto infected rootstocks would result in infected roses.

Prevention

Best growing practices always include preventative measures. Examine any new plants to be sure they are symptom-free. That does not guarantee that they are healthy, since symptoms can take from 17 days to 9 months or longer to show up. Be sure to buy plants from a reliable source. Wild multiflora roses are the primary host and are an important source for the virus, so removing any wild populations within 100 to 150 meters of your plants is necessary.

Star Roses and Plants/Conard-Pyle recommends pruning dormant plants just before new growth appears to eliminate or reduce mites and their eggs that hide in bud crevices. They recommend cutting the plants back by two-thirds their size. Given the mobility of the mites and the possibility of root grafts, plant roses far enough apart as possible so that roots or branches don’t touch. This is sometimes hard to justify when field space is at a premium, but this will reduce the chance of RRD spreading to a healthy

neighboring plant and potentially ruining an entire planting. If space is limited, try interplanting other species among the roses.

Management

There is no effective chemical treatment for plants infected with RRD or any other viral disease, but controlling the mite vector is a good place to start. Trials at the University of Tennessee are evaluating miticides to control eriophyid mites, and preliminary results look promising. However, the mites are very tiny, making it hard to get acceptable coverage. Pesticide application is certainly no substitute for removing an infected plant from the field. The jury is still out on how to best manage RRD, so the following recommendations are provisional.

Since viruses become systemic in their hosts, pruning may not be sufficient, especially if the disease is not caught early enough. If a bush has only one affected cane, pruning that cane as close to the ground as possible might get ahead of the infection, but we have no definitive data to show that this is effective. Removal of infected plants is the safer course of action. Plants should be bagged before digging or as soon thereafter as possible, to reduce the chance that the mites will scatter on the wind and carry the virus to nearby roses. Remove enough of the roots so that the infected plant does not re-sprout. Fragments of small roots left in the soil after plant removal should pose no risk. As long as there are no other infected roses nearby, replanting can be done immediately. The virus and mites should die quickly after plants are chipped, so properly composted mulch should not be a source of the disease. Finally, keep a close watch on areas where diseased plants were removed, to be sure they do not sprout again.

As plant pathologists and entomologists continue to conduct experiments over the next several years, we'll be in



RRD symptoms showing witches' broom, flexible shoots, and leaf deformation.

a better position to know what works and what doesn't. The ultimate solution will be to have resistant varieties. Perhaps some of the resistance in our native species like *Rosa setigera* and *Rosa carolina* can be brought into cultivated types. However, breeding takes time.

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Photos by Michael Munster

Eucomis for Specialty Cut Flower Production

Alicain Carlson and John Dole



Eucomis 'Ruby' seed pod

Eucomis, commonly known as “pineapple lily”, is an easy-to-produce perennial, native to South Africa. The flower spikes are a dense column of waxy, star-shaped flowers with a tuft of leaf-like bracts on top, from which the common name is derived. From a true bulb come the long, strap-like leaves, which form a rosette around the inflorescence, adding to its exotic tropical look. Flower, seed pod, stem, and leaf colors vary from white to green, pink, purple, or burgundy. Sometimes leaves and stems have spots of a darker color. The *Eucomis* genus has about 15 species including *E. comosa*, *E. bicolor*, *E. autumnalis*, and *E. pole-evansii*.

Currently, we have 13+ cultivars in field trials at North Carolina State University (NCSU) for cut flower evaluation. Over the last 5 years we have learned a lot about growing *Eucomis* and the great potential it has to be a successful cut flower. Growers have reported that they sell very well to florists and at farmers’ markets, getting roughly \$2.50 and \$5.00 per stem, respectively. Of course, consumer acceptance and product price will vary depending on your market, but this offers a good place to start.

Cultivars

It is important to choose the correct species and cultivars appropriate for cut flower production. We do not recommend dwarf varieties or *E. bicolor* for use as cut flowers. Dwarf varieties are often too short for cuts. *E. bicolor* has a slightly disagreeable odor and we found it not to overwinter at NCSU (zone 7b). Stem length varies with cultivar and age of the bulb, generally ranging from 1 to 4 feet. Taller-stemmed varieties will fall over, especially if not kept well hydrated or supported, thus netting might be useful, but not necessary. A few great cultivars we do recommend for cut flower production include ‘Sparkling Burgundy’, ‘Can Can’, ‘Reuben’, ‘Oakhurst’, ‘Tugela Jade’, ‘Tugela Ruby’, ‘Tugela Gem’, ‘Tugela Jewel’, and ‘Megaru’. The beautiful burgundy foliage of ‘Sparkling Burgundy’ can also be harvested. Breeders are working with *Eucomis*, so many new and exciting cultivars are appearing on the market for cut flowers (and potted plants, too!).

Planting Location and Propagation

Eucomis does well field grown, under high tunnels, or in standard lily crates in the greenhouse. Planting bulbs in the greenhouse to be forced in January will give May/June flowering with night temperatures around 60F. For field production, spring planting is best where bulbs planted in May will flower in July (approximately two months). Bulbs can also be planted in the fall for flowering the following summer.



***Eucomis* 'Sparkling Burgundy' foliage before flowers develop.**

3-5 years to flower. *Eucomis* can also be started from plugs, which are available commercially. Bulbs can be divided periodically in the fall or spring and offsets replanted.

Older/larger bulbs will produce larger inflorescences. Over time inflorescence size can get unmanageable for some uses, and bulbs left in the field should be divided at this point. One 18cm+ bulb will give one flower in a season; as the bulb develops bulblets and forms a cluster, multiple flowers will be produced. Bulbs can be planted successionaly (e.g. every 3 weeks) so flowering can occur over a longer period of time.

Water and Fertilizer

Substrate should be kept evenly moist. Good drainage is necessary because like most bulb crops, *Eucomis* is more susceptible to rots if habitually overwatered. Light to moderate fertilization (100-150 ppm N) is best from shoot emergence to flowering. Over-fertilized plants will typically show some leaf tip burn. Clear water leaches should be done to reduce salt buildup if grown in crates. Typical peat-based substrate blends work fine.

Light and Temperature

Eucomis should be grown in full sun, which makes leaf and stem color more vibrant, but can tolerate partial shade. For example, in full sun 'Sparkling Burgundy' will have a dark burgundy foliage, while those in partial shade will be greener. Shorter-stemmed cultivars may be stretched slightly if grown under partial shade. Leaf coloration of 'Sparkling Burgundy' and all bronze-leaved cultivars will also change from burgundy to green as the inflorescence develops. Flowering may also be enhanced by high light levels. The warmer the temperature the faster *Eucomis* will flower. It can tolerate high temperatures if kept well hydrated. We

get up in the 90s and occasionally hit 100 and our plants were fine. Foliage will persist until frost. Plants do not appear to be photoperiodic, but bulbs do have a vernalization requirement that is still being determined.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major pests or diseases that commonly affect *Eucomis*, but watch out for water molds, cut worms, leaf miners, mealybugs, and botrytis. Thankfully, deer do not like *Eucomis*. Be sure to inspect bulbs upon arrival for signs of soft rots.

Harvest Stage

Stems should be harvested when no less than 75-100% of the florets have opened to maximize vase life. Harvesting at this time also reduces the chance that the stems will become weak and flop over postharvest. The colors of the florets, stem, and seed pods change over time so it is understandable that you may want to



***Eucomis* 'Sparkling Burgundy' at NCSU**

harvest at different times to get different looks; however be aware that early harvests increase the likelihood of weak stems, shorter vase life, and not all florets will continue to open. As the flowers age they become greener and colored seed pods form, which are also attractive and attribute to the long vase life.

Foliage of the burgundy-leaved cultivars can be harvested and will last even longer than the flowers. Foliage grown outdoors in full sun and harvested before flowering will have the darkest color; leaves will be more green than burgundy under lower light levels.

Harvest

Stems are easy to harvest, no clippers required, just grab as close to the base of the stem as possible and give it a firm twist and pull. As long as the plants are properly hydrated the stem should detach easily from the bulb. This harvesting method prevents the leftover stem “nub” from rotting away on the plant attracting fungus, disease, etc. Stem ends should be recut after harvest by this method to facilitate maximum water uptake.

Postharvest Handling

Harvested stems perform best held in tap water and have the potential to last 30-60 days, depending on the cultivar. Properly hydrate stems upright in a bucket of tap water in a cool place. *Eucomis* does not benefit from the use of hydrating or holding solutions, including bulb specific preservatives. If stems are in a mixed arrangement with flowers that need floral preservative, the vase life could be reduced by approximately a week; however, *Eucomis* will probably still outlast anything else in the vase! Harvested leaves are as easy to handle as the flowers, with floral preservatives not needed. *Eucomis* is not sensitive to ethylene when exposed to 1 ppm for 20 hours.



***Eucomis* 'Tugeta Ruby' at NCSU**

While cold storage for more than one week can decrease vase life, cut stems can still have a vase life of 20 days when stored either wet in buckets or dry in floral boxes for up to 3 weeks. This makes *Eucomis* a good candidate for long-distance shipping or storing stems to prolong availability. Stems stored for more than a week at temperatures below 40F may show signs of cold damage so treat them like tropicals. When removed from dry storage be sure to re-cut and allow to properly rehydrate upright before using.

Eucomis does not perform well in standard floral foams due to possible hydration issues that cause the stem to lose turgidity. If need be, a long wooden pick or skewer could be inserted into the fleshy stem to provide support for event work. Stems harvested at the proper stage will perform better in foam due to increased stem strength.

Acknowledgements

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Sources for *Eucomis*

DeGoede Bulb Farm,	jack@degoedebulb.com
Bill Moore and Company, Inc,	www.billmooreco.com
ADR Bulbs, Inc,	www.adrbulbs.com
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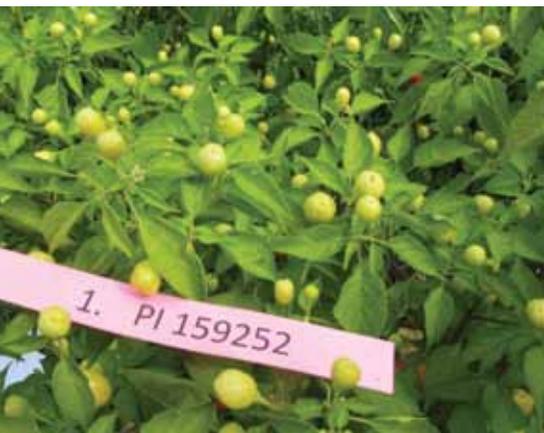
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Tugela Gem

Fruiting Pepper Stems: What About the Leaves?

Chris Wien



One of the lines tested. Mature fruits are about 1 inch diameter.



Priscilla Thompson, my assistant, next to one of the tested lines. By the end of the trial, plants were about 5 feet tall, producing stems 30 to 40 inches long.

Cut stems of ornamental peppers add color and texture to fall arrangements, reinforcing the themes of harvest and fruitfulness. Yet commercially available varieties of ornamental peppers look attractive only after the leaves have been removed, because the leaves wilt promptly when the stems are put in water. We have tried to maintain leaf turgor by using commercial hydrator solutions, but without success.

A couple of years ago, a colleague at Cornell who is developing new pepper varieties showed me some spectacular pepper plant introductions that had potential as cut stems. They are a different species: *Capsicum baccatum*, rather than the ornamental varieties we normally grow, *Capsicum annuum*. They are big plants that require a long growing season to mature, and in the first year, dropped their leaves as the fruits matured, thus eliminating the need for defoliation (We are in cold hardiness zone 5B). Last year, the season was cooler, so we did not see the leaf drop, but when we placed the cut stems in water, leaves did not wilt, and the stems stayed attractive for three weeks.

Last growing season we shared sample seeds of five lines with several ASCFG members through the National Cut Flower Trials, and the results of their tests can be found in the Trial Report on page 22 of this issue. Again, vase life ranged from 7 to 14 days or more. Only a few trialers kept the leaves on in their vase test, but were happy with the result. So it seems we have some pepper lines that show promise as fall cuts.

Another strategy for dealing with the pesky leaves is to treat the stems like dried plants by hanging them up in a dry environment. We did that with these lines and found that all except PI 441525 retained an attractive appearance, but leaf removal continued to be a chore. Only PI 159252 had leaves that could be easily removed.

So should you leave the leaves? Try it on a sample, and let the results dictate your actions.

What next? If some of you would like to try these lines next year, please let Judy or me know, and we can send you samples. In addition, several seed companies also participated in the trials, and I am hopeful that they will be further developing these materials for extended vase life.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Dr. Michael Mazourek for producing the seeds for the trial, and to Liza White and Priscilla Thompson for gathering the data. I am also very grateful to the ASCFG Research Foundation for sponsoring this work.

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Take Another Look at Foxgloves

Janet Foss

Foxgloves grow wild around here in my corner of west-central Washington State. They're so populous you'd think they're native, but these were mostly likely brought here by our European ancestors. The country road I grew up on was lined with them, and they're abundant along many highways and in wild places.

So when I grow them for cut flowers I'm looking for something special. I don't like people to think I just harvest wildflowers off the roadside, because I don't—but that's a whole other subject.

Over the years I've tried many species and hybrids of *Digitalis*, with various results. Some never germinated, or weren't vigorous enough in the cell pack. Some didn't live long enough to flower, and others I simply ran out of room for.

My favorite for many years has been *Digitalis purpurea* 'Apricot Beauty'. Its soft apricot is so lovely that it's worth

'Apricot Beauty' is a true biennial, so it needs to be started in summer the year before you want to use it. I usually get plugs to set out after early annuals like agrostemma or bachelor buttons have finished. It needs a cold period before it will bloom well, so even an earlier planting does not yield a profitable bloom the first year. If we keep the plants cut and don't allow many seeds to form, we can usually harvest for two years, though it's best grown as a biennial.

Cut the stems when just the bottom blooms are opening. We grade them in five- and ten-stem bunches depending on the stem size. The first cutting is pretty much all five stems, but later cuttings lean heavier to ten-stem bunches. Most of our customers use them for weddings and event work. Foxgloves are perfect for mason jars arrangements as well as formal designs. Although they're ethylene sensitive they last about a week cut.

Growers and consumers should know that *Digitalis* is the source of digitalin, a powerful drug used to treat heart disease. We don't sell any flowers for food or other consumption, and are clear to customers who want edible flowers that they should find a grower who specializes in them.

'Primrose Carousel' is a variety similar to 'Apricot Beauty', but has a soft yellow tinge with a heavily spotted throat. It seems to be a good color for weddings and events, though it often fades to white late in its season and seems less heat tolerant than others.



Digitalis lutea

Foxglove 'Polkadot Polly' made a superb cut flower, one of the best I've grown, with a deep rosy honey-apricot color.

growing simply for the color. But even better, it has nice long stems and produces flowers for a long time, especially if not allowed to go to seed. We were even able to pick some blooms in September to use at a special event, for which a customer specifically requested foxgloves.

I have repeatedly grown *Digitalis lutea*, a true perennial. Its soft lime-yellow bloom is small and waxy looking. It has very fine flowers and stems, and does some reblooming from side shoots, but generally we only cut it for two weeks every year. I like to have some odd items to throw in the mix of floral offering from time to time, but for the amount of space it takes it's not a highly profitable flower. It does sell well, though, and it is pretty special.

A couple years ago I grew *Digitalis lantana* 'Café Crème'. It was different; I didn't really like it, and it didn't sell

well for me. The blooms were small, on long and narrow stems, and production was really light, only about a stem per plant. It may have perennialized and been a heavier producer, but it was not given the chance.

Polkadots and Camelots

Last year we tried a series called the Polkadot Collection. 'Polly' made a superb cut flower, one of the best I've grown, with a deep rosy honey-apricot color. Its excellent performance may be due to the fact that it was grown in a high tunnel. It was supposed to be a first-year bloomer, and possibly flower even until Christmas. I knew if it was outside and *Digitalis lutea* flowered that late, they wouldn't be useable due to the weather, so this was my reason for growing them in the high tunnel. They didn't produce the first year, but they did flower over a very long time the following late spring and summer. They look like they'll be perennial, as we already have very nice rosettes formed for next year.

They supposedly don't set seeds, but if you don't pick the flowers, pods do form, although none that I opened had seeds. Even if they didn't live up to all the promises they were the most beautiful foxgloves ever. I look forward to trying some other colors in the series. On other note, I did pick some blooms in October, just a handful for a customer. So I wouldn't be surprised if in some other places they did perform as promised. In western Washington in late November there was not even a hint that they might be thinking of blooming.

Of the annual foxgloves, Camelot Series is excellent for cutting. It does bloom as an annual; the flowers are useable and harvest time is good. It's nice that they come in specific colors. We grow these, but they are not as tall as the biennial type we grow for cutting. The stems border on almost too short to cut, but they do extend the time we have foxgloves available. They will actually produce for more than one season if left in the ground. They are great for growers who don't want to wait a year for flowers. If you get the idea these are not my favorite it's true, but practically speaking, they are useful.



'Polkadot Polly'

I enjoy growing foxgloves, and many available cultivars are good for cutting. They add a nice wildflower look to arrangements, offering that "just off the roadside" look with a bit more class. Why would people want that look? Not sure, other than they love the idea of danger involved in the harvest of their flowers!

Janet Foss, J. Foss Garden Flowers, is a specialty cut flower grower in Chehalis, Washington, and a long-time contributor to The Cut Flower Quarterly. Contact her at jfoss-garden@tds.net

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It Is About Bacon

Gay Smith

Are you comfortable with social media? Or, like me, do you resist having to, or are even scared to blog, tweet or post on Facebook? Does Twitter make you jittery? My resistance boils down to feelings of awkwardness and impatience: many Luddites (like me) blame social media phobia on too little time to learn the ropes and get smooth with composing hip, fun, interesting insights (especially within the constraints of 140 characters!) Feeling clumsy and inept squelches my creativity fast. Thankfully, my marketing manager at Chrysal affords me the luxury of sending all kinds of copy, videos, information snippets, and photos from road trips “as is”. She beautifies the material, zips it up, and posts it on various social venues. But I’m bored with my feelings of intimidation and figure I’m past due on overcoming e-trepidations.

Of the millions of books available about social media, I recommend, “It’s Not About You, It’s About Bacon”, by Brian Basilico. According to Basilico, the world of business has never been more customer-centric. “We no longer act as the hunter, but must learn to be what they (customers) want to hunt.” He also states, “The goal is not just to be in the conversation, but to learn how to start it and direct it in a way that you will be top of mind when someone needs your product or service.”

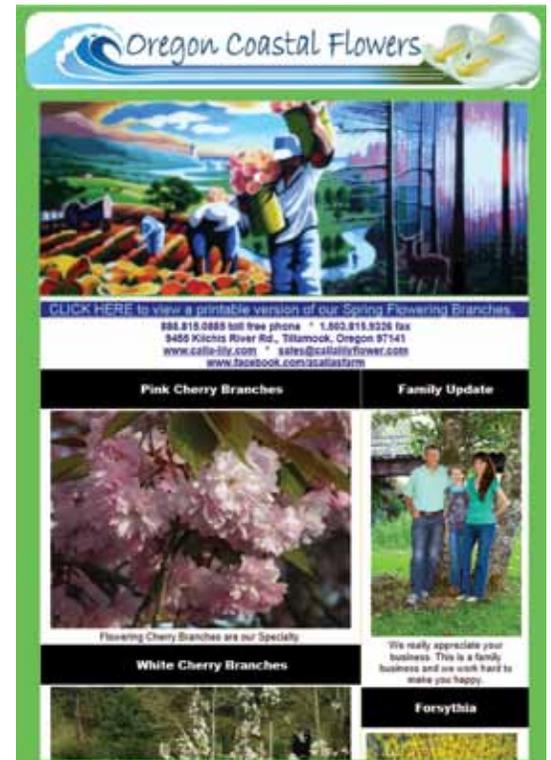
Recently, I teasingly told a grower friend that his business blog seemed more a vacation travelogue than anything about flowers. He took umbrage and declared that it’s all about keeping your company’s name in front of customers. According to him, top-of-mind positioning is the holy grail of social media, regardless of the subject matter. That got me thinking about other techniques that function as top-

of-mind triggers. One technique that came to mind was used by a supermarket chain to stimulate repeat business by creating a reason for customers to check out the flowers on every visit. Using signage that highlighted varietal name, production area and characteristics of various roses, they established a rose of the week promo. Results were fast: in only a couple of weeks, customers started stopping in the department to ask which rose was that week’s feature. Without doing much more than highlighting varieties with informative signage, they stimulated interest (top of mind) and increased rose sales.

Today’s consumers are information-starved and Basilico reminds us that we have lots of data to mine at our fingertips.

Mine customer contact data from your address book or accounting files to build a network of folks interested in receiving information about your business such as product offerings, farm activities, care information for various flowers, and of course, availability. I receive Patrick Zweifel’s Oregon Coastal Flowers newsletter and feel that he does a great job of generating top-of-mind experience. He always includes a modest news item or photo about family, some local situation, the big fish caught in Alaska, or a beautiful nature shot, and then proceeds to list details about products and prices.

I look forward to it, which is exactly what you want customers to do—look forward to checking out what you have to say about what is happening at your location. Basilico reminds us that people



don’t boot up and log onto social media to look at ads or fabulous offers. They want to:

- Keep up with relevant news
- Maintain important relationships
- Be entertained
- Stay informed
- Be educated
- Be moved by compassionate or controversial comments or memes
- Find conversation...but NEVER be sold

People involved with social networking want to be educated. Educating your blog audience positions you as an expert. Provide consumers techniques associated with flower care not only garners attention, it often stimulates sharing or re-posting, which extends your online reach. Basilico puts it

like this, "Becoming a trusted source takes time and commitment. Social networking is a communications tool, not an advertising methodology."

He also reminds us that a common mistake is to hand over the job of creating and maintaining a company blog or newsletter to a 20-something employee. The problem with such a hand-off is matching the voice of the blog with the voice of your customers. If your customer base is 40-60 years old, will they trust that a young person can understand their questions and issues?

Another excellent example of an ASCFG member's newsletter that speaks straight to its customer base is written by Rita Jo Shoultz of Alaska Perfect Peony. She voices concerns, provides tips and information, and admonishes customers not to sit on their hands and miss out on offerings, all directed clearly at her customer audience. Email her for a past copy to see what I mean. Heck, I'm not a peony grower nor do I live in Alaska, but I enjoyed reading every word of her past newsletters because of the tone and focus.

Recently I received an email from Just Add Ice Orchids, offering customers a chance to sign up for their care kit which includes:

- Email Watering Reminders
- 10 Ways to Keep Your Orchid Healthy
- A Simple Guide to Orchid Root Health
- Subscription Opportunity to Our Orchid Care Blog
- A Simple Guide to Trigger Reblooming
- Exclusive Orchid Care Videos
- Store Locator

What a great way to engage customers and be their undisputed expert, not to mention staying top of mind!

If, like me, you've been reluctant about jumping into social media, I recommend Basilico's book as a good jumping-off point. He gives dos and don'ts on this ever-growing style of business communications, as well as insights and examples. His resource list starts with the suggestion to use Google to find examples of how other people are sharing information.

An important chapter covers the legality of cutting and pasting images, photos, texts or videos. Be careful what you use because there are companies patrolling and scanning the internet for unlicensed copyright infringements. It is an expensive mistake to use material without permission or payment, even if done so unintentionally. And keep in mind, social media is not a mission impossible.

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Megan Bame

Low-Light Pulses Improves Postharvest of Fresh Basil

Herbs are often incorporated in fresh flower bouquets, including a variety of uniquely scented basil. Fresh basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) has a storage life of 4 to 5 days at room temperature. As a plant of tropical origin, it is susceptible to chilling injury below 12C (about 53F). The postharvest life of fresh basil is

limited by senescence of green leaves. Since it is known that the initial phase of senescence induced by darkness is reversible, this study assessed the feasibility of using low intensity light pulses to delay senescence of basil leaves.

Basil leaves were irradiated each day for 0, 30, 60, 90, 120 and 180 minutes with low intensity white light (30-37 $\mu\text{molm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$). Postharvest indicators evaluated included

chlorophyll loss, protein degradation, ammonium accumulation, changes in sugars and leaf appearance.

The daily 2-hour treatment with low intensity white light pulses delayed senescence. Light effects were determined to be partly systemic, suggesting that even with a treatment where light does not uniformly reach the leaves, postharvest life will be improved. The use of light is considered an inexpensive, easy to apply technology for improving postharvest life.

Costa, L., Y.M. Montano, C. Carrion, N. Roiny, J.J. Guiamet, 2013. *Application of low intensity light pulses to delay postharvest senescence of Ocimum basilicum leaves*, Postharvest Biology and Technology, 181-191.



Ethanol Use on *Tweedia caerulea*

Tweedia caerulea is a native of Brazil and Uruguay with bright blue star-like florets. Senescence is first noted when the flower petals change from light blue to pink, after which the flower closes. It was previously reported that *T. caerulea* is sensitive to ethylene. This study investigates the effect of ethanol on vase life, ethylene production and sensitivity to ethylene of cut *T. caerulea*.

Newly-opened flowers were harvested in the morning and trials started the same day. Vase life was considered terminated when the petal angles became acute, indicating flower closure. If flowers did not close, the vase life was determined by apparent necrosis of the petals.

Continuous treatment with ethanol delayed senescence of *T. caerulea* flowers. Ethanol reduced sensitivity to ethylene, but stimulated autocatalytic ethylene production. This suggests the delay in flower senescence induced by ethanol was not attributable to reduced ethylene production, rather to a reduced sensitivity to ethylene. Interestingly, the ethanol treatment did not delay the change in petal color, the first indicator of flower senescence.

Pun, U.K., K. Ichimura, T. Niki, 2013. *Ethanol reduces sensitivity to ethylene and delays petal senescence in cut Tweedia caerulea flowers*, Plant Growth Regulation, 125-130.



Newly Developed Round-bale Unroller for Weed Control

Mulches used between rows serve to suppress weeds and add organic matter to the soil, among many other benefits. While hay and wheat straw are typical organic mulches, applied using square bales, an alternative may be using round bales of old or spoiled hay which is no longer good for livestock feed. There is an opportunity to significantly decrease the labor of mulch application by using a round bale unroller. However, some modifications must be made to the standard round bale unroller to apply the mulch between row-beds since the implement normally carries the bale on the centerline of the tractor. The

modifications will allow the tractor to straddle the bed, unrolling the mulch in the aisle.

The modifications can be made to any conventional bale unroller as long as the clamping arms are open at the end where they pivot on the toolbar, allowing the additional length of the toolbar to be added. The toolbar was extended 27 inches, resulting in an offset of 36 inches from the center of the row. The modifications assume using 4-foot wide round bales, noting larger bales may be too heavy for safe handling.

Another important modification was the addition of a hydraulic top link. This

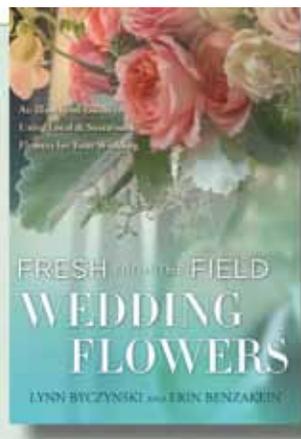
allows for rolling bales out to a smaller diameter without lowering the tool bar to a height that could damage plants or the bed structure.

While costs will vary dependent largely on metal fabrication, the bale unroller in this project was purchased for \$1,300, the hydraulic top link was added for \$300 and the offset toolbar modification was an additional \$470. Other considerations include the need for a minimum 35-horsepower tractor with either a Category I or II three-point hitch system. In addition to the tractor driver, an additional worker is usually needed to walk behind the bale to assist in peeling off the layers of mulch. While the coverage area can vary considerably, this trial applied a single layer, covering a distance of 250 to 300 feet with per round bale. This trial saw effective weed control at an application rate of 15,000 to 20,000 lbs/acre.

For detailed modification plans, visit this University of Kentucky website: http://www.bae.uky.edu/ext/Specialty_Crops/plans.htm.

Wilhoit, J., and T. Coolong, 2013. Mulching with Large Round Bales between Plastic-covered Beds Using a Newly Developed Offset Round-bale Unroller for Weed Control, HortTechnology, 511-516.

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A NEW BOOK PROMOTING THE USE OF LOCAL FLOWERS FOR WEDDINGS

Created for the eco-conscious couple who wants to have a greener wedding, floral designers who want to jump on the locally grown trend, and specialty cut flower growers who want to enhance their floral design skills.

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- Four step-by-step photo essays demonstrate how to make a hand-tied bouquet, boutonnieres and corsages, mason jar centerpiece, and tall arrangement.
- Dozens of photographs of local flowers used in real weddings.
- Information on growing more than 100 flowers, foliage, and other botanicals for weddings.

SOFTCOVER, 7"X10", 112 PAGES, DVD WITH VIDEOS. \$40 (\$32 TO GFM SUBSCRIBERS) + \$5 S/H. [GROWINGFORMARKET.COM](http://growingformarket.com); 800-307-8949

ASCFG GROWER GRANT REPORT

Research Supported by an ASCFG Grower Grant

LISIANTHUS INTERCROPPING

Missy Bahret, Old Friends Farm, Amherst, Massachusetts

In my years of growing lisianthus in the field, I have had the surprise of harvesting outstanding flowers from beds that were overtaken by weeds. Curiously enough, in years that my cultivation practices were more precise and fewer weeds succeeded, the quality of the lisianthus was reduced. To add to the problems of the “good” years (when the beds were weed-free), the weedless beds offered no support for the lisianthus, so I added extra expense with the dreaded support netting.

Why did the “good” years result in the “bad” lisianthus, and the “bad” years result in the “good”?

This question led to me applying for and receiving an ASCFG Grower Grant. Would intersowing cover crops in a transplanted lisianthus bed give the lisianthus the simulated

“weedy” conditions that they do well in, yet give me as the crop manager, the assurance that I wouldn’t be adding trillions of weed seeds to my soil bank?

The “Lisianthus with Intercropping” project started in 2012. We had to abandon it due to extreme drought and inability to irrigate “extras”. We redid the experiment in 2013 with one slight modification, a change of lisianthus cultivar. Intercropped lisianthus would, in theory, be a lower maintenance bed. Less irrigating, no cultivating, no netting...dreamy!

The Project bed was set up as follows: Two varieties of lisianthus were transplanted down the bed, one variety per side. The bed was divided into equal portions for each cover crop section. Cover crop seeds used were: oats and peas, rye, barley, and vineyard mix, a cover crop mix including triticale. One equal section was left as a control. Cover crop seed was intersown and irrigated to germinate.

In theory, the benefits of intercropping are fantastic: weed control, physical support, decreased incidence of pest and disease,

Intercropped lisianthus would, in theory, be a lower maintenance bed.

Less irrigating, no cultivating, no netting...dreamy!

increased biodiversity, increase in organic matter, disruption of raindrops so the soil splash on the crop is reduced, added shade to keep the soil temperature low and reduce moisture loss, nutrient retention, and added green manure when the crop is turned in at the end of the season.

Reality has its downfalls. Although we got a suitable lisianthus yield from the experimental bed, it didn’t make us change all practices to intercropping. We had issues with some of the varieties of cover crop being too tall for the lisianthus, leaving them spindly; any cover crop with peas in it had the problem of the tendrils wrapping around the lisianthus flower stems; and, above all, harvesting through other plants is annoying, slow, and tickles the face to no end.

None of the cover crops types quite matched the density of a “natural” weed bed, and thus didn’t offer enough to reliably replace the support netting. In addition, several cover crops went to seed around harvest time, and combined with a light rain put tons of unsightly seeds on the beautiful lisianthus petals. These fall off once dry, but any that are within the bowl of the flower, especially on the white varieties, were visually obtrusive. There were no incidence of aphids and second cut was decent enough to be market grade.

All in all, the potentials for lisianthus intercropping as a suitable replacement for mechanical cultivation and netting in field production needs further study to refine the ideal cover crop types and sowing density.



Lisianthus intercropped with clover mix.

NORTHEAST



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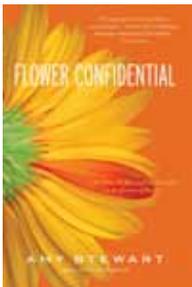
Just beginning my three-year term and learning curve as Northeast Regional Director. The first conference I attended was here in Vermont, in 1992. I've been a quiet off and on member since then.

Kudos to Missy Bahret for so much informative and thoughtful input throughout her recent term! And thank you Carolyn Snell for keeping things interesting, and running for this board seat as well. Check out Carolyn's regular contributions to the ASCFG's 2 two online forums—the Bulletin Board and the Community Network.

Year's end reflection: when chatting with customers about what motivates them to buy locally-grown flowers, they often recall the days of the "Mom and Pop flower shop", with its steam-heated, glass-paneled greenhouses, and seasonal crops brought in from the farm fields out back. The conversation expands into the history of cut flower growing in the United States. That's a fat topic, worthy of ongoing conversation, and can also include the companion history of global cut flower production. (Recalling a c. 1997 Quarterly article; I'd hoped to use a few quotes from that article here; alas, the online archive began in 2001).

Studying up on the history of the cut flower industry gives us information to share—and language to use—with curious customers at the farmers' market and farm stand, as well as when conversing with wholesalers, produce departments, and florists. Here, reviews of two popular books on the topic:

Flower Confidential: The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful in the Business of Flowers, Amy Stewart, 2007



"Amy Stewart offers richly detailed information about the breeding and genetic engineering of flowers, and the organic and fair-trade movements around the world. Stewart also provides interesting historical notes, including a look at how the Romans in the first century AD had a highly developed flower trade, manipulating flowers to bloom out of season using steam or hot water in

some of the earliest greenhouses. She sees firsthand how flowers are grown and harvested on farms in Latin America, California, and Holland. A fascinating intersection of nature and technology, of sentiment and commerce." *Orion* magazine.

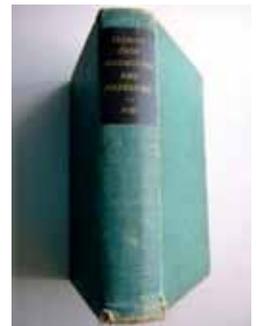
Favored Flowers: Culture and Economy in a Global System, Catherine Zeigler, 2007



"Ziegler's ethnography unravels the economic and cultural strands of the global flower market. She provides an historical overview of the development of the cut flower industry in New York from the late nineteenth century to 1970, and on to its ultimate transformation from a domestic to a global industry. As she points out, cut flowers serve no utilitarian purpose*; rather, they signal consumers' social and cultural decisions about expressing love, mourning, status, and identity. Ziegler shows how consumer choices have changed over time and how they are shaped by the media, by the types of available flowers, and by flower retailing". Amazon.com

*Wait, what? "Flowers serve no utilitarian purpose.?" I'd say they are both useful and practical! Before writing this article today (Thanksgiving 2013) I harvested gorgeous white quilled mums, bupluerum, and eucalyptus from the greenhouse, then added rosehips, parsley, kale, dusty miller, rue, and dogwood from the field, and placed the bouquet on the table to say "Welcome to our final harvest in northern Vermont." to our holiday visitors. On a practical level, heck, half the bouquet could be eaten tomorrow, part of it could be dried and given to a regular customer as a 'thank-you' gift, and the rest goes onto the compost pile!

Our same visitors had gifted me years ago with Fritz Bahr's *Commercial Floriculture*, 1922. Fritz says "a compost pile is a paying investment for every grower, consisting of so-called wastes from the greenhouse...which even if only used as mulch or top-dressing, will permit a great saving". We're all familiar with the utilitarian benefits of well-done compost. Take note: the National Organic Program does not allow "store-bought" flowers in their list of acceptable compost ingredients (unless perhaps such flowers are certified organic?).



I'll be attending the tri-state (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont) Greenhouse IPM workshop in January, and will highlight "best practices" in the next report. Also looking forward to attending presentations by fellow ASCFG members Molly Culver and the fabulous Hutchisons at the NOFA NY conference in late January. Other intriguing workshops include "Profitability of the paper pot transplanter," (seen more than once at the ASCFG meeting last November in Rhode Island), and "Scaling up to small farm composting," (to make the process as efficient and effective as possible).

MID-ATLANTIC



Jennie Love

Love 'n Fresh Flowers
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I am excited and humbled to be taking on the role of Mid-Atlantic Regional Director here in 2014. The ASCFG was hugely important to the success of my farm in my early days of growing flowers. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to give back to the organization now. I'm really looking forward to writing for the *Quarterly* and hope to use this report each issue to discuss new approaches to marketing, new crops/varieties, and floral design, particularly for weddings since that is the main focus of my business, Love 'n Fresh Flowers. If you'd like to learn more about me and my farm, please visit www.lovenfreshflowers.com. Also, I welcome any feedback or questions to the pieces I write. Please feel free to email me at info@lovenfreshflowers.com. Let's get started!

Re-Considering the Chrysanthemum

I have to confess that I was most decidedly in the anti-mum camp for most of my life. I considered them boring and far too common. I first saw a catalog from King's Mums while working at

Longwood Gardens before starting my farm. I thumbed through and became fascinated by all the different bloom classifications. Even while loathing the many (many!) hours of disbudding and pinching in the Longwood greenhouses to get the highest quality blooms for the gardens and conservatory, I was incredibly inspired by their beauty and the idea of growing them for cuts.

As Love 'n Fresh Flowers began designing for more and more late autumn weddings and holiday events, when the risk of frost is ever-present, I knew heirloom mums were the answer.

These hardy plants can handle light frost without flinching. If grown under the cover of a hoop house, they can easily keep blooming through Thanksgiving here in Philadelphia. They have a very long storage and vase life



as well. Each plant is hugely productive so a small amount goes a long way. Now in our fourth season of mum production at the farm, I feel like I've got a good handle on some of the varieties that work best for wedding and holiday centerpiece designs.

All of the following are available from King's Mums (www.kingsmums.com)

'Lynn Johnson' A large, lush, white irregular incurve that blooms early on tall stems. It's super productive and the best of the many whites I've tried over the years. Great for bridal bouquets and centerpieces alike.

'Seatons Ruby' One of the only flowers I know that displays a true gold quality at the tips of its petals. When fully open, it has a large cushion in the middle. I often use it before it's fully open, though, and absolutely love the very warm red and gold hues mixed in with other autumn colors. Flowers very nicely as a spray. Buds are especially cute for boutonnieres.

'Apricot Courtier' A new cultivar at the farm this year, but firmly on the favorites list and definitely a repeat, this very warm peachy gold bloom is superb for wedding work. The buds are large and nicely colored for personal pieces like boutonnieres, corsages and hair flowers. The full bloom is large and lush with coloring that pairs beautifully with 'Seatons J'Dore', 'Honeyglow', and anything orange.

'Mocha' Spider mums are incredibly unique but sometimes tricky to use in wedding floral designs. Mocha's soft toffee color helps it bridge the gap between weird/funky and elegant. My favorite time to use it is actually when the blooms are about half open so it looks more like a quill than a spider. The little curled ends of the petals are incredibly precious. The plant is very productive and with nice long slender uniform stems. Those slender stems do mean that it's prone to toppling in heavy storms. 'Mocha' would be best in a hoop house.

'Candid' One of my favorite mums of all time, the rich ruby

red of this bloom is unlike any other I've seen. It's a red that actually works wonderfully for weddings. It's a striking accent in centerpieces, and I love to pair it with soft pinks and peach blooms along with purple kale. A very reliable producer, it's great grown as a spray with long enough laterals that you can split the main stem apart to use side stems in centerpieces. Buds are also great in boutonnieres.

'Coral Charm' Always a looker and highly productive, this little beauty tends to bloom more warm mauve than coral for us. It's really a great color for fall and I prefer it to a true coral anyway. It's super productive and great grown as a spray. Wonderful for centerpieces with hefty blooms that make designing quick. The warm undertone of the color lets it play nicely with other warm autumn colors, even red. This cultivar has been at the farm since we started growing mums and will be there until we stop. Definitely a keeper!

'Honeyglow' Your classic orange mum, 'Honeyglow' is ridiculously productive and easy to grow. It's a definite "must" for anyone growing for autumn farmers' markets or wholesale. Stems are long, and it grows wonderfully as a spray with all the blooms at pretty much the same level on each stem. The color is a really nice warm tone so it mixes nicely with 'Candid' and 'Seatons Ruby' for autumn centerpieces. It is an early bloomer so if you're considering it for Thanksgiving sales, make sure you have a cooler so you can hold it if needed. Like all mums, it's got a very long shelf life. I've kept it for over a month in the cooler and still had customers rave about how long it lasted in their arrangements.

'Seatons J'Dore' You'll never find a pink quite like this. So very delicate, it is a warm hue that blends superbly with the classic red and copper tones of autumn. Mix a few of these with 'Apricot Alexis' and 'Candid' in a bouquet or centerpiece for instant drama and color harmony.

Growing Notes

Our rooted cuttings from King's Mums are grown on in 4" pots in the heated greenhouse from March through May. As the plants grow, they are pinched at about four or five inches tall. The pinched piece gets dipped in rooting hormone (also available from King's) and then rooted on a heating mat set at 70F. These newly rooted cuttings also get pinched as they grow, and the cycle continues so that we have a massive number of plants by the time we plant them out in the field (usually the first week of May).

Our mums are grown in black plastic with drip irrigation. Spacing is 12" apart, two rows in a three foot wide bed. Mums are ideally supported with two levels of Hortonova netting, though if plants get too big before we get around to putting netting on, they get supported with stakes and twine. Harvesting through the netting is tough, so we're still weighing the pros and cons of different supports for cut production.

The plants get a second hard pinch in July, pinching all branches down to about two sets of leaves to encourage even more branching. If we wanted earlier bloom production for some reason, we would not do this second pinch.

We do not disbud at the farm. It's too labor intensive for our small operation and team. Instead, two hard pinches prove to be sufficient for getting nice blooms for wedding work. There are many blooms on each main stem, but we can cut each large cluster apart and use the shorter side stems in centerpieces. This system works for us but may not work for every farm. If you are selling to high-end florists, you may want to consider disbudding and demanding a premium price for each stem.

Most of our mums are field grown, but about 25-30 plants go into the hoop house as well. When we have more hoop house space, we will grow many more inside as wind and rain can be very hard on mums. However, mums can definitely do well out in the open field if you don't have a hoop house.

The only major pest we've really experienced to date are aphids. They are quite abundant, and we use Pure Spray Green, a horticulture oil, as an organic control. Regular sprays are important to keep populations from exploding and ruining the harvest.

January is a great time to order your mums for the coming season!

SOUTHEAST



Tanis Clifton
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Happy Trails Farms had a great season at our local farmers' market last year! However, being new to flower farming, going into our fourth year has involved a gigantic learning curve! We discovered many great new ideas that in turn, enhanced not only sales, but our entire marketing experience. Hopefully the ideas shared in this column will be beneficial not only to the novice, but to the veteran farmer as well.

Information that we have gleaned the past season or so includes the importance of booth organization, use of proper containers, tips on attracting customers, bouquet presentation, and several different electronic/media ideas. If only one useful tip is adopted by the reader, I will feel I have attained my goal by sharing the following ideas.

Booth Organization. Our booth is set up with a center aisle and tables along both sides. Not only does this allow customers to walk into the booth to shop, but provides protection from the

weather as they do. Another element to organization involves appearance. We were lucky to have a seamstress sew table covers that are seamed at the corners as well as the edges, making them fit like a glove. Since the covers go to the ground, this allows storage space underneath, thus preventing clutter.

Proper Containers. I cannot stress how important this is! If you use five-gallon buckets, they will have much more “eye appeal” if they are covered with fabric or paint. During our first year at market we used buckets from a local bakery. Looking closely at these buckets we found there was an image of a choking baby along with the warning, “choking hazard”! This is NOT the image you want associated with beautiful flowers! After searching for a proper container, we discovered that maple syrup cans work great. Sources for the cans may be found on the internet, as we got ours from Ebay. Finally, have little chalk boards hanging off the side of your containers to identify flowers and prices.

Flower Attraction. While all of the above will help attract customers to your booth, the MAIN attraction will be the flowers themselves. Ironically, people are drawn to funny and unusual flowers. Case in point being that we set up a display with various cockscomb. Some were the huge crested ones while others were the smaller crested celosias, with the Bombay fan style being the final display. We erected a large sign out front that said, “Brains for Sale” and labeled the varieties as such: “Brainiacs”, “Half a Brain” and “Scatter Brain”. It drew a lot of folks into our booth and generated a lot of frivolity, photos and most of all, sales. Another good draw is the hanging amaranth, a.k.a. “dreadlocks”. We encouraged customers to feel them, which created a lot of banter, and besides, they just looked cool! During autumn pumpkin-on-a-stick is a great crowd pleaser, so for us this is a MUST for eliciting attention to the Happy Trails booth.

One of the most important aspects of flower attraction of course, is the scent. People naturally want to sniff the wonderful fragrances given off by the tuberose, oriental lily, cinnamon basil and ‘Purple Majesty’ millet. Always make these readily accessible by placing them prominently in your booth.

Good Public Relations. Provide “dog water” at the market. Many customers bring their dogs and will naturally gravitate to or even seek out water sources for their furry companions. During the hotter months it is good to freeze a big pan of water. Dogs, as well as their appreciative owners, love it! As their pooch quenches his thirst, owners have the opportunity to look at your flowers while waiting. This is an excellent return on your tap water considering that most of these people will buy your flowers! It pays to always keep your eyes open for good PR opportunities!

Bouquets. These are a must at the farmers’ market. The appearance of your blooms is very important. Considering companies spend large amounts of money on their packaging, this point is very important and it does make a difference.

Supplies for Small Growers

SEED STARTING - Pots Trays Inserts Plug Trays
Labels - large variety size, color & shape of blank plant pot & row markers
Weed control, fertilizer, tapes & ties, watering, and more.



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<http://stores.ebay.com/AAA-Mercantile>
<http://www.amazon.com/shops/AAAMercantile>

Enter coupon code ASCFG for a 15% discount for a limited time at AAAMercantile.com

Happy Trails Farm sells bouquets in a couple of different sizes and in containers. We recycle tin cans with paint and a personal label such as “Can-O-Sunshine”. Small, inexpensive arrangements are placed in cola bottles and are called “Little Swigs”. Customers just love these! Wrapped bouquets are also popular. Colored and pre-cut kraft paper from A-Roo (a-roo.com) is my favorite. The difference in the appeal of wrapped and unwrapped bouquets is something akin to a framed photo opposed to an unframed one. HUGE difference! Of course our label is adhered to the paper insuring that happy customers will look us up in the future!

Electronics and Media. It is important to take advantage of all the benefits afforded by smart phones and personal computers. A most helpful tool using these forms of communications is the e-newsletter. Open a MailChimp account (it’s free) and send out a newsletter informing your readers as to where and when you will be at market, what’s on special, etc. (mailchimp.com). Customers sign up at our booth giving us easy access to an e-newsletter reader base. I try to send out a newsletter at least once a month and additionally if we are having a special or sale. Also, if you are not currently taking credit cards, make the leap next season for it will be well worth it! Many people carry very little cash these days, depending on the use of credit and/or debit cards. Several companies offer apps for smart phones making the use of credit card sales very simple and inexpensive. Look into apps such as Square, Intuit and Paypal for a possible plan. The fees are usually reasonable and the apps are user friendly. You will discover that the availability of credit/debit card use will generate many sales that you would otherwise miss.

In closing, we at Happy Trails Farm hope you will find the aforementioned information insightful as well as helpful. In the future, we would love to hear how these tips may have helped you put some money in your pockets, as well as sharing a few good ideas of your own!

MIDWEST



Kent Miles

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Winter is a time to reflect on what we have done this past year through November. Some of our crops were big hits again and made real money for us. Despite the drought of 2013, it was much better than the summer of 2012. We had a wet spring (April and May), and planting of annuals was delayed by 3-4 compared to a “normal” year. Our spring-flowering woodies like lilac, quince, cherry, and snowball.

Some key annual crops like sunflowers, ageratum, celosia, zinnias, grains and cotton were all in demand for us. Zinnias were right behind the sunflowers for yields. Wholesalers, retailers, and farmers’ market customers were expecting them all season once they came on crop.

In 2013 the ASCFG went from one National Conference to four smaller meetings. This change was well received by the membership and attendance was high for each. Those who attended one or more meetings brought back tons of information. The one in Wooster, Ohio had the highest attendance, from small and new growers to larger and experienced growers. The arboretum tour I felt was very informative to myself. And others commented on how much they learned. For 2014, we are going back to a single National Conference and Trade Show, October 19-22, in Wilmington, Delaware. Mark your calendars now !

It’s that time of year when so many seed, plant, plug, and nursery catalogs are stuffing your mailboxes. If you have not yet, you better start deciding which old favorites and new varieties you want to go with. Seeds versus plugs can be a tough call for new growers. Seeds are the cheapest, but some can be tricky in sowing , germinating and growing on. Lisianthus is one of those crops that’s best to go with plugs. A learning point for us this past year was on gomphrena; planted way too much or may not have had enough avenues to move it. This year we will cut back on varieties and planting dates for this one. Sunflowers, you can never plant too many. Once again this was

The Cut Flower Quarterly

a good moving crop for us. We plant three varieties; two go strictly to wholesalers, one goes to florists, and all three for the farmers’ market. We just try to keep sunflowers simple and it has worked for us. At the Wooster meeting I talked to a few growers who grow several varieties, which seems to work for their markets in their area. Think about doing different ones more for your customers?

If you new members aren’t growing woodies, this is the time to think about adding them to your offerings. Start with the basics like curly willow, dogwood, boxwood, winterberry, and lilac. There are plenty of resources to guide you about what will work in your zone. Those mentioned above will not work everywhere. Wintertime is generally when I get caught up on my reading (you know those days that you’re SNOWED in). Two publications that I refer to many times throughout the year for answers are *Woody Cut Stems for Growers and Florists* , by Lane Greer and John M. Dole. My very first publication was Dirr’s *Hardy Trees and Shrubs* by Michael A. Dirr. Also contact the membership for questions and answers on the Bulletin Board, your county extension office, and other growers.

Decide what grade of plant you want to start with: plugs, one- or two-gallon containers, bare-root, rooted or unrooted cuttings. Some would be better choices than others, depending on your time frame, growing zone, and time of year to plant. Check out the membership as a source to acquire these plants. No, not a shameless plug here, but we offer unrooted cuttings in winter to spring.

You should all keep records on your crops all season; those notes will come in handy later on down the road. Speaking from experience, those first few years not everything got written down. We are getting old and memories on certain years are sometimes difficult to recall . This time of year is a good time to lay out the year 2014 season, if you have not already done that.

Winter is a good time for us to hit the road or by phone and make

new contacts. We will be doing some cold call visits as well as planned visits to potential new wholesalers, florists, and commercial accounts. We also will be going to trade shows, being vendors at shows, bridal shows, etc. How many of you sell on your web page? If not, this is the time to set up an ecommerce page. Last January to April we shipped woodies to 23 states. The internet is a great source to move product.

I would like to wish everyone a wonderful new year with warm wishes to all. Hope 2014 is a banner year for you. Happy people grow happy flowers! Or is it happy flowers grow happy people?

October 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	ASCFG National Conference Wilmington, Delaware		22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

SOUTH-CENTRAL



Rita Anders
Cuts of Color
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It's almost Thanksgiving here at my farm and we have not had a freeze yet. Fields are still green and we are still harvesting sunflowers, marigolds, celosia, grasses, and ornamental peppers out in the fields. We also have our season extension greenhouses that have dahlias, lilies, basil, and zinnias. Life is good but it's about to end for us too with an expected freeze on Thanksgiving morning. From what I gathered from other growers in our multi-climate region, everyone else is done for the year. It's been an awesome year in our region with a decent economy and great flower sales. No extreme weather to report for once and we actually had to wait to get in the fields to plow in old crops, compost and start planting our over winter plantings.

As a Regional Director, I get to talk to so many amazing people with wonderful stories and a passion for growing flowers. Recently there have been several who have done some farm visits with me where they come work alongside me and my crew and they see what we are doing and how we harvest. I try to time the visits on harvest days where they get to see the whole farm. This hands-on experience is so valuable to the wannabe growers and it's an extra hand on days that we are very busy. You can sit in a classroom or read all the books you can get your hands on but getting out in the field for that hands-on experience tops off the education. They get to experience not always perfect weather, ants, mosquitoes, possible snakes, backbreaking labor, long hours and if after a few hours, they are still around and sometimes they come back week after week, you know they will make it or not. Source out that grower who's near you and give them a call and possibly you can work this out with them. I've found it to be very rewarding to help others and give them a glimpse of what it's like to be a flower farmer and it might save someone a lot of wasted time and energy if they see what's it's all about before they give up a full-time job, or see if it's something they really want to do or just a dream and not a reality.

Our Region is so big, covering many states and can vary so much which leads me to a story about a recent phone conversation I had with Rocky Ferrell, who grows farm fresh vegetables and flowers in Tucson, Arizona. He wanted to drive over and visit. After talking with him on the phone, I found him to be such an interesting young fellow, 77 years young. I asked him to share his story with me.

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A retired financial executive, Rocky started growing vegetables in 1992. He started growing flowers about 2½ years ago after a local florist asked him if he would be interested. He tried it, enjoyed it, and ended up turning his hobby into a business.

From May to September, Rocky and his son Marc sell flowers and vegetables at a stand at Rocky's home.

The main crops that Rocky grows are gladiolus, zinnias, sunflowers and dahlias. His favorite glads are 'Blue Mountain', 'Fiesta orange/yellow', 'Purple Flora', 'Red Sensation', 'Tampico Rose', 'White Prosperity', 'Advance Red', 'Vista Tricolor', 'Alaska White', 'Good News', 'Hop Pink', 'Joyous Entrée Yellow', 'Land o' Lakes Blue', 'Blue Sky', 'Finishing Touch Peach', 'Plum Tart Purple', and 'Victor Borge Red'. He gets his bulbs from Vandenberg Bulb Co. in Howell, Michigan.

He grows the unusual sunflowers like 'Solar Power', 'Velvet Queen', 'Ruby Eclipse', 'Sonja', 'Ikarus', and 'Teddy Bear'. His zinnia varieties include the Benary Giants, 'Inca', 'Oklahoma', 'Giant Cactus', dahlia flowered 'Gold Medal', and 'Peppermint'. His dahlia choices are decorative, gallery and ball with success.

Rocky's wife Gloria makes the bouquets and arrangements and they sell bouquets ranging from \$5 to \$25 at their market stand. The prices he gets for straight stems are gladiolus for \$1-2 a stem, zinnias \$.80 to one dollar a stem, sunflowers and dahlias, one to two dollars a stem. Rocky is able to grow lots of flowers despite Tucson's below average rainfall and below freezing temps.

He designed his own irrigation system. It works off two 230-foot wells, each of which has a 5-horsepower pump. Water is stored in tanks, then pumped out to the beds, with Rocky controlling how much water each crop receives.

Rocky uses row cover on his ranunculus and ornithogalum, putting it on in the fall because he experiences a lot of wind. His pest control methods include soapy water and crop rotation. The garden is enclosed by a fence made of hardware cloth to keep rabbits, ground squirrels, rattlesnakes (eeeeek), and javelina out. The fence is buried 10" underground.

It's not easy to grow in the desert, says Rocky, but after trial and error, he has found what crops grow for him. His farming is a hobby which developed into a successful cut flower business.

We are working on putting together the first of two 2014 Growers' Schools. It will be held in the Dallas area on March 3-4 and will contain tons of information for beginner growers. The program is still under construction and probably by the time you read this we will have it all finalized and you will have already received info on its contents.

If you're a first-time grower, or even if you have been growing for years, I urge you to attend this awesome program. You were sent a survey and on it was a question about what you would like to see at an ASCFG meeting. We are taking that list and trying to answer a lot of the beginner grower questions,



but even like myself who has been growing flowers on my farm for sale since 2004, I don't go to any meeting without taking something away from it that pays my trip. Spend your winter reading and using the Community Board and the Bulletin Board to answer questions and go back and read all those *Quarterly*s that you have stacked up on the shelf and go back to the basics. I've heard so many growers say "My first year was so good and now it's not." Well, the answer may be that you think after you've done it, you can skip this step or that and wonder why things don't turn out the same. Well, go back to the basics and you will have that first-time crop because you did it by the books.

WEST AND NORTHWEST



Paula Rice

BeeHaven Farm
behavenflowers@gmail.com

As you know from a previous report, I took a USDA/FSA micro-loan in spring 2013. I did four things with that money: I put landscape fabric (actually I used road fabric, much cheaper) around all my peonies in a one-third acre field; I built a deer fence around my one-acre woodies field; we built a 10'x 12' walk-in cooler, and installed a CoolBot; and with the leftover money we did the best we could to complete a processing room/design studio. I would like to share some of the thoughts that came out of the cooler project in hopes it will help you nail down some of the cost vs. efficiency vs. effectiveness ratios as you work your routines toward a more smoothly run business.

I worked for seven years without a walk-in cooler and let me just say this: it should have been a little bit higher on my priority list. I know lots of people don't have one and probably feel they don't need one, but for me, the stress level went way down, waste went way down, and quality of life went way up.

It's hard to see lilies (that you paid good money for) ready to cut on Saturday afternoon after you come home from a long day at the market, and you don't have anywhere to sell them until Wednesday of the next week, and a cool basement in the heat of summer just isn't going to be enough to slow them down. So you get out there, pick them, and stuff them into that rinky-dink soda pop commercial refrigerator you bought that is "better-than-nothing-at-all", except that it isn't "better-than-nothing-at-all" because you had so many lilies you overstuffed it and everything ended up freezing anyway because of poor air circulation. Losses like that just didn't happen at all with the cooler.



An interesting phenomenon that I really wasn't counting on, was that for the first time ever, I had more flowers than I could sell, **and** I had even planted less. We were having a baby and we were just going to "hold the line" this year. In addition, I picked up another florist, picked up a small grocery store (so much for "holding the line"), had more DIY brides than before, increased sales across the board, and I still had more flowers. Why?

I figured it out. With the walk-in cooler, I wasn't throwing a bunch of over-bloomed product on the ground as I harvested; because I had a place to store it. I could pick everything at its prime so the waste went down. How exciting is that? I don't have to plant and cultivate as much (which is an expense) to maintain my same markets—bonus! On the flip side you could plant the same and increase your markets.

A walk-in cooler also allowed us to pick flowers every day and stockpile them rather than try to do a "mad-dash-all-in-one-harvest-and-sell". Talk about a stress reliever. As each flower came into its perfect stage of harvest, into the cooler it went. And at a cool 36-40 degrees, it would stay in perfect condition for next week sales. Furthermore, it helped eliminate or decrease some risk factors. What if that employee got sick on the all-important harvest day? No problem—you've been picking daily already. What if a huge storm is due and will likely take down every sunflower? No problem: pick them and hold them. Customer calls and needs a bouquet? Or worse yet,

a customer is at the door and needs a bouquet? No big deal, just walk into the cooler, grab what I need, and wrap it up. These are just a few of the perks, there are many more.

A walk-in cooler also allowed us to pick flowers every day and stockpile them rather than try to do a "mad-dash-all-in-one-harvest-and-sell". Talk about a stress reliever.



We built this cooler/studio room under an existing pole-framed lean-to, off an existing shop. The lean-to had a dirt floor and was mostly open to the air. We poured cement for the entire project and made sure there was an insulating

factor under the concrete where the cooler would be. We planned ahead and had the cement sloped for a drain in the middle of the cooler and another one in the studio where we would be processing the flowers. It was such a thrill to see the

water from a spilled bucket flow toward and into the drain!

We basically built double walls and ceiling for the cooler, and no matter what we found on the internet for how to build this thing, we built it thicker and better. Based on other farmers' sentiments from ASCFG farm tours, we went ahead and framed in a second door on an opposite wall for future planning and loading purposes, just in case. We wrapped plastic on the exterior framing and insulating for a vapor barrier, finished the outside with gray corrugated tin, and lined the inside with white corrugated tin for easy cleaning, a nice inexpensive finish that could be hosed down.

It was so exciting when the day came to hook up the air conditioner and CoolBot. Our new walk-in cooler was down to 35 degrees in 15 minutes, I kid you not. And then, horror of horrors—we filled the floor of that cooler in no time with buckets of flowers so that I could not even have a walkway.

Did we not build it big enough? So we went out and bought steel racks on rollers to maximize vertical space. These racks can be rolled in and out of the cooler for processing and packing, a real back-saver, and you would not believe how many flowers I can pack in that 10'x12' room. I fill it and sell everything twice a week.

The cooler seriously helped fine-tune and streamline a lot of processes that were usually more erratic and required a lot of hard, long, working days. For me, it was one large step closer to a smoother running operation and one huge leap towards a better quality of life (not so crazy). How on earth did I ever operate without one?

Now the stage is set for my next endeavor, becoming a farmer-florist. I can't help but think that there's a way to get more "buck \$\$" for my "bang" out there. Working smarter, not harder.

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Cut Flower Growers' School

March 3 - 4, 2014
Fort Worth Botanic Garden

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Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers

Find out more at ascfg.org

Cut flower how-to list

- ★ Office to field business planning
- ★ Cultivar selection and succession planting
- ★ Flower harvest and postharvest handling
- ★ Growing for markets, weddings, and more
- ★ Season extension ideas

Monday, March 3

12:30 p.m. Registration

Marketing Session One

1:00 p.m. Selling to Florists

Cynthia Alexander, Quarry Flower Farm, Celina, Texas
Cynthia will explain her process of preparing flowers for her florist route, and how to best develop relationships with, and sell to florists. Floral demonstration: flowers bunched for florist delivery.

1:30 p.m. Selling at Farmers' Markets

Rita Anders, Cuts of Color, Weimar, Texas
Stand out at your farmers' market! Increase sales with tips from a longtime grower. Floral demonstration: farmers' market wrapped bouquet.

2:00 p.m. Selling to Supermarkets

Pamela Arnosky, Texas Specialty Cut Flowers, Blanco, Texas
Learn how to streamline your bouquet-making process while increasing productivity. Floral demonstration: sleeved bouquets for supermarket sales.

2:30 p.m. Workshop One

Create your own wrapped or sleeved bouquet for farmers' market or grocery outlet. Experienced grower/designers will provide personal assistance.

Marketing Session Two

3:00 p.m. Increase Your Bottom Line with Top Wedding Sale

Rita Anders, Cuts of Color, Weimar, Texas
Rita will share her methods of contacting and engaging brides. Floral demonstration: hand-tied wedding bouquet.

3:30 p.m. Tapping into Wedding Sales

Gretel Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio
Sunny Meadows' wedding business has grown exponentially in the last few years. How does this fit into the rest of their farm business? Floral demonstration: hand-tied wedding bouquet.

4:00 p.m. Workshop Two

Reassemble your original bouquet into a hand-tied bridal bouquet. Experienced grower/designers will provide personal assistance.

6:30 p.m. Join the speakers and other attendees for dinner at Joe T. Garcia's Mexican Restaurant, a Fort Worth tradition since 1935.

Not included in registration.

Tuesday, March 4

7:30 a.m. Registration

7:50 a.m. Welcome and Introduction

Rita Anders, Cuts of Color, Weimar, Texas

8:00 a.m. Office to Field Business Planning and Record Keeping

Paula Rice, Beehaven Flower Farm, Bonners Ferry, Idaho
Plan for an organized and smooth growing year with useful record-keeping strategies. Learn to set up an efficient flower grower's office using QuickBooks to create charts of accounts. Use Paula's groundworks to plan seeding and field planting schedules, while keeping track of basic cost accounting.



9:00 a.m. What to Grow and Why

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

How do you choose which perennials to grow? Which annual varieties are the best producers? Steve and Gretel grow a wide variety of both, as well as woodies and bulbs, and will explain their selection process.

10:30 a.m. Seeds or Plugs? Both?

Frank Arnosky,
Texas Specialty Cut Flowers, Blanco
Frank will cover all factors of growing cut flowers, including variety selection, seed types, germination for plugs,

and environmental controls. He'll discuss tricks of the trade, as well as what to grow yourself and what to buy in as plugs.

11:30 a.m. Lunch (included with registration)

12:30 a.m. Making the Most of Every Square Foot on a Small Farm

Lisa Ziegler, Gardener's Workshop Farm, Newport News, Virginia
Make the most of the high-demand season by providing your buyers a steady stream of flowers. Even better, learn how to get it all done by 5:00 by using the best practices and equipment.

1:30 p.m. Harvest and Postharvest

Pamela Arnosky, Texas Specialty Cut Flowers, Blanco
Pamela will cover all the steps of handling cut flowers, beginning in the field and going through to the final customer. Topics will include harvest practices, preservatives and hydrators, coolers and storage, packing, shipping and extending vase life for the customer. She'll show you the tools, sleeves, and equipment she uses, and provide sources for materials.

2:30 p.m. Creating and Finding Markets for Your Flowers

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

Are you crazy to offer wedding flowers? What's the best way to approach local florists? Are flower subscriptions profitable? Learn from these dynamic growers what to do – and what not to do.

3:00 p.m. Breaking into Business: Getting Florists and Supermarkets on Board

Lisa Ziegler,
Gardener's Workshop Farm,
Newport News, Virginia

You may not be too small! Lisa gave up her farmers' markets to turn her attention to florists and supermarkets. Learn how to build your business to get those dreamy orders and keep happy customers.

3:45 p.m. Season Extension

Mimò Davis, Urban Buds, St. Louis, Missouri
Don't limit your production to a "typical" growing season! Hoophouses, tunnels, and succession planting can stretch your cut flower offerings on both ends of the calendar.

4:30 p.m. Closing





ASCFG Growers' School REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____ Company Name _____

Additional Co. Member _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

ASCFG Growers' School
Fort Worth Botanic Garden
Fort Worth, Texas
March 3-4, 2014

Monday, March 3

- \$50 Member
- \$50 Additional Co. Member
- \$50 Additional Co. Member
- \$75 Non-member

Tuesday, March 4

- \$150 Member
 - \$150 Additional Co. Member
 - \$150 Additional Co. Member
 - \$200 Non-member
- \$195 Yes, I want to become a member

\$ _____ **TOTAL**

Area Hotels

Fairfield Inn/Marriott
The ASCFG has reserved a block of rooms for March 2-4. Rooms are \$119 plus tax. The cut-off date is February 16. 1505 S. University Drive, Fort Worth (817) 335-2000

Hilton Garden Inn
912 Northton Street, Fort Worth (817) 921-0788

Springhill Suites/Marriott
3250 Lovell Ave., Fort Worth (817) 878-2554

Holiday Inn Express
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Register online, call (440) 774-2887, or complete this form and mail or fax (440) 774-2435 to ASCFG, MPO Box 268, Oberlin, Ohio 44074

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Cancellation policy: A full refund will be paid prior to February 1, 2014; one-half refunded prior to February 15, 2014; after February 15 no refund can be made.

The ASCFG Welcomes its Newest Members

Another RECORD NUMBER of

Maureen Azize, The Local Bouquet, Little Compton, RI
Sheila Beard, Lawrenceville, IL
Erin Benzakein, Floret, Mount Vernon, WA
Dawnna Berndt, White, SD
Jenny Bingham, Sweet Hilltop Farm & Nursery, Okemah, OK
Kyra Bosnik, Akron, OH
Richard Bouton, Cornwall, NY
SheilaKay Calabretta, Chewelah, WA
Andrea Clemens, Lovelight Flowers, East Troy, WI
Kim Cooper, McDonald, TN
Emily Daniel, Basil & Bergamot Flower Farm, Nashville, TN
Angela DeFelice, Hopewell Junction, NY
Douglas and Susan DeLeo, Bangor, MI
Janice Dunn, Germania Seed Company, Chicago, IL
Bryan Dyck, River Herbert, Nova Scotia
Jeanie Fischer, Franklin, IN
Libby Fogleman, Hillsborough, NC
Amy Gardner DeGood, Good Gardener, Etlan, VA
Allison Glascock, Blue Iris Flowers, Catonsville, MD
Joanne, Halter, Alvena, SK
Natalie Hamill, Roots to River Farm, New Hope, PA
Amy Hirschfeld, Soluna Garden Farm, Winchester, MA
Joyce Hoffman, Cumming, IA
Carol Hornak, Glacial Till Gardens, Burton, OH
Mandy Hornick, Asheville, NC
Drucilla Howes, Brewster, MA
Karen Hull, Auburn, CA
Angela Humphrey, Antiquity Gardens, Lafayette, CO
Anna Jane Kocon, West Kingston, RI
Jill Kopel, New Leaf Organics, Bristol, VT

Jennell Lehman, Eagle, MI
Megan and Jonathan Leiss, Spring Forth Farm, Hillsborough, NC
Sarah Long, Stirling, Ontario
Elise Luck, Seattle, WA
Thanh Thanh Luu, Saunderstown, RI
Kumiko Matsuura, Columbus, OH
Erin McMullen, Rain Drop Farms, Philomath, OR
John Miller, Neponset, IL
J. Michael, Milligan, Round Rock, TX
Sarah Pappas, Fresh Cut, Detroit, MI
Lori Petsche, Norfolk, Nebraska
Karen Pettrone-Keber, Bright Beginnings, Naples, NY
Denise Richter, New Orleans, LA
Jill Rizzo, Studio Choo, South San Francisco, CA
Elizabeth Rooks-Barber, Ridgeland, MS
Violeta Saldana-Veenstra, Veenstra's Vegetables, Rochester, IL
Ann Schauman, Macedon, NY
David and Suzanne Scheirer, Fairport, NY
Linda Shanahan, Barefoot Gardens, Doylestown, PA
Julia Shipley, East of Eden Flower Farm, Brunswick, ME
Lynda Simkins, Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick, MA
Alexandra Smith, Fiddlehead Farm, Victoria, British Columbia
Melissa Smith, Irmo, SC
Yvette Stark, Missouri City, TX
Abbie Turner, Door Blooms Flower Farm, Vail, CO
Pamela Uhlig, Sonshine Farm, Langley, WA
Amanda Vanhoozier, Coppell, TX
Kuenzi Wiswall, North Middlesex, VT
Sonja Zupanec, Gabriola Island, British Columbia

The ASCFG Loses Two of its Family in 2013

Anille “Neil” Caggiano, October 5

Carol Caggiano said it best when she told the Society of American Florists “That was Neil: the definition of a people person. He could never have enough friends.”

Neil was a second-generation florist. He and Carol opened the Glen Head Flower Shop in New York, and worked together for 37 years. Neil was an active member of the SAF, frequently



participating in their educational, design, and lobbying projects.

Bob Wollam continues the story: “In the spring of 2004, Mike Mellano Sr. was in Washington D.C. for the SAF’s Congressional Action Days. He came down to visit my farm in northern Virginia during his trip.

“The first week of June of the same year, Neil and Carol retired to their new home – just one mile down the road from my place. Mike had told Neil about my farm, and suggested he visit me as well. Within one week of Neil’s arrival in Virginia, he drove down my driveway and introduced himself. We immediately became friends.

“He visited the farm often, always wondering what we were growing, what was new. He joined the ASCFG as soon as I told him about it, and I think he attended every National Conference and Regional Meeting since then. We miss his frequent visits and his laugh.”

Neil not only attended ASCFG events, he was an active participant, was instrumental in several of the design sessions, and co-chaired the Long Island and Reston conferences. He was a creative designer, and generous with his floral experience to everyone he met. He was proud of his service as an EMT to the Warrenton Fire Department.

His humor was his trademark. His jokes were awful groaners, but he got such a bang out of telling them – often at inappropriate times – that you had to laugh with him.

Ed Pincus, November 5

Many ASCFG members have had “other”, or previous lives to their cut flower careers. Ed Pincus had experiences like no other. A Brooklyn native, he received a master’s degree in philosophy from Harvard. Shortly after that, he began his life in film and photography, producing small documentaries, writing books, and starting the film school at MIT.

In the early 1980s he and his family moved from Boston to Vermont after they were threatened by a mentally unstable former colleague. Third Branch Flower Farm was established. Filmmaking took a back seat until he made “The Axe in the Attic”, about Hurricane Katrina, in 2007. His last film is “One Cut, One Life”.

Read two *New York Times* articles for a more thorough biography and film overview at

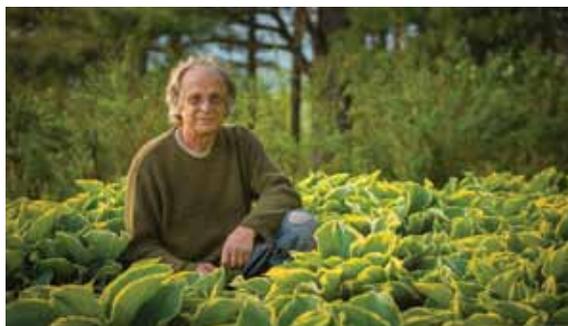
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Third Branch specializes in woody cut stems, rose hips, peonies, and other fresh cut flowers. For many years, they partnered with Shlomo Danieli’s Blooming of Beloit as important providers of woody cut material to regional and national markets.

Ed was a mentor to many cut flower growers, opening his farm for both organized and informal tours. He spoke at many meetings, and always took special time for new and young farmers.

Ed served as ASCFG Northeast Regional Director from 2002 to 2004. He was known for misplacing, forgetting, or otherwise not reading agendas and committee reports before meetings, but almost always coming up with his own complete analysis of and recommendations for any topic. The bright orange tank top he wore to a couple Board meetings became legendary.

Third Branch Flower Farm will continue to produce cut flowers under the direction of Ben Pincus and Heidi Albright.





Getting Back to Basics

Judy M. Laushman

One of horticulture's more important news items last year was that two major horticulture organizations, ANLA and OFA, combined to create a new association.

American Horticulture Industry Association, AmericanHort for short, is on a mission to unite, promote, and advance the horticulture industry through advocacy, collaboration, connectivity, education, market development, and research. The new entity aims to represent a wide range of the plant industry, uniting growers and breeders, garden centers and nurseries, florists, suppliers and manufacturers.

Another consortium, including representatives of the American Society for Horticultural Science, the American Horticultural Society, the American Public Gardens Association, and others, is banding together with the goal of increasing public awareness of the positive attributes of horticulture. Given the paucity of younger people choosing horticulture as a career, it's essential that the perception of horticulture be as correct, and positive, as possible, and that working in it as a profession once again becomes desirable and profitable.

This need to project and protect an accurate, energetic image of our industry is as real now as when I chose horticulture as my major at Iowa State University. My siblings reacted by repeating the tired old joke about—well, you know what it's about—and my parents asked countless times the difference between horticulture and botany,

my husband's field. Trying to later explain what "specialty cut flowers" meant was a whole other story.

Specialty cut flowers can pretty much now be called local flowers, and a third group is working to promote the use and sale of them. You've been hearing about the American Grown Task Force for some time. Their objective is to take back the 80% of cut flowers currently imported, using national marketing programs and informing customers on the origin and proper use of their cut flowers.

With such a spectrum of support behind us, the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers can continue its mission, to educate, unite and promote cut flower growers. We are the backbone of

the industry, and these other organizations help complete the structure. It is gratifying to see so much energy devoted to small-scale agriculture, and the ASCFG is glad to be part of the effort.

For the first quarter of the new year, I'll be studying how cut flower growers in the United Kingdom produce and sell their flowers. It's been said that England and America are two countries divided by a common language. I'm curious to see how the language of flowers is spoken across the pond, as I work for a few months from London, where my husband will be teaching for the spring semester.

I'll be sure to keep you posted on my experiences of how similar and different our practices are.



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- A full-day, back to basics Growers' School
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- New Varieties introductions from John Dole—audience participation welcome
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Wedding flowers

Normal bouquet

Mono bouquet

July-on-pot



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Double flower

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