

Volume 22, Number 4 Fall 2010

# *The* **Cut Flower**

Q U A R T E R L Y

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

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

# Inside this Issue

From the President.....3  
 Northwest & West Regional Meeting..4  
 Culture Profile.....8  
 GrowerProfile.....12  
 Back to Basics.....14  
 From the Archives.....16  
 Small Things Considered.....18  
 IPM Update.....20  
 Grower Grant Report.....22  
 National Conference Preview.....24  
 Regional Reports.....28  
 ASCFG News.....34  
 Industry News.....36  
 From the Director.....38

Cover photo  
*Rudbeckia* 'Henry Eilers' courtesy  
 of North Creek Nurseries

## The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

is published by:

The Association of Specialty  
 Cut Flower Growers, Inc.

MPO Box 268

Oberlin, OH 44074

Judy Marriott Laushman, editor.

Linda Twining, layout.

2010 ASCFG

ISSN 1068-8013

Subscription is included with ASCFG membership. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the ASCFG. No endorsement of named or illustrated products or companies is intended, nor is criticism implied of products or companies not included.

### PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Deadline
Spring	March 1
Summer	June 1
Fall	September 1
Winter	December 1

All articles, features, display and classified advertising must be received by these deadlines for publication.

*The Cut Flower Quarterly* welcomes advertising. For display advertising, contact ASCFG for current advertising insertion order form. Classified ads are FREE TO MEMBERS.

Contact Judy Laushman

(440) 774-2887 or

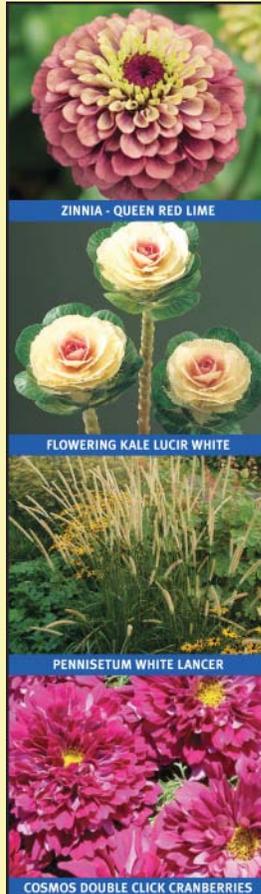
ascfg@oberlin.net



page 4



page 12



# Cuts from Harris Seeds



Look to Harris Seeds for an extensive selection of high quality cut flower varieties, available in both seeds and pre-started plugs. You will find over 150 different varieties that have been specially selected for cut flower growers, including essentials such as sunflowers, statice, and zinnias, along with a wide selection of the more unusual cuts, and a solid range of cut flower supplies.

Call us toll-free at 800-544-7938

or visit us on the web: [www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com)

- Harris Seeds Professional Ornamental Growers' Seed Catalog
- Harris Seeds Professional Ornamental Growers' Plug & Liner Catalog



**HARRIS SEEDS**  
 A Grower Friendly Company

355 Paul Rd., PO Box 24966

Rochester, NY 14624-0966

[www.harriseseeds.com](http://www.harriseseeds.com)

# From the **PRESIDENT**

*Vicki Stamback*

Where in the world did the summer season go? Now the Conference is right around the corner. We are concentrating on the Growers' School that will be held at Bear Creek Farms. Let me tell you a little about it.

We will be starting early, because we have so much information to cover, with seed germination and growing-on with Todd Cavins. Todd studied under John Dole at OSU and NC State and currently works for Sun-Gro. He'll be able to answer any growing questions and will give everyone great growing information.

Next John Dole will cover succession planning and planting. I remember when I began growing flowers and John taught me how to succession plan and plant in 30 minutes and he will teach you too. Succession planning and planting is such a valuable tool in cut flower production.



Then Eric Rebek and Tom Royer, with OSU Extension, will discuss insects and diseases. They will teach you what to look for and where to look. You will look in Bear Creek's greenhouses for insects and Eric and Tom will also show you how to properly release beneficial insects. For all you bug people, this is going to be fun!

We will all go to lunch at 11:00 at Hideaway Pizza. They will have a buffet ready for us including vegetarian selections. Hideaway has been a Stillwater mainstay since 1956 and I think you'll really like it.

After lunch it will be back to the farm and Steve Upson from the Noble Research Center will talk about various greenhouses and hoop house options plus the infrastructure needed for them. Steve will show you the different greenhouses and

hoop houses at Bear Creek, their benefits and talk about others he's built. Steve will be able to answer any question about greenhouses and hoop houses.

Next John Dole and Gay Smith will talk about postharvest, what to do and the importance of postharvest to the flowers. John and Gay will have the answers you need regarding any postharvest question so come with your most difficult postharvest problems and see what they say.

Next Holly Pasmore from Bear Creek will discuss her record keeping, what she keeps track of and why it's important. You will see forms she designed and uses and she will be able to tell you how we use the information to help with growing from year to year.

Finally, we will answer any questions you have and have a quick tour of Bear Creek answering more questions as we go. Then back on the bus to

Tulsa, where you can hopefully catch a quick nap before attending the reception at the hotel that evening.

I also want to talk about the bulb crates we will have available. Once you see how we've put together our crate growing system, you'll want some! We have 1700 bulb crates available and the Research Foundation will be selling them for \$2.00 per crate. If you want crates but don't want to pick them up at the Conference, you are welcome to pick them up before or after the Conference at Bear Creek. So please, come get some bulb crates or we will be very busy figuring out how to best use 1700 crates!

Join us in Tulsa for lots of fun, learning, sharing and networking! I hope to see you all there.

*Ednie Flower Bulb inc.*



*From Bulb to Bloom - Quality, Service and Expertise*

**Callas**



**Lilies**



**Tulips**



**and so much more !!**

For a complete catalog,  
please contact us.

**1-800-24-EDNIE**  
[www.EdnieFlowerBulb.com](http://www.EdnieFlowerBulb.com)



## Northwest & West Regional Meeting

The ASCFG thanks Debra Prinzing and David Perry, who shared their reflections (in text and photos) of the 2010 Northwest and West Regional Meeting. They are the publishers of the blog “A Fresh Bouquet” ([www.afreshbouquet.com](http://www.afreshbouquet.com)), and author and photographer of the upcoming book of the same name.

The combined flower-farming knowledge contained in those lively minds and generous souls gathered in the fields of Charles Little & Co., Eugene, Ore., farm was nothing short of amazing. We arrived at the bucolic spot for the one-day Northwest-West Regional Meeting; David with little sleep, having driven nearly overnight from Seattle; Debra having flown in the previous afternoon from Los Angeles, shepherded by friend and fellow writer Mary-Kate Mackey, her Eugene host.

The sight of a straw-hatted crowd of about 60 folks standing near the charming, hand-lettered u-cut flower sign next to a wooden shed greeted us. In addition to familiar faces, including several stars of the *A Fresh Bouquet* prototype BLAD, Diane

Szukovathy and Dennis Westphall of Jello Mold Farms; Melissa Feveyear of Terra Bella Flowers & Mercantile; and Stacie Sutliff of Blush Custom Floral, we met many new folks. The meeting drew flower farmers from the Oregon coast, the Olympic Peninsula, the cities and rural fields of the west – others whose love affair with cut flowers feels familiar to us.

We were especially gratified to finally meet ASCFG Executive Director Judy Laushman, a new friend and supporter of this book project. The member farmers of this organization are pretty impressive and hard-working. We’ve read about and heard of many of them – and now we were able to spend a day in their midst, soaking up their wisdom and learning the practical aspects of their craft and trade.

It was an inspiring and educational day, beginning with Charles Little walking us through just a portion of his 35-acre flower-growing operation. He highlighted specific crops, including favorite and well-performing cultivars of plants that produce flowers, foliage, branches, pods and berries for the cut flower trade. Two-hundred-plus botanical ingredients, including herbs, grow here. Charles’s commentary was fascinating (as were the snatches of conversations all around us).

Here then are some of the stellar plants we met, along with a few, choice growers’ secrets and other observations that were shared:

- **Lavender** - *Lavandula angustifolia* x *lanata* ‘Ana Luisa’ is a favorite for cutting. Charles and Bethany also grow *Lavandula* x *intermedia* cultivars: ‘Provence’, ‘Grosso’ and



Diane Szukovathy and Dennis Westphall

‘Edelweiss’. One handful will contain 50-100 stems. Cutting techniques vary by grower. Some say they “grab and hack” with Felco pruners or shears. Others use a hand-scythe to saw the stems.

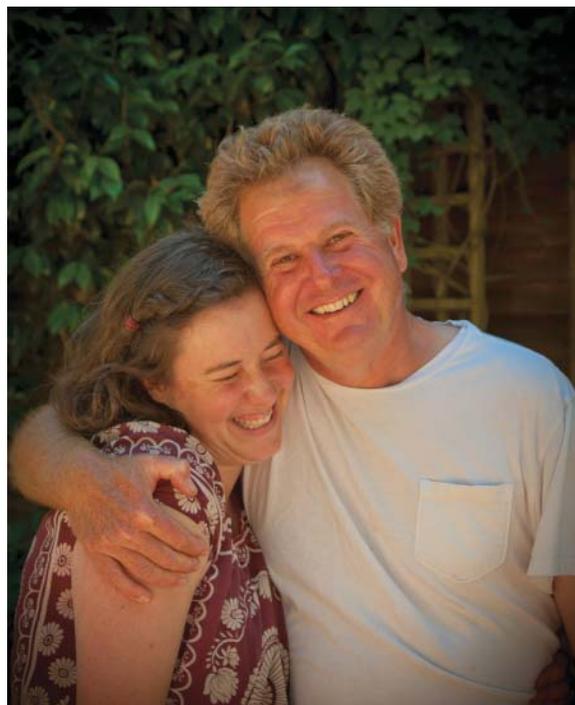
- *Centaurea macrocephala* ‘Marco Polo’ – Charles grows three rows of this dusty miller relative, which produces large golden-yellow, thistle-like flower heads.

- Oregano species and cultivars: Several varieties of this herb lend beautiful foliage, flowers and a pleasing aromatic note to bouquets. While compact in form, *Oreganum rotundifolium* ‘Kent Beauty’ is an ornamental oregano with an attractive pinkish hue. You may not think of it as a good floral design ingredient because its stems are so short, but, Charles points out “Floral designers gobble it up for corsages and boutonnieres.” Another species, called *Oreganum laevigatum*, a Mediterranean native, is taller – up to 2 feet when in bloom. Charles grows ‘Herrenhausen’ (lilac-purple blooms) and ‘Hopley’s’ (purple bracts and pink flowers). According to *Sunset’s Western Garden Book*, both varieties “have purple leaves in cool weather.” There’s more to this story, though. Ever the curious plantsman, Charles selected his own dark purple variety of ‘Hopley’s’, which he calls ‘Purple Value’.

On to woody plants, *Callicarpa* sp., or beautyberry, is a deciduous shrub that produces small, almost iridescent lilac berries in late

fall to early winter. Charles was asked if he has to spend much time pruning the shrubs. “If we get a good crop, we cut it all back,” he says. “That’s the pruning.” And when the callicarpa is cut way back, its branches go straight to market because it’s a winner at a time of year when the floral color spectrum produces little else in the lilac hue.

- Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* sp.), a North American native deciduous shrub, is another plant that elicited a lot of admiration, as well as agreement from other growers on the tour. I’ve certainly grown varieties of snowberry for their ornamental performance in the domestic landscape. But you should hear the growers rave about the many varieties that produce clusters of pearl-sized berries in delicious colors. Charles grows many, including ‘Green Pearl’, ‘Pink Pearl’ and ‘White Pearl’ – trademarked cultivars. He also loves *Symphoricarpos x chenaultii* ‘Hancock’ (red berries). There was some dispute about how disease resistant this plant is, but everyone agreed that “deer love it.” Good thing I don’t have deer living near my garden, because I’m eager to grow this cool plant for its gorgeous winter berries.



Charles and Bethany Little, our generous hosts.

- Asclepias, which is known as milkweed in southern California, is a stunning producer of small, starlike flowers. These perennials are beloved by those who grow habitat gardens because butterflies, moths and other winged pollinators love their tasty nectar. Charles grows a yummy orange species called *Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed), a native eastern U.S. plant that produces clusters of bright orange flowers. I was pretty impressed with the diversity of form and bloom color. The farm also has row upon row of pink and white varieties, as well as *Asclepias incarnata*, a raspberry-maroon form. Wow. All are said to be long-lasting as cut flowers.

- Like asclepias, varieties of yarrow (*Achillea* sp.) are a favorite of butterflies. The stunning golden-yellow flowers of *Achillea filipendulina* ‘Gold Plate’ have clusters up to 6 inches in diameter. Several rows are already in bloom here, ready to be harvested for market. There is another name for the variety Charles grows – fernleaf yarrow – so called for its deep green, fernlike foliage.

- Eupatorium is another landscaping plant that I grew in my former Seattle garden, valued for the chocolatey foliage. This plant does produce fluffy white flowers,



Stunning ‘Gold Plate’ yarrow, and just beyond it . . . inquiring minds that really do want to know.



Field grown sweet peas being carefully harvested by hand.



Sweet peas and onions growing companionably together in the warm Oregon sun.

but for my money, it's the awesome leaf color that inspires its use. And clearly the floral trade loves dark foliage as a foil to all that garden greenery. *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate' has deep espresso-plum leaves. The farm also grows the straight green-leaved form.

- Roses are not overlooked at this flower farm, although the roses grown here are appreciated for the hips and foliage more than those blowsy blooms. I spotted *Rosa multiflora*, which Charles says "makes beautiful red hips." Yes, you can tell how prolific this plant is by the many-clustered sprays of creamy-white single roses. We also spotted *Rosa glauca*, which is valued for its blue-gray leaves and sweet pink flowers in the landscape – and for its small, oval hips that floral designers crave.
- Winterberry, or *Ilex verticillata* 'Winter Red' is another berry producer. There are also cultivars that produce golden berries. This form of *Ilex* is a deciduous shrub with smooth, oval leaves (rather than the pointy Christmas variety).
- *Angelica archangelica* is a biennial that reseeds, essentially making itself a perennial. An excellent cut flower, according to Charles, the plant resembles Queen Anne's lace or a carrot

plant gone to seed. I particularly love the pale green flower heads. They had already been harvested by the day of our tour, but a few remnants were enough to get me excited about the architectural forms – imagine them in a modern vase!

- Garden burnet, or *Sanguisorba*, is a cool perennial with ovoid, serrated blue-green foliage. Its flowers are like little pink bottle-brushes. I had one in my former Seattle garden, a plant I brought home from a Hardy Plant Study Weekend. Again, a vase-worthy plant that also looks cool in the landscape.

After the field tour, we headed in the opposite direction, across another field where rows of the lemon-lime foliage of *Cotinus coggygia* (smoke tree) contrasted so beautifully with adjacent deep wine-colored rows of *Physocarpus opulifolius* (ninebark). Our destination was Charles and Bethany's soaring barn and inviting farmhouse (and lunch).

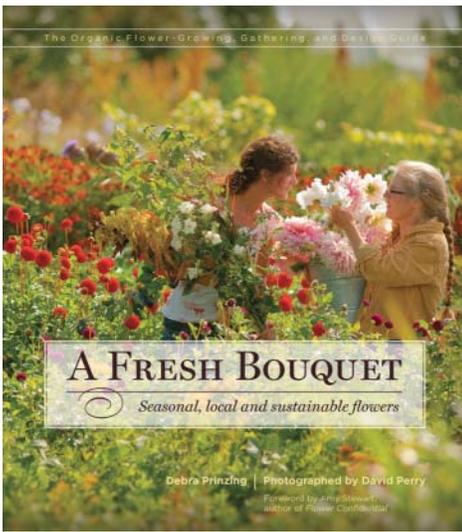
David and I were not the only ones who took a detour when we spotted one of the farm's crew members harvesting bunches of sweet peas. Who can resist sweet peas, especially when the vines are trained in rows more than 4 feet high? But what caught our attention further was the surprising crop of onions poking out of the soil at the base of the sweet pea plants. Wow – was this a new companion planting scheme we were seeing?

We swapped theories with the others, but figured we'd ask Charles for an explanation. He humored us with a short interview, in which the mystery is revealed as to why he's paired sweet-smelling annuals with strong-smelling onions. (Watch this video at <http://afreshbouquet.com/2010/07/09/flower-wisdom>)

After a hearty lunch, we gathered under the canopies in an informal circle to "talk shop." Diane and Judy led the conversation by asking people to share their new ideas, field lessons and successes (as well as challenges). The conversation was enlightening, revealing just how demanding it is to grow flowers for market.

We heard about best-selling flowers for Mother's Day (peonies, tulips); how one small grower uses Facebook updates to attract local flower customers to her farmers' market stall; how another grower succeeds with ranunculus crops; how several growers band together as a cooperative selling unit as a way to create a successful "buy from the farmer" marketplace – and so much more. They were most generous to ask us to share about *A Fresh Bouquet* and our vision for this book – following flowers through the growing, gathering and design steps and sharing the passion for seasonal, local and sustainably-grown ingredients. This is a group who understands how significantly this book will influence the floral design trade and flower enthusiasts everywhere.

In addition to heading home with a few botanical goodies: (a packet of *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Rubenza' seeds from Osborne Seed Co. – can't wait to grow these dark ruby cosmos flowers) and a potted *Polygonatum* sp. (Solomon's seal) from Charles and Bethany's farm, we left with an expanded understanding, respect and appreciation for the farmers' life, passion and commitment to growing flowers.



## A Fresh Bouquet: Seasonal, Local and Sustainable Flowers

By Debra Prinzing | Photography by David Perry

[www.afreshbouquet.com](http://www.afreshbouquet.com)

The increasing popularity of seasonal, local and sustainably-grown flowers reflects new values and lifestyle choices of an engaged, thoughtful and expanding market of consumers.

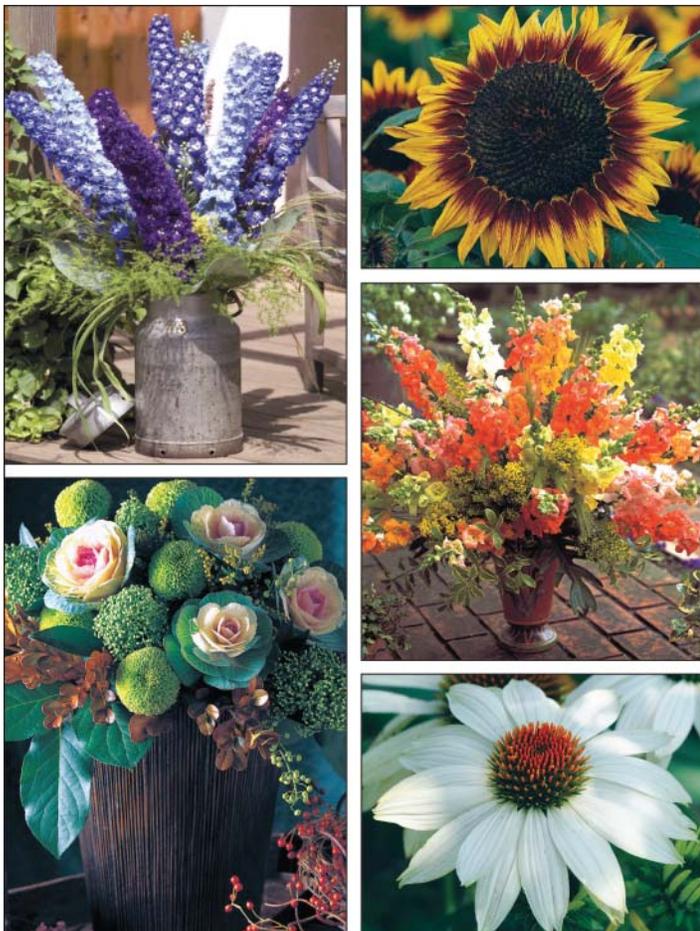
Storytellers David Perry and Debra Prinzing believe that flower enthusiasts and floral designers are seeking fresh and authentic options to conventionally mass-produced crops. Through *A Fresh Bouquet*, their blog and book project, they want to inspire and motivate consumers and florists to seek local sources for floral ingredients or try growing uncommon stems and blooms in their own backyard. *A Fresh Bouquet* follows the short

journey of sustainably-grown flowers *from field to vase*. It features where, how and who is bringing these breathtaking blooms from the flower farm to the design studio, and celebrates passionate cut flower growers around the country. How-to ideas for designing with local and seasonal ingredients are also included.

David and Debra launched [www.afreshbouquet.com](http://www.afreshbouquet.com) last fall. The collaborators are pursuing several options for the book's publication, including traditional printing and open publishing. At the same time, they continue to meet, interview and photograph innovative flower farmers and floral designers, including several ASCFG members.

*A Fresh Bouquet's* original inspiration comes from friend and author Amy Stewart (*Flower Confidential*), who is supporting this project and will write the book's foreword, and Erin Benzakein (flore), who introduced David and Debra to her passion and creativity as an organic cut flower grower and designer.

David and Debra welcome your ideas, suggestions and comments. You can contact them through the web site and you can look forward to seeing more of their work in future pages of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*.



**WHERE YOU CAN ALWAYS EXPECT**

- ✿ Extraordinary Personal Service
- ✿ Extensive Seed Selection
- ✿ Extra-Friendly Sales People
- ✿ Exceptional Delivery Time

*Contact Us For Your Cut Flower Seed*

121 Gary Road, Hodges, SC 29653  
 Toll Free: 888-645-2323 Fax: 864-227-5108  
 Email: [svc@geoseed.com](mailto:svc@geoseed.com) Website: [www.geoseed.com](http://www.geoseed.com)

# CULTURE Profile

Lane Greer and John Dole

From *Woody Cut Stems for Growers and Florists: Production and Post-Harvest Handling of Branches for Flowers, Fruit, and Foliage*

## Forsythia

forsythia, golden bells

### Why You Should Grow It

Forsythia is easy to grow and may be the easiest species to force. They are one of the top ten woody cut flowers, since their vibrant yellow flowers are some of the earliest to bloom. Many growers are also using cultivars with variegated foliage, and using species forms in fall, when the leaves turn blood purple. Dutch studies have shown that dormant cut stems can be held for months.

### Why You Shouldn't

Markets may already be flooded, since this cut is so popular and easy to grow. It is difficult to grow forsythia in areas often hit by late freezes.

### Species and Cultivars

**Forsythia 'Arnold Dwarf'**. Hybrid of *F. xintermedia* and *F. japonica*. Not really dwarf but more compact than most; grows about 4 feet (1.2 m) tall and takes longer to flower than *F. xintermedia* hybrids. Dirr states flower production begins when plants are five to six years old.

**Forsythia xintermedia, forsythia, golden bells.** The most commonly used species, *F. xintermedia* is a hybrid between *F. suspensa*, a naturally weeping form, and *F. viridissima*, an upright form. This explains the presence of upright, arching and weeping stems on a single plant. All forsythias bear flowers in varying shades of yellow. When purchasing plants, bear in mind that cultivars are often inaccurately labeled.



- 'Arnold Brilliant'. Poor producer of harvestable stems. Difficult to locate.
- 'Beatrix Farrand'. Produces lots of large flowers but fewer stems than 'Lynwood' and blooms slightly later. Most canes grow upright, though some weep. Flower buds are less cold hardy.
- 'Karl Sax'. Golden yellow flowers, slightly smaller than 'Beatrix Farrand'.
- 'Lynwood'. Also known as 'Lynwood Gold', this is the most common cultivar for landscape purposes. It seems to be the most prolific producer (see "Research"). It is an upright grower with numerous flowers per stem.
- 'Spectabilis'. Stiff, upright growth habit. This is the most common cultivar grown in the Netherlands. Richard E. Bir and Joseph L. Conner, working in North Carolina, found that this cultivar produced lots of fall flowers, which decreased spring production. Flower buds are more cold hardy, however.
- 'Spring Glory'. Pale yellow flowers open about one week before 'Lynwood'. Plants branch more but produce fewer stems (see "Research"). May be better for warmer climates (Zones 7 to 8).
- 'Vitellina'. Small flowers, upright habit.

**Forsythia ovata, early forsythia.** This species grows 4 to 6 feet (1.2 to 2 m) tall with an upright habit. Flowers are slightly smaller, but plants bloom earlier and are more cold hardy (Zones 4 to 7) than *F. xintermedia*. Cultivars include 'Meadowlark', 'New Hampshire Gold', 'Northern Gold', 'Northern Sun', 'Ottawa', 'Robusta', 'Sunrise', and 'Vermont Sun'.

For foliage. Variegated forms are best for foliage sales. *Forsythia xintermedia* cultivars include 'Fiesta', 'Goldleaf', 'Golden Times', 'Variegata' (which is not a strong grower and often reverts to green), and *F. koreana* (also known as *F. viridissima* var. *koreana*) 'Kumson' and 'Ilgwang'.

## Production

**General Growth:** Forsythia are deciduous shrubs, growing 6 to 10 feet (2 to 3 m) tall. They have upright, arching, and weeping tendencies. They grow best in areas where winter temperatures are cold but not too cold, which can damage the flower buds (Zones 5 to 8). They grow in almost any soil and should be sited in full sun. In early spring, vibrant, bell-shaped yellow flowers open along the stem. Flowers are followed by dark green leaves, which turn various shades of burgundy in fall. Forsythia as a landscape plant is long-lived; it is common to see healthy forsythia planted 50 years ago.

**Spacing:** Generally, plants can be spaced 4 feet (1.2 m) apart or farther. If allowed, lower stems tend to root and grow their own shoots, producing large plants and filling in the space between plants in the row.

**Pruning:** Forsythia produce axillary (lateral) flowers on last year's wood; the terminal (end) bud is always vegetative (leafy). Forsythia grows with a stool-like habit, branching from ground level. For best flowering of landscape plants, old wood should be pruned immediately after flowering. Early pruning allows more growing time for foliage, and admits more light and greater air circulation. According to Brown and Kirkham, plants pruned annually will be more vigorous. By early fall, next year's flower buds have already formed on the stem, which is why stems can be cut at that time for later forcing. Often, a few forsythia blooms will open in the fall.

David Jenkins cut plants to ground level with a brush hog or brush-cutting saw every year immediately following harvest, then fertilized with 10-20-20. Other growers, from North Carolina to Washington State, have also had excellent success by coppicing plants after harvest. At Oregon Roses, they have coppiced plants in the past but saw no gain in production by doing this, so they now cut all stems selectively.

To rejuvenate old shrubs, cut all growth to the ground in late winter and early spring.

**Pests and diseases:** Forsythia is rarely bothered by pests.

## Harvest and Postharvest

**Stage of harvest:** Most buyers want to purchase stems cut in tight bud, with no color showing. Homeowners may want to wait until buds have just started to open. For shipping, stems must be cut in bud; open flowers rarely stand up to this challenge. Cutting on a very cold day should be avoided. Some growers cut one-year-old branches, other cut two-year-old stems, since these have more branching and can look fuller in flower. Occasionally, even three-year-old wood is cut. Harvesting can begin as early as November and held for spring sales. If stems are cut later (January), they can be held at 29F (-2C) or forced immediately.

For foliage, cut in summer or fall after foliage has hardened off. (This can be tested easily by cutting branches and placing them in water. If the leaves wilt almost immediately and stay wilted the branches are not yet ready for cutting.)

**Expected yields:** Bir and Conner found that yields varied from three stems per plant for 'Arnold Brilliant' to eighty stems for 'Lynwood', after two years of growth (see "Research"). After three years, 'Lynwood' produced over 100 stems per plant.

**Conditioning:** If you're planning to store the stems for a long time, Will Fulton recommends dipping them in fungicide first. At Oregon Roses, they found that holding stems at 29F (-2C) eliminates the need for fungicides. Two sources (Edwards; Halpin and Mackey) recommend placing stems in deep water for several hours. Stems cut in tight bud benefit from soaking overnight in water or preservative solution (Nowak and Rudnicki).

Several growers cut stems in tight bud, then hold them in water in the cooler for weeks or even months. They pull out stems as required for sales and may force them for a few days in a warm greenhouse before shipping.

**Storage and shipping:** Hold in water or preservative solution for short-term storage. Stems cut in tight bud can be held dry at 29 to 41F (-2 to 5C). When held dry, stems must be kept in high humidity chambers. Stems are usually sprayed with water, which freezes on the stems, or held in buckets of ice. Stems can be held like this for months.

Joanna Nowak and Ryszard M. Rudnicki recommend holding opening or open flowers for no longer than three to four days. Ship in water or preservative at 41F (5C). Washington State grower Ted Jonkheer wraps stem bases in wet newspaper, then encloses the entire stem in plastic that is actually recycled greenhouse covering. Tall stems are slightly bent to make 4- to 5-foot (1.2- to 1.5-m) long "big sausages" and are shipped without a box.

**Vase life:** Cut flowers last from six to ten days.

## Propagation

Forsythia are incredibly easy to propagate. There have even been reports of cut stems rooting in the vase. Softwood cuttings are slightly easier to propagate than hardwood (Dirr). Seeds germinate more uniformly when held at 41F (5C) for one to two months.

## Marketing

Stems are graded by length. North Carolina growers Gary and Sybil Calder use this system:

Stem length	Stems per bunch
1-2 feet (30-60 cm)	20-25
2-3 feet (60-90 cm)	10
4-5 feet (120-150 cm)	10
5+ feet (150+ cm)	5

Very tall stems, average 6 to 7 feet (2 to 2.1 m) are hard to find and demand premium prices.

## Troubleshooting

**Short vase life.** Forsythia (and most spring flowers) will last longer when held at cooler temperatures. Also try increasing humidity.

**Not all flowers on the stem open.** Holding stems in high humidity environments, or soaking stems cut in bud, will help to alleviate this problem.

**Stems have only a few flower buds.** Forsythia stems bear both vegetative (leaf) and reproductive (flower) buds on the stem. Flower buds are slightly less hardy and may be killed by severe cold and late freezes. Harvest stems early and hold in a cold room. If lack of flower buds is an annual problem, consider growing more cold-hardy cultivars or species. When harvesting, look for the fat flower buds: vegetative buds are usually thinner. If flower buds are located only further down the stem, cut longer stems and cut off the vegetative tips.

## Landscape Plantings

Forsythia grows quite large, 8 to 10 feet (2.3 to 3 m) tall and 10 to 12 feet (3 to 3.6 m) wide, so plant accordingly. Single plants or groupings of three to five are very effective in spring. Daffodils look good planted underneath and bloom about the same time.

To keep plants blooming, cut back annually just after flowering. Stems grow 4 to 8 feet (1.2 to 2.3 m) in a season. For old, nonproductive plants, cut all stems to

the ground just after flowering. (If the plant does not come back from this treatment, it was dying or dead anyway.)

One of Earth's worst sights is a sheared forsythia. Please do not treat forsythia as a hedge plant. The natural form is gracefully arching, and plants look so much better when allowed to retain their natural shapes. Plus, many of the flower buds are typically removed when pruning forsythia into hedges, resulting in spotty flowering in the spring. Without flowers, forsythia have little to recommend them as landscape plants. Selectively prune out older wood and blooming stems to keep forsythia looking its best.

## Uses

Use stems as linear accents. Because of its early bloom time, forsythia is often used by itself or with simple greenery, rather than combining it with other flowers. Make a statement by mixing forsythia with pussy willows (*Salix*) and red twig dogwoods (*Cornus*). Foliage can be used as a filler. Forsythia is not suitable for drying.

## Other Comments

Forsythia normally live for decades, and we always feel guilty when plants die early. However, because plants are widely available and very inexpensive, forsythia is an excellent candidate to treat as a short-lived or throw-away woody plant.

### Number of *Forsythia xintermedia* stems per plant.

One-gallon plants were planted in spring of 1995. Results of a study conducted in western North Carolina.

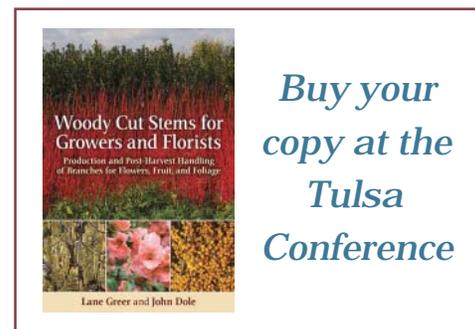
CULTIVAR	1996	1997
'Arnold Brilliant'	2.7 e*	3.7 e
'Beatrix Farrand'	11.7 d	30.7 cd
'Farrand Hybrid'	11.0 d	17.3 de
'Karl Sax'	11.3 d	49.0 c
'Lynwood'	79.7 a	103.0 a
'Spectabilis'	29.7 c	48.3 bc
'Spring Glory'	47.0 b	68.7 b

\* Each letter represents a statistically different degree. In other words, numbers with an *a* are distinctly different from those with *b*, which are distinctly different from those with *c*.

In other words, do not be afraid to "use up" forsythia plants, since they are easily replaced by propagating your own or buying new, cheap plants.

## Research

In the 1990s, Bir and Conner in Fletcher, North Carolina, conducted tests using several cultivars of *F. xintermedia*. They placed plants 10 feet (3 m) apart within the row and fertilized with ammonium nitrate (34-0-0), applying 0.5 ounces (15 g) per plant the first year and 1 ounce (30 g) the next year. They used glyphosate (Round-Up) and hand weeding to maintain plantings. They found that cultivar played a huge part in number of stems harvested. The outstanding cultivar was 'Lynwood', with 80 stems collected from each plant after just two years of growth. 'Arnold Brilliant' came in a distant seventh place. They noted that 'Spring Glory', which finished in second place, flowered a week earlier than 'Lynwood'.





**Perennial Seed. Beautiful. Useful.  
Native...  
To the Planet.**

*Jelitto*

STAUDENSAMEN · PERENNIAL SEEDS · GRAINES DE PLANTES VIVACES

Production · Breeding · Seed Technology

USA Office: 125 Chenoweth Ln. · Louisville, KY 40207  
Phone (502) 895-08 07 · Fax (502) 895-39 34 · <http://www.jelitto.com> · [maryv@jelitto.com](mailto:maryv@jelitto.com)  
German Headquarters: P.O. Box 1264 · D-29685 Schwarmstedt  
Phone 01149-5071-9829-0 · Fax 01149-5071-9829-27 · [www.jelitto.com](http://www.jelitto.com) · [info@jelitto.com](mailto:info@jelitto.com)

**DripWorks**

Professional  
Drip Irrigation Supplies



**DripWorks Loves  
Cut Flower Farmers!**



Superior  
products  
for  
gorgeous  
flowers

Grow more  
flowers  
with less  
water



*Ask us about our  
Complimentary  
Design Service*

**In-line Emitter Tubing  
Sprinklers & Sprayers  
Fertilizer Injectors  
Mainline Tubing  
Row Cover**

**T-Tape**

**ORDER ONLINE  
[dripworks.com](http://dripworks.com)**

Call for  
Free catalog  
**800.522.3747**

# GROWER Profile

*Jennifer Moeller, Hensbury Farm, Waite Hill, Ohio*

## *Growing it Alone*

Jennifer Moeller was a woman on a mission. Living on fifteen acres of rolling farmland just east of Cleveland, she knew she wanted to do *something*; she had land, she had some time, and most importantly, she had the energy. How could that energy be put to good use, producing something useful and beautiful at the same time?

Her location: near a major city, blessed with well-drained silty loam soils, zone 5 with moderate summer temperatures and consistent moisture (especially considering seventy-plus inches of snowbelt contributions some years) made her fields ready to produce just about anything.

But how could this be done by only one woman? Her husband's job took him out of town for several days a week, her children's activities kept them too busy to take anything but a passing interest in new agriculture ventures, and her distance from neighbors and friends made labor (or lack of) an issue not to be taken lightly.

### *Small Farm, Big Dog*

Goats were her first experiment. She bought 20 Boer goats, and bred them until she had produced a champion at the 2007 Ohio Meat Goat Association Show. Others won more prizes, and Jennifer enjoyed her time showing and selling them.

They're happy to range a small pasture, climbing a steep hill that overlooks a lake and nature preserve. They share their space with a Great Pyrenees named Julia, who, raised with goats since puppyhood, considers herself one of the flock. Since coyotes and other predators can easily nab a goat kid in Jennifer's rural area, it's helpful to have a dog on the premises. A really large dog.

Jennifer couldn't find the market for goat meat that she needed to be profitable, even in the ethnic markets of Cleveland, so she now maintains a herd to sell goat kids



to human kids for 4-H projects. Their composted manure is used to amend the cut flower beds in another section of the farm.

Chickens have proved to be a more lucrative enterprise. Locally-produced eggs are enjoying a massive popularity boost, thanks to the buy local movement and the public's recent awareness of factory farming. Jennifer's \$4.00/dozen is reasonable for beautiful, clean and safe eggs. She sells them mostly to friend and locavores from the farm, and delivers some to florists with her flowers.

She raises a mix of araucana and brown layers, and currently has about 40 birds. Jennifer built a mobile coop of cedar that's a step above most chicken tractors. The cedar helps repel pests



attracted to manure and spilled feed, and the entire structure (coop and attached wire pens) can be easily moved around the farm. The chickens can feast on weed seeds and insects, fertilizing the soil as they do.

## Small Farm, Tall Sunflowers

Goats and chickens aside, what is most dear to Jennifer's heart – and profitable for her wallet – are cut flowers. She grows on a small scale, about two acres, and concentrates on annuals like sunflowers, celosia and zinnias, with a lot of dahlia production that gears up in the fall.

She likes 'Benary Giant' zinnias, and the sunflower cultivars that perform best for her are 'Sunbeam', 'Procut BiColor', and 'The Joker'. Even though the heads on the multicolored varieties tend to bend, the florists prefer their unusual colors, and don't mind wiring the stems. 'Sunbeam' does great in retail settings.

Jennifer has grown Karma and other dahlias that she buys from Gloeckner, Ednie Bulb and Swan Island Dahlias. She prefers to use tubers rather than cuttings so she can dig them up and divide them for the next year. Among the Karmas, Jennifer considers 'Prospero', 'Corona', 'Sangria', 'Cornell' and 'Gingersnap' real workhorses, though they bruise easily.

Flowers are delivered to florists in University Heights, Cleveland Heights and Mentor, relatively easy drives from Waite Hill. Jennifer recently began a relationship with Allied Wholesale in Cleveland, to whom she delivers about twice a week. This is a bit farther from her farm, but worth the trip, as it's usually a larger order.

Jennifer also delivers directly to a Whole Foods and to the warehouse at Heinen's, northeast Ohio's local high-end grocery chain.

She tried selling her cut flowers at two different farmers' markets but realized they weren't for her. The prep time, driving distance and unpredictable finances (too many rained-out Saturdays) made them inefficient and unprofitable for a one-woman operation.

In addition to the field annuals, Jennifer has "landscaped" her long driveway with a collection of willows and shrubs she uses as woody cut stems. They're appealing enough to pass as "decoration" for passing neighbors, but shrewdly placed so that she can drive down

the lane, cut and bucket the stems, and load them directly into the van for delivery.

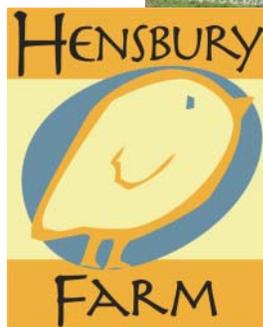
## Mother of Invention

That's just one way Jennifer manages to run her farm by herself. She gets occasional help when weeding or flower picking are peaking, but in general, it is a one-woman operation. A pretty small woman, at that. Jennifer realized that she would need to find other ways to make her farm as efficient as possible.

The electric fence surrounding one of her annuals field is solar powered. Nothing fancy, or too expensive, just a standard battery with a solar trickle charger. She's used the same battery for several years with no problem. This helps keep her utility bill to a minimum while ensuring a steady stream of power to the fence. The abundance of white-tailed deer in northeast Ohio make this a necessity.

A frequent contributor to the ASCFG Bulletin Board, Jennifer credits other members for turning her on to CoolBot. This small piece of equipment connects to a standard room air conditioner, making it more efficiently cool a flower holding area. Jennifer was easily able to set up the system herself, and can't imagine storing her product without it.

Another "Pay now, or pay later" decision Jennifer made was to use weed fabric on several of her fields. She's happy with the one she purchased from



Rain-Flo, and thinks it will last ten years if she takes it up each winter. While the initial financial output might have seemed overwhelming, the advantage it gave her over weeds was unmistakable. The rows without cloth are quickly overtaken, even with

biweekly hoeing; the areas covered can be easily maintained by pulling the few pests that make their way through the holes burned for the cut flower crops.

Jennifer credits the ASCFG and its generous members for much of her success. She did as much research as she could before planting her first crop, but it wasn't until she discovered the organization that she was able to pull together what she needed to get started on the right foot.

She finds her fellow growers to be an invaluable source of real world information on everything from pricing to sourcing supplies to pest control. Just seeing another cut flower operation helped validate some things Jennifer was doing; with absolutely no experience, how could she know what drip tape was supposed to look like in the field? She was happy to meet many other growers at the 2010 Northeast Regional Meeting in Ithaca, who gave her a sense of how they space their plants, manage harvests and figure out their marketing.

What's next for this energetic grower? Like many others, she's considering rethinking her strategy, and hiring outside help so she can grow her business. And like many, she wonders: Does she want to be a people manager as well as a farmer? Luckily, she has the ASCFG to guide her on her way.



# Back to **BASICS**

Jay Conrad Levinson

## Guerrilla Generosity

These days, there seem to be two kinds of businesses: givers and takers. Today's consumers seem to be increasingly attracted to "giver" companies and repelled by "taker" companies. Giver businesses are quick to give freebies to customers and prospects. The freebies may be gifts, but more likely come in the form of information. The right information is worth more than a gift and often even worth far more than money.

In fact I've added a new personality trait to my list of characteristics possessed by successful guerrillas. I've always known they were blessed with infinite patience and fertile imaginations. I've written in awe of their acute sensitivity and their admirable ego strength. I've raved about their aggressiveness in marketing and their penchant for constant learning.

Now, I'm impressed, but not surprised, at their generosity. They are, every single one of them, generous souls who seem to gain joy by giving things away, by taking their customers and prospects beyond satisfaction and into true bliss. They learn what those people want and need and then they try to give them what they want and need absolutely free.

The result? Delighted prospects who become customers and delighted customers who become repeat and referral customers.

What kind of things do guerrilla marketers give away for free? Let's start with a list of ten and your mind will be primed to dream up ten more:

- They give gift certificates to their own business, whether the certificates are for products or services.
- They give printed brochures to anybody who requests one.
- They give electronic brochures, on audio and video, once again to people who ask for them. And they are quick to offer their free brochures in their other marketing.
- They give money to worthy causes and let their prospects and customers know that they support a noble cause, enabling these people to support the same endeavor.
- They give free consultations and never make them seem like sales presentations.
- They truly try to help their prospects.
- They give free seminars and clinics because they realize that if their information is worthwhile, it will attract the right kind of people to them.
- They give free demonstrations to prove without words the efficacy of their offerings.

- They give tours of their facilities or of work they've accomplished elsewhere, again transcending any standard marketing tools they might employ.
- They give free samples because they know that such generosity is the equivalent of purchasing a new customer at a very low price.
- They give invaluable information on their web site, realizing that such data will bring their customers and prospects back for more, thereby intensifying their relationships.

Guerrillas are highly creative in dreaming up what they might give for free. Of course, many advertising specialties such as calendars and scratchpads, mousepads and ball-point pens are emblazoned with their names and theme lines, but they seem to exercise extra creativity as well.

Case in point: When an apartment building went up, signs proudly proclaimed that you get "Free Auto Grooming" when you sign a lease. Soon, the occupancy rate was 100 percent. The salary they paid the guy who washed the tenants' cars once a week was easily covered by the difference between 100 percent occupancy and 71 percent occupancy, the usual occupancy rate in that neighborhood.

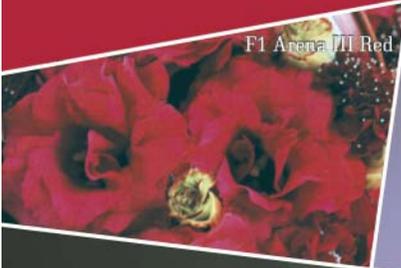
That means your task is clear: Think of what might attract prospects and make customers happy. Be creative. Be generous. Then, be prepared for a reputation embracing generosity, customer service, and sincere caring.

Today's customers are attracted to giver companies and repelled by taker companies. What kind of company is yours?

---

*Reprinted with permission from  
Guerrilla Marketing [www.gmarketing.com](http://www.gmarketing.com)*

**New Cut Flowers  
for 2010!**



F1 Arena III Red



F1 Chantilly Yellow



F1 Lucir Series

**Antirrhinum F1 Chantilly Yellow**  
New color added to open-faced Chantilly series

**Callistephus series, Nina**  
New series, more disease resistance compared to other varieties  
Available in Rose, Salmon Pink, White

**Cut Flower Kale series, F1 Lucir**  
New series, unique shiny leaves  
Available in Rose, White

**Eustoma**  
F1 Arena series (double flowers) - 2 new colors  
III Red, IV White  
F1 Vulcan series (single flowers) - new color  
II Deep Purple

 **TAKII SEED**  
[www.takii.com](http://www.takii.com)

For more information contact your preferred broker,  
or American Takii, Inc. at 831-443-4901.

TAKII SEED TAKII SEED TAKII SEED TAKII SEED TAKII SEED TAKII SEED TAKII SEED

**Haygrove**  
tunnels

[haygrove.com](http://haygrove.com) | 1-866-HAYGROVE | [tunnelbuzz.com](http://tunnelbuzz.com)



**Haygrove Owners Conference (others welcome) December 3, 2010 - Lancaster, PA**

# From the ARCHIVES

Janet Foss

## The Grass Isn't Always Greener

Originally printed in "Lemons and Lemonade" January 1999

"What's new and exciting?" I hear that every year, and I pass the question along to the people I buy seeds and plants from. I search magazines and seed catalogs for new, exciting material I haven't grown before, or at least for a while. I'm always trying to please my customers, as they want to see different things, because their customers want different things, too, and these are the people that keep me, a specialty cut flower grower, in business.

Sharing success and failure with other growers has always been the best source of information for something different. It's cool, how after spending a few days with other growers, you come home with lists of things to try. It's terrific how some plants grow better here than there. I must admit listening to growers complain that gomphrena is too productive, when I always feel like I really accomplish something when I get only a few stems, is a little hard to take!

I try quite a number of different plants each year, some become essentials that we grow every year, for others it's just a one-time deal. The space is sometimes not profitable, but other times one trial crop is so good it makes up for all the others that were not - that's the crop I'm after. Sometimes a good thing happens by accident and sometimes it's planned.

In 1997 the weather was so bad we were unable to plant some of our land until August 1. I planted 'Black Tip' wheat, figuring it might just be a cover crop, but hoping the weather and time would allow a harvest. While the wheat was a bit on the green side, we were able to harvest and sell every stem by early November.



*Briza maxima*

'Black Tip' is nice because it matures evenly, and the whole row can be cut at once.

We actually stretched the harvest over two weeks, because we were selling it fresh. With the cool fall weather, it was never over-mature. This year we did succession plantings from early July every two weeks. We were able to sell it all fresh. We also grew wheat 'Red Head', which matures a week behind 'Black Tip', but it's just as uniform in maturity. I like both wheats equally. 'Red Head' grew about 30 inches tall, and had no lodging. 'Black Tip' was 5 feet tall in late fall, with some lodging. Both of these wheats were so uniform they could be cut with a machine and dried. I prefer to sell wheat fresh and I like the late plantings, as fall is the best time to have wheat for sale, without the extra steps of drying it.

Generally, grasses and grains can be direct seeded, and they grow fairly quickly, outpacing the weeds. I often plant some just because they're easy: no transplanting, no hand weeding, no or very little pests or diseases, and harvesting is fast and generally easy. There seems to be very little competition from other growers on the fresh market. Fresh grasses and grains give the customer something different and special. The only downfall is that, compared to many other flowers, they are low on square foot profits.

This year my favorite new crop was *Panicum violaceum*, or annual red switchgrass. I learned about this grass at the 1997 Portland Conference, and a five dollar packet of seed paid my way to the Raleigh Conference in 1998! It was the most profitable grass I've ever grown. It

produced many stems and it sold well. It reminded me of broom corn, but was more manageable and more productive, and not as tall. It matured fairly evenly. After a plume is cut, it sends up more plumes, smaller than the first but still marketable. I did only one planting on June 23, and it was ready to harvest on September 5. For fresh cuts we were able to spread harvest over the whole month of September. It lasts 2+ weeks in water. Looks great with other tall flowers, especially sunflowers. It was done by October, so next year I will do two or three successions to ensure good quality throughout the fall.

I have grown quaking grass, *Briza maxima*, off and on over the years. It sells best in the fall, as all grasses seem to. It bloomed enough to harvest some 90 days from planting. Though a beautiful grass, it's time consuming to cut: the stems are short, mature and immature blooms mix and tangle together.

Not a plant to cut on high stress days! I planted it on June 23 and though the plants produced stems all of October and November, I think an early June planting would have yielded more. While *Briza* has many strikes against it, I like it and feel it's worth the extra trouble. It looks lovely in arrangements, and people notice and comment on it.

*Bromus secaulinus*, little sea oats, was also planted on June 23, and harvest began on September 3. It was very uneven in maturing, which provided a longer harvesting and selling window, but it would not be good for machine harvest. We were still harvesting in mid-November, and never had any stems get over-mature, so an earlier planting would have been more profitable. It matured in clumps so we could harvest a whole clump at once with a scythe, which was good, but there was always a decision to make while cutting, as to whether it was mature enough or not, and that takes time. It looked very *roadsideia* to me, which some people like. The most frustrating problem was that it collected rust very early on.



PanAmerican Seed™

Katz Stock  
Matthiola



- Great accent item provides fragrance, volume and colour to bouquets and flower arrangements
- Suitable for tunnel, cool greenhouse, or outside cutflower production

Stocks are an old-time favorite that has never gone out of style. This new Stock Katz was named in memory of Mr. Philip Katz, who for many years promoted the PanAmerican Seed cut flower genetics.

This series combines all the desirable characteristics of the standard stock, such as sweet fragrance, bright and solid colours, plus an excellent full flower spike.

This full blooming spike makes it very desirable in flower arrangements, as well as in the growing bouquet business.

An excellent choice for high end flower decoration.



While it wasn't my favorite, it sold, and I would grow it again.

Grains and grasses planted this late in the season need plenty of moisture to mature into high quality plants. While I did not water these plants, they were planted in peat muck, which has lots of moisture. Planting in drier areas on the farm this later has not been as successful.

These grasses and grains required minimal postharvest handling. We had the best luck using just straight water, in freshly bleached buckets. Some grains break easily when the seed heads are heavy. I bind them in two places if they need it, but stay away from sleeves, as it might be perceived as a dried product.

When most buyers are looking at fresh grains and grasses, they're thinking "What I don't use fresh will dry." While most of it is used fresh for a very specialty look, this customer notion of dual use gives grains and grasses a value-added appeal. Grasses and grains have always been a staple for drieds, and are seldom seen at fresh wholesale markets, but they offer something different and special.

# SMALL Things Considered

Gay Smith

## Top Ten (plus one) Reasons People Buy Flowers from ASCFG Members

What qualities are valuable to customers and cultivate loyalty? What motivates people to buy *your* flowers? When I ask these questions in training sessions, answers include “freshness”, “color”, “quality”, “aesthetics” and “long-lasting”. WFFSA (Wholesale Florists and Floral Suppliers of America) conducted a blind survey to find out what retail florists valued most in the group of flower providers with which they work. Providers included farm direct, importers, wholesalers and wire service programs. Survey results were collated and ranked by provider group. When attributes were ranked in order of importance, data indicated that wholesalers exhibited the most valuable traits. This article uses the WFFSA list format, but examines it from an ASCFG perspective. Paying attention to the attributes floral buyers value is one way to secure a spot at the top of their supplier list.

### 1. Overall Satisfaction.

Satisfaction is a moving target; a fragile one, too. One slipup is all it takes to destroy carefully developed vendor status. Follow-through is an important attribute to satisfaction as is ongoing, clear communication. People like information, lots of it. Unexpected surprises rarely win customer loyalty and although the phrase may be overused in business jargon, the axiom of under-promising and over-delivering rings true.

**2. Reliability.** When customers place future orders, offer options in case the weather turns fickle and causes you to resort to Plan B. Free trade and a global flow of products have distorted the awareness of seasonality among generation X and Y. Having grown up with year-round availability of produce and flowers, they expect tulips in July and peonies in December. Offering substitutions provides flexibility against heat waves in March or a cold snap in August without losing your status as a reliable source of supply.

**3. Accuracy.** In our harried world, who doesn't value accuracy? Double check, recount, repeat credit card numbers to ensure the sequence is correct, use a calculator or computer when invoicing, and speak slowly when leaving a phone number on message machines. Accuracy saves time and demonstrates professionalism.

**4. Responsiveness.** Retail florists rank responsiveness high on their list, so make it one of your traits, too. People expect to receive information fast and have questions answered immediately. It's likely you're in the field rather than at a desk during the day, so encourage customers to communicate via email to avoid wasting time playing telephone tag. Leave details about weekly features on your phone message. Let customers know two weeks out what's coming on so they can start pushing



it. Tell them in advance when a crop is winding down. Provide color information—especially which colors are scarce—to encourage pre-orders. Ask customers to leave their order rather than promising you'll call back to get it. Set up—and update—blogs to post product photos and prices. Tell them when you'll be checking messages so they don't feel ignored.

**5. Expert Knowledge.** Who knows more about a given product than the ASCFG grower producing it?

Share your expertise! If you don't like the gushiness involved in selling, hire someone who does. Lean on suppliers for insights and information on everything from postharvest care to market trends. Sign language is important to catch people's attention. You know the FAQs, all you need to supply are the answers.

**6. Cut Flower Quality.** Quality encompasses more than just growing a beautiful product. Handling specifics play an important role in maximizing flower longevity, too. Details about variety selection, sustainable production methods, (e.g. the use of compost tea) and postharvest solutions help distinguish your line a notch above others. Share the information down the line by informing retailers and consumers alike about best practices used to maximize vase performance.

**7. Relationship.** A sharp salesperson appreciates the importance of developing relationships as part of connecting with customers. Whether it's asking about someone's new grandchild or sharing a joke, people want to connect. Building strong relationships with customers helps avoid a buyer's tactic of lumping blooms into commodity categories to drive down price.

**8. Easy to Order.** This trait takes a little finessing since most ASCFG growers don't have fulltime salespeople manning

phones. Make it easy for your customers to order by establishing grades and standards for every product line. Include consistent stem counts, indicate stem lengths and flower size per price tier on price lists to avoid answering the same questions over and over.

**9. Convenience.** This attribute is another one that's tough for ASCFG growers to compete with wholesalers since wholesalers often make two delivery runs a day so customers don't have to plan ahead or anticipate needs. One downside of just-in-time inventory is that lack of variety is boring and doesn't spark impulse sales.

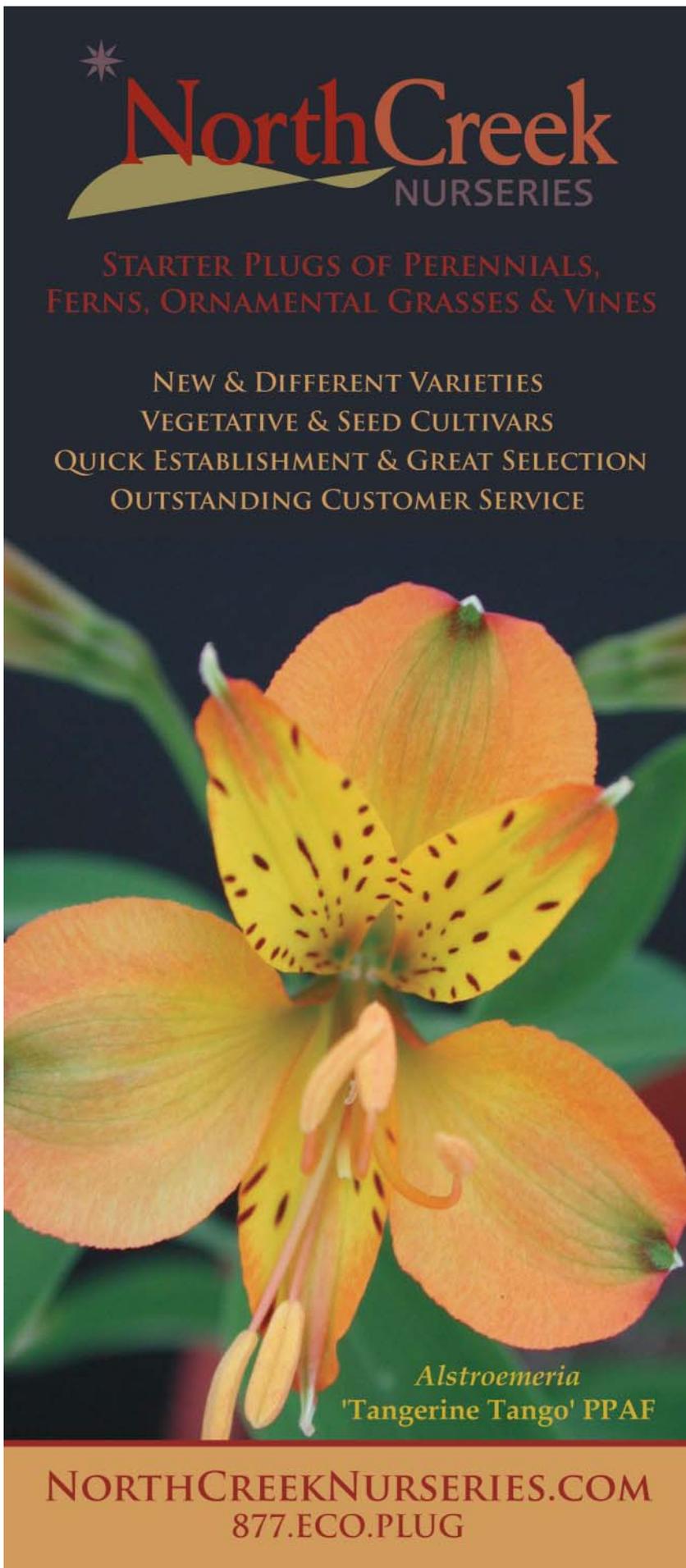
**10. Selection.** Let your van, sales table or camera do the talking in this category. Get your farm name *and* the flower's name on sleeves, stickers, invoices and price lists. Print legibly and make up names if the botanical version is too difficult. You want buyers and sellers to be able to pronounce it so they can push it in the sales call and remember it for re-orders.

**11. Cost Effective.** The prevailing interest in local food spills over to flowers. Prepare your 30-second commercial with features and benefits of your product line, when retailers push back on price. Of course, the Hail Mary of local products is the low carbon footprint due to lack of transport across the country or across continents. Buyers like choices so provide 3-tiered pricing: highest for a single bunch, medium price for 3 or more bunches and lowest price by the bucket of \_\_\_ bunches.

There's nothing new, innovative or outrageous about these traits, in fact they are qualities anyone values when dealing with a supplier. It's just that we get so involved with day to day *busy-ness*, we forget to step back to take an objective look at our *business* practices to identify areas needing improvement. As the season slows down, consider what changes are worth implementing next year to improve your standing among your customer base.

---

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



**NorthCreek**  
NURSERIES

STARTER PLUGS OF PERENNIALS,  
FERNS, ORNAMENTAL GRASSES & VINES

NEW & DIFFERENT VARIETIES  
VEGETATIVE & SEED CULTIVARS  
QUICK ESTABLISHMENT & GREAT SELECTION  
OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

*Alstroemeria*  
**'Tangerine Tango' PPAF**

**NORTHCREEKNURSERIES.COM**  
**877.ECO.PLUG**

# IPM Update

Stanton Gill

## A New Invasive Bug Attracts Attention

Back in the 70s and 80s the government decided that we needed to benefit the country by importing products from other countries. After all, we were the superpower, the great economic engine and our citizens liked buying stuff, especially cheap stuff. Big box stores flourished, providing lots of goodies from China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan that dazzled the eyes and did not cost much. Everything was wonderful because our consuming society had tons of stuff to put in its large houses and cars.

Now the party has ended and we find out that we got a bonus prize: all sorts of new, interesting bugs that came along for the ride. It is little like having a hangover after a great party. We have a huge deficit and lots of new bugs and not necessarily friendly bugs. It is hard to make money when you have bugs on your flowers.

The brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB), *Halyomorpha halys* (Stål) was introduced from Asia into the Mid-Atlantic region. This infestation is believed to have originated in Allentown, Pennsylvania in the mid 1990s. Since then, BMSB has spread to New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, and Virginia, mainly via car trunks and campers. The brown marmorated stink bug has also been detected in Mississippi, Florida, Ohio, Oregon, and California.

BMSB is a polyphagous pest whose host range includes high-value crops such as cut flowers, vegetables, tree fruits,



Bug, marmorated stink-adult on zinnia.

ornamentals, hardwood trees and cultivated crops such as soybean and sweet corn. In the region encompassing western Maryland and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, populations have steadily increased annually since first detection in 2003 and 2004, respectively. During the 2009 and 2010 growing season, serious economic injury to peach, apple, and Asian pear due to large BMSB populations was commonly detected in orchards July through October.



Bug, brown marmorated stink-nymph on snapdragon.

I have had three greenhouse operations bring in potted chrysanthemums with brown marmorated stink bug feeding on mum stems. In nurseries we found them feeding on crabapples, cultivated apples, hibiscus, and holly berries. In landscape we have reports of them feeding on basil, tomatoes and peppers, and in cut flower operations on sunflowers and zinnias. They appear to be very attracted to sunflower florets.

Some commercial growers have used increasing numbers of pyrethroid applications, a class of insecticides found to be effective against BMSB. The trouble is that the insects attack fruit and vegetables just about harvest time. This means a very short time before the consumer will be handling the treated product.

In addition to the agricultural threat posed by BMSB, this invasive species is also emerging as a serious nuisance pest for homeowners and business. In the fall, BMSB adults move from host plants and seek overwintering sites, particularly in homes and other buildings. During this behavioral shift, profound numbers of adults will move toward and aggregate on the outside of structures and eventually seek entry within. Local newspapers and television stations in mid-Atlantic states have reported on this summer/fall aggregation behavior, highlighting the problems for homeowners. After entry into overwintering sites, BMSB



Please contact Stanton Gill at [Sgill@umd.edu](mailto:Sgill@umd.edu) if you are finding the brown marmorated stink bug feeding on cut flower species. We are trying to develop a list of preferred host plants at this point and your help will be greatly appreciated.

will often be found aggregating in large numbers in small confined spaces such as behind bookshelves, beneath mattresses, inside filters of window-mounted AC units within homes or between layers of stacked building materials in garages. This highlights the societal impact imposed by this pest and the need to address homeowner and grower concerns. This is a new pest for all of entomology and there is much to learn before we can provide really good control techniques.

We know that they are attracted to artificial lights at night and cluster near sodium vapor lights high in the red spectrum. I am working with Maryland growers to set up trials with traps that use black and white emitting lights with different hues to see if we can develop an effective trap. We have just started this project in early September so we don't have anything to report yet.

Meanwhile, pyrethroids do kill them but many beneficial organisms as well. We must continue the research efforts and find a control that has less impact on the environment.

*Stanton Gill is Extension Specialist for the University of Maryland Extension and Professor of Landscape Technology at Montgomery College.*

*Contact him at [sgill@umd.edu](mailto:sgill@umd.edu)*

*Photos by Suzanne Klick*



# Exciting Lilies for Cuts

from  
*Gloeckner*



Shocking



Pico

Gloeckner has a rich history in lilies. Shocking has a unique blend of colors. Buttercup yellow with a deep red center makes this OT hybrid lily a most distinctive and versatile flower. Each flower is huge and very long lasting. Grows 38-42" tall and displays 3-4 flowers from a 14/16 cm bulb. Bulbs planted in January will be ready for market in about 13 weeks. Pico brings back a lost color to the Oriental lily division- a rich plum red color with enormous flowers. Grows 40-42" tall and displays 3-5 flowers from a 14/16 cm bulb. Bulbs planted in January will be ready for market in about 15 weeks. Pico was the #1 variety selected by the commercial trade at the first Lilytopia flower show held at Longwood Gardens in May 2010. Contact us now to place your order.

## Fred C. Gloeckner & Co., Inc.

600 Mamaroneck Ave. Harrison, New York 10528  
Phone: 800.345.3787 Fax: 914.698.0848  
[info@fredgloeckner.com](mailto:info@fredgloeckner.com) [www.fredgloeckner.com](http://www.fredgloeckner.com)

# GROWER GRANT *Research Results*

This grant was supported by the ASCFG Research Fund.

To see how you can apply for an ASCFG Grower Grant, go to [www.ascfg.org](http://www.ascfg.org) and click on Research Activities.

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

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

Proposal funded December, 2008

Report submitted September, 2010

My original objective with this project was to explore possibilities for using compost heat to boost soil temperatures in an unheated hoophouse, and to study whether I could increase yields, improve crop quality and hasten spring harvest dates for a number of floral crops.

In a nutshell, the answer for some crops is yes, yes and yes. However, the amount of labor output required to get results by far cancelled out any economic gains I may have achieved with this experiment. I would not recommend any farm to repeat my steps, but some interesting results were achieved.

### *Materials and Methods*

After much trial and error, I discovered that an eight-and-a-half yard compost pile was necessary for the project. Each new pile, built from fish scrap, farm debris and sawdust, regularly heated to a temperature of 160F, and would hold above 130 degrees for 2-3 weeks before requiring a turning. At the time of constructing each pile, I would snake 250 feet of hot water hose through the pile, being careful to maintain an uninterrupted area of approximately 2½' X 5' X 3' where the pile could keep its core heat.

Powered by a 2.2 amp/270 watt in-line pond pump, water circulated through the hot water hose where it would pick up heat from the compost pile, exiting the pile at an average temperature of 85 degrees. The heated water would then disperse through a network of ½" pvc piping buried 1½" below soil surface and

running 1' apart, parallel in the study area. Finally the water would return at a trickle to a 50 gallon insulated rain barrel where it would again recirculate. Rate of flow was .665 gpm.

Again through trial and error, I learned to run the system just ten hours each day so that the pile could recover its lost heat. I chose to start running the system during the early morning hours of each day, figuring that plants might best benefit from soil heat during daylight hours. The only exception to this pattern was during two periods of arctic weather when I ran the system at night instead to protect the crops and keep my system from freezing up.

It was difficult to measure soil temperature with the simple thermometers that I had, but on average I observed a temperature difference while the system was running of 2-3 degrees throughout the duration of my trials.

A 300 square foot area was planted with eight trial crops. Adjacent to that, a control area of equal size was planted with the same crop schedule, but the soil was not heated.

Crops trialed were campanula Champion series (seeded early August and transplanted into study area 10/15/09), ranunculus 'Gigi White' (presoaked and planted 11/27/09), stock 'Cheerful Yellow' and 'Cheerful Midseason Yellow' (seeded late November and transplanted 1/13/10), godetia 'Grace Salmon' (seeded late November and transplanted 1/13/10), sweet pea Winter Elegance Mix (seeded 11/13/10 and transplanted 12/25/10), lupine assorted varieties (seeded early August and transplanted into hoop 9/2/09), and anemone 'Galilee White' (presoaked and planted 12/12/09).

Trials received soil heat from 11/8/09 to 3/6/10, a period of four months. In addition, both the trial and the control areas received daylight interruption via fluorescent shop lights from 4:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. each day.

### *Results*

My results varied hugely with different crops. When the first arctic weather of the year hit in early December, air temperatures in the hoop plummeted to 15 degrees. I lost all ranunculus during that event. I harvested the first anemones from the trial bed on 2/20/10 and that crop came into production two weeks ahead of the control. There was no discernable difference in yield or crop quality on the anemones.

The stock and godetia crops in both areas performed the same. There were no differences in harvest time, yield or crop quality. Stock bloomed from mid April to mid May. The godetia came on a little later than the stock and bloomed into June. Sweet peas in the trial area came into production two weeks sooner (first bloom on 3/30/10) than the control (first bloom 4/12/10), with no difference in crop quality or overall yield. The lupine crop got every kind of mildew and languished in both the trial and control areas, eventually offering up a few blooms at exactly the same time as our field crop lupines started producing.

The Champion campanula provided my most startling results. First stems of white and blue were harvested from the heated area on 4/12/10 with an average main stem height of 25-1/2". Side stems had an average height of 23". First stems of white and blue were harvested from

the control area one week later with an average main stem height of 20". Side branches from the plants in the control area were minimal and too short to bunch and sell for premium price. Because we could harvest and sell almost every side branch, we achieved at least four times the salable yield from the plants in the area with heated soil and it was a far superior crop. Of note: the campanula was the earliest crop planted besides lupine.

### Conclusions

All told, I made over forty yards of compost for this experiment. Because flexible hose was snaked through the pile, I had to build and unbuild each pile by hand, a total of ten hours for each cycle. Benefits: a totally buff body in the winter, lots of great, high quality compost to spread around the farm and a few square feet of top quality campanula.

Costs: about 100 hours of labor to set up the system and make enough compost to keep it running.

I learned that just a few degrees difference in soil temperature can cause dramatic changes in plant behavior. In order to achieve economic success heating soil with compost, a more efficient method of extraction would need to be engineered.



The recirculating system



An eight-and-a-half yard pile in the making



3/17/10 Campanula Champion series - heated soil



3/17/10 Campanula Champion series -control

When I wrote for this grant, my goal was to create a farm-friendly system for harnessing compost heat. My work has been read with interest by at least one engineering firm seeking ways to collaborate with the agricultural sector. Below are excerpts from correspondence with Donald R Flett, P.E., Flett Associates, Environmental Engineers and Scientists, Toms River, New Jersey.

I heard about your research efforts on line at the Specialty Flowers web site. Your report is very interesting and helpful in my design of small, community based, decentralized wastewater management systems.

The three goals of my small decentralized wastewater management systems are: environmental, economic and energy neutrality. I call it the "E3 Principal". In other words, the system should have no negative environmental effects, use no fossil fuel derived energy and must economically cost the tax payers nothing (seriously). Melding my wastewater treatment and disposal system with community based agricultural activity allows me to effectively start approaching these ambitious, but logical, goals.

The biosolids from our wastewater facility can be composted to produce heat for young plants, and as a soil improving amendment. We also plan to use anaerobic digestion of organic materials to produce biogas. This biogas can fire a combined heat and power (CHP) unit to produce electric and heat energy. We can provide CO2 from this unit for growing operations. We will use the captured exhaust heat for winter heating and summer cold storage (by means of absorption chiller).

There are many other collaborative activities and more are being developed all the time. I believe you are making a useful contribution to this effort.

# Growers' School

- 6:00 a.m.      **Buses depart hotel**
- 7:15 a.m.      **Buses arrive Bear Creek Farm, Stillwater**
- 7:30 a.m.      **Welcome and Introductions**  
*Vicki Stamback, Bear Creek Farm*
- 7:45 -8:45      **Seed Germination and Growing On**  
*Todd Cavins, Sun-Gro Horticulture, Stillwater*
- 8:45-9:15      **Succession Planting**  
*John Dole, North Carolina State University*
- 9:15-9:30      **Break**
- 9:30-10:45     **Insect and Disease Control**  
*Eric Rebek and Tom Royer, Oklahoma State University*
- 10:45           **Buses depart for lunch, Hideaway Pizza, Stillwater**
- 12:00           **Buses return to Bear Creek Farm**
- 12:15-1:30     **Infrastructure and Greenhouse Options**  
*Steve Upson, The Noble Foundation, Ardmore*
- 1:30-2:30      **Postharvest Handling**  
*John Dole, NCSU, and Gay Smith, Chrysal USA*
- 2:30-2:45      **Break**
- 2:45-3:45      **Marketing Before You Grow**  
*Lynn Byczynski, Growing for Market, Lawrence, Kansas*
- 3:45-4:15      **Effective and Profitable Recordkeeping**  
*Holly Pasmore, Bear Creek Farm*
- 4:15-5:00      **Tour of Bear Creek Farm**  
*Vicki Stamback, Bear Creek Farm*
- 5:00 p.m.      **Buses depart Bear Creek Farm**



# Tour

If you haven't visited Vicki Stamback's Bear Creek Farm in Stillwater, you're in for a treat. Vicki grows cut flowers virtually year round. Her major field crops are sunflowers, celosia and zinnia, while her five greenhouses produce ranunculus, freesia, anemones and sweet peas; more than 100 different cut flowers are grown. Cut poinsettia stems are an important holiday crop.



# Auctions

The ASCFG Research Foundation needs contributions from growers like you, to support researchers like John Dole, Chris Wien and Stanton Gill. Without their important work on postharvest handling techniques, high tunnel cut flower production, and integrated pest management practices, you would be working a lot harder than you already are.



Please bring donations for the Silent Auction: caps or shirts with your farm's logo, gift baskets filled with local delicacies, artwork, or unusual plants. Be prepared to outbid other conference attendees for the big prizes at the Live Auction; you never know what might pop up!



# Lessons Learned

Join the group Monday night for "Lessons Learned", an informal exchange of experiences, ideas, and "If I'd only know then..." topics. It doesn't matter if you've been a flower farmer for ten years or two months; anyone can participate, and everyone is welcome.



# Trade Show

Visit us:

Abbott-Ipco  
American Plant Products & Services  
A-Roo Company  
ATTRA  
Ball Horticultural Company  
Ball Tagawa  
Chrysal USA  
Ednie Flower Bulb  
Fred C. Gloeckner & Co.

GeoSeed  
Gro 'n Sell  
Growing for Market  
Harris Seeds  
Hortica  
King's Mums  
Lacebark  
PanAmerican Seed  
Syngenta Flowers  
Zabo Plant



**Registration Form**

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Information:**  
 Please bill my: Visa  MC  Check enclosed   
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers, or ASCFG.*  
**Cancellation policy:** A full refund will be paid if cancellation is received prior to October 1, 2010; one-half refunded prior to October 15; after October 15, 2010 no refund can be made. No exceptions.

**Note:** Spouse/partner or two company members of ASCFG member welcome at member rate. This does not mean "two for the price of one"; it means additional attendees pay the same price as the first person. Student registration available to those currently enrolled in a certified horticulture or floral design program. See discounted price below.

**Questions**  
 or  
**register by phone**  
 (440) 774-2887  
 ascfg@oberlin.net

Indicate the appropriate registration fee in boxes below		TOTAL per person
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	
Growers' School Monday, November 8 Register by October 1. Limited to 85 \$150 Member, \$175 Non-member	Workshop QuickBooks and Online Marketing Monday, November 8 \$50	
Workshop Wonderful Weddings Monday, November 8 \$25	Workshop Improve Your Marketing Potential Monday, November 8 \$25	
Full Conference Registration Tuesday-Wednesday November 9-10 Sessions, Trade Show, Banquet, and Tour \$395 Member before 10/1/10 \$520 Non-member before 10/1/10 \$440 Member after 10/1/10 \$595 Non-member after 10/1/10 \$100 Student	Tuesday Only November 9 Includes Banquet \$350 Member before \$450 Non-member	
Tour Only Wednesday, November 10 \$100 Member \$130 Non-member	Additional Banquet Ticket Tuesday, November 9 \$55 Member, \$75 Non-member	
	I'd like to join the ASCFG today!	\$175
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b>		

All Attendees - Please indicate number attending banquet \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian total \_\_\_\_\_

Return your payment and registration form to ASCFG: MPO Box 268 • Oberlin, Ohio 44074-0268 • fax (440) 774-2435

**Request a Free Catalog • Commercial Prices**

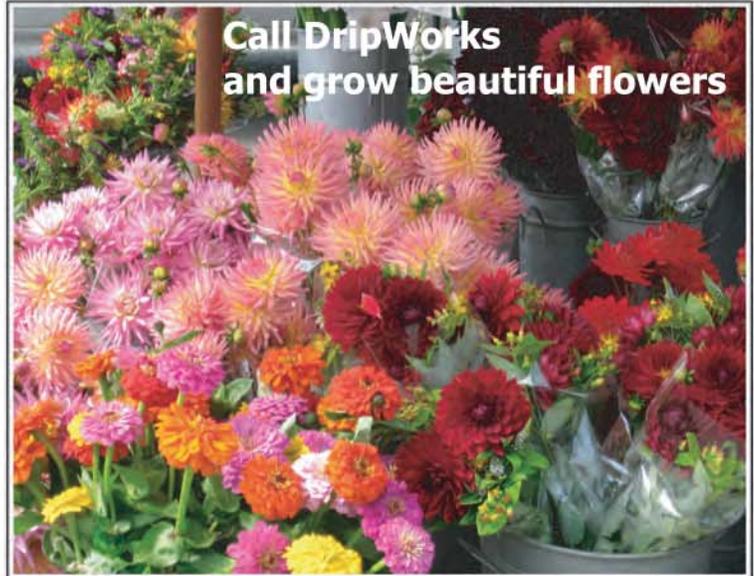
**Wholesale Nurseries  
Flower Farmers  
Garden Centers**

# **DripWorks.com**

*Quality Drip Irrigation Supplies*



**WELCOME 2010  
ASCFG CONFERENCE  
ATTENDEES!**



**Call DripWorks  
and grow beautiful flowers**



**Greenhouse Irrigation**



**Extend the season with  
Agribon Row Cover**

**Use our Free Design Service**

**Call 800/522-3747  
and request a commercial catalog**

**Helping Professionals  
with Drip Irrigation**

**SINCE  
1992**

# REGIONAL *Reports*



## **NORTHEAST**

*Polly Hutchison*

Robin Hollow Farm

polly@robinhollowfarm.com



## **MID-ATLANTIC**

*Andrea Gagnon*

LynnVale Studios

andrea@lynnvale.com

### It's Been a Blast

I really can't describe how much being an ASCFG Regional Director has meant to me over the last three years. I have traveled far and wide (BWI airport hotel anyone?) and laughed so hard. I have stayed up late talking farm issues and made fast friends in the process. And of course, I have made immeasurable improvements to my business through those little tweaks and big investments based on advice from fellow growers.

Thank you all for allowing me the privilege of being your Regional Director. We had a good National Conference last year in beautiful eastern Long Island, and many of you helped to make it a success. This summer's Regional Meeting in Ithaca (thank you AGAIN Chris and Alison and Audrey) was just over-the-top perfect, and a happy way to finish out my term.

Now, on to the future. Tulsa looks great, and I hope many of you will be there this November. Vicki has hustled some of the great South-Central talent together for a jam-packed two or three days, and I think all three are worth the trip! I can't wait to see it all, and to see where the Midwest starts to become the West in the Tulsa area.

My future is definitely in flower farming. Many of us in the Northeast have had a phenomenal growing season, and the heat-loving crops have been amazing, especially after last year's anemic weather. I am seeing farmers' markets on an upward climb, and consumer interest in "different" kinds of flowers ("We prefer 'specialty', my dear.") is really strong. I just love hearing them tell me they've never seen the flowers I grow before. My answer is "That's what we do!"

Thanks for being specialty cut flower growers, because I wouldn't want to hang with any other crowd.

### One for the Record Books!

Well, I thought I was prepared for extremes in the Mid-Atlantic. I was wrong. Following strong spring sales, we hoped for a season of recovery, and then there was June. Record high temps and little rain led to crop failures and weak attendance at markets, hence poor sales. Surely this couldn't continue?

Then July and August; for 6 weeks we attended afternoon markets with 100+ heat indices. In times of stress I did what I always do when faced with growing challenges, peruse the ASCFG Bulletin Board in the cool morning hours.

It seemed futile to post "How do you keep your flowers from wilting at market when it's 103?" or "What do you do when your customers faint from heat exhaustion?" messages. Page after page, post after post, I continued to marvel at our greatest resource as ASCFG members, our willingness to share our knowledge—good/bad/indifferent—above all else.

The light bulb went on several weeks ago, when I was searching for any help I could find regarding dahlia production in our area. Most of my Karma dahlia production (particularly 'Naomi' and 'Prospero') which had been purchased early, bumped up, planted out well rooted and irrigated, had stunted in the heat, been attacked by corn worms and an ever-increasing explosion of mites. I needed help fast and not of the virtual variety. I reached out to one of our members - Don Dramstad of Don's Dahlias in Leesburg, Virginia.

Several years ago I visited Don's garden (approximately 30 minutes north of us) and marveled at the exquisite dahlia jungle he had created under shade cloth here in Virginia. Growing for exhibition and sale, it was a dahlia lover's paradise. Like us, he too was experiencing heat-related dahlia challenges.

After my distressed phone call, he rode in around 6:00 the next morning like a knight in a shiny pickup truck, prepared to share his expertise AND small amounts of the latest/most effective miticides to control our problem, along with his recommended application schedule. Cutting down the worst affected dahlias, fertilizing and implementing Don's pest plan

we have successfully staved off crop failure and are now seeing beautiful results. Around our region - here is our Mid-Atlantic dahlia report:

Bob Wollam - Record success with 9,000 dahlias in bloom, planted early, propagated from cuttings and tubers. The first dahlia festival drew 1,000 visitors over two weekends to Wollam Gardens in late August. Reporting little to no pest and disease pressure, Bob attributes his success to planting early and a regular and consistent watering schedule. He does report reduced size of plants due to heat.

Becky Devlin - Celebrating success this year due to her consistent use of Surround as a pest deterrent and protection from heat stress/sunburn damage, applied weekly and/or after rains Becky says that although it coated the foliage, there was little evidence on blooms and it did a great job of keeping pests at bay up to harvest.

Barbara Lamborne - Grows exclusively Karmas and has seen reduced production and stunting of certain varieties, specifically 'Naomi' and 'Prospero'. Next year she plans to augment her production with Karma tuber and perhaps new tuber varieties.

Mel Heath - After planting 750-800 Karma plugs, at the time I write he has zero dahlia production; observing severe stunting, burning and insufficient growth for any quality commercial production, all plants were removed completely in late August. Mel suspects sustained extreme heat was chief reason for decline.

I could not have asked for a more fitting end to my term as Regional Director. It has been a true pleasure. Thank you to all those members who, like Don, give selflessly of their expertise and support toward the greater goal of becoming better growers, better businessmen/women and just plain better people. I look forward to serving as Treasurer and hope for a great National Conference here next year!



## SOUTHEAST

*Susan Wright*

Shady Grove Gardens & Nursery

sggarden@skybest.com

This will be my last Regional Report and I want to thank everyone for giving me this opportunity, it's been a pleasure to be on the Board. Traveling to board meetings was a nice change from the day to day grind of a challenging farm and isolation. I would encourage others to consider running for office, it's a great way to get to know the organization.

I hope to see you all in Oklahoma, in addition I have great hopes of a very late season Regional Meeting here in the Southeast, so keep on the lookout for that information.



Weddings have become a big part of our business. I believe we would have regular jobs by now if it weren't for weddings. This year we are offering bucketfuls of petals to our brides. Being the cheap farmers that we are, we quickly adapted to making the buckets up at the end of our Saturday market. Chopping up great unsold flowers is sad but it's been a huge hit with brides after we posted photos on my blog <http://shady-grove-gardens.blogspot.com/2010/07/lesley-and-peters-wedding-july-24th.html>. We charge \$30 per bucket and it includes mixed colors of petals and whole flowers. Most brides buy 4 buckets along with bouquets and arrangements.

Another outlet just developing is funeral and memorial services. ASCFG members are a great source during the growing season for more non-traditional flowers for the non-traditional service.

I've put together a few last bits of reference material and sites I like. I hope you will enjoy poring through the information during the winter as much as I do. These are sources for mostly flower arranging information.

For good, bad and out of fashion videos, try these sources:

- YouTube - most of these are home videos but some are from well-known gurus of the flower world.
- iTunes - free podcasts on gardening, some farming and flower arranging as well as apps. Check out the university section. Most everything is free or 99 cents.
- Netflix - Martha Stewart - young and old - videos live here. Some are boring details about tablecloths, but also lots of clips from the Martha show with floral designers. You'll need a subscription. Lots of higher quality flower arranging how-to.
- *Florists' Review* - one of the best florist magazines offers many free videos right on its website <http://www.floristsreview.com/main/>

Every wedding site has hundreds of photos of weddings. Here are some good ways to keep up with the magazines and the trends.

- <http://www.marthastewartweddings.com/>
- <http://www.weddingwire.com/>
- <http://wedding.theknot.com/wedding-pictures.aspx>
- <http://www.weddingmagazine.co.uk/galleries/1/flowers.html>
- <http://www.thebrideandbloom.com/>

Photo sharing websites have hundreds of groups devoted to weddings of all types. I use [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) (a Yahoo product). You can develop contacts or join groups to follow new photo additions. Last year I started a group called 'Real Weddings with Locally Grown Flowers' <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1158716@N21/> Anyone can join but we have mostly ASCFG members, and one florist that buys from our members. Check this out and add your photos to the current 265 items.

Many florists, event planners and photographers use blogs to promote their work. Try a Google search for blogs of interest to you. If you don't have a blog to promote your business, now's the time to start one - it's easy. Try Google's [blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com).

- <http://www.sprout-flowers.com> A florist with great topics.
- <http://growingideas.johnnyseeds.com> Farming and gardening.
- <http://shady-grove-gardens.blogspot.com> My blog with photos.

Check out these ASCFG member websites:

- <http://www.starvalleyflowers.com/gallery2.html>
- <http://www.da-sh.com/index.aspx>
- <http://auntwillieswildflowers.com/>
- <http://www.floretflowers.com/>
- <http://www.cuttinggarden.com/weddings.html>
- <http://www.flowersbulbs.com/>
- <http://www.liliesandlavender.com/>
- <http://web.mac.com/theafolls/follsflowers/Welcome.html>



**MIDWEST**  
**Quinton Tschetter**  
 Tschetter's Flowers  
[qct@mahaska.org](mailto:qct@mahaska.org)

Summer 2010! How shall she be remembered? I suppose it depends on what part of the summer and what part of the country you are talking about but here in Iowa, it will be remembered for record rains and record flood levels.

The high point of the summer was the Regional Meeting at Blooming of Beloit in Wisconsin. Shlomo Danieli invited us to his farm and gave a very good group of us a tour of the farm and a very informative, interesting presentation. He discussed the processes that he went through in developing the farm, his business model and his plans for the farm. Thank you Shlomo for a terrific experience.

The summer began with an almost boring weather and temperature pattern. We had a cold spring but in the middle of it we had a couple really warm days that triggered the "Let's get growing." instinct in many of our plants. We even had peonies in the unheated hoop house by Mothers Day. We thought that we were off to the start of a record year. Well, someone

said, "Let it rain." And rain it did. In a three-day period in June, we recorded over 12 inches, and in August we had a 7-inch rain in a couple hours that closed our highway for several weeks. Can you say "Water in the basements.?" On top of that, the sun forgot to shine on us for an extended time.

There were several unpleasant results from this combination of too much water and not enough sunlight and warmth. One was that crops that do not appreciate being overwatered, simply went stagnant. The celosia that we planted outdoors was so poor that we just tilled it under. For a three-week period, the ground was so wet that we were not able to plant any seeds. That meant that we didn't have any sunflowers for an extended period. However, the grasses, zinnias, and several other crops thrived. Thankfully, we have 6 hoop houses that saved our operation. Another result was that, with all that moisture and coolness, we had a bumper crop of botrytis. We don't have enough room to put all of our crated lilies indoors, so those that were outdoors were lost, even with spraying.

One very important lesson that stands out in my mind is the need for being diversified. What saved us was the fact that we had a good variety of plants in the hoop houses and they flourished this year. However, that does give us a limited supply of cut flowers. Therefore, we were forced to drop deliveries to the florists near the end of July which cut our revenue stream almost in half. The upside was that I had a lot more time to work on the farm. On the other hand, the Des Moines Farmers' Market was having a great year, in fact we were having our best year there. The market has had attendance in the 20 to 30 thousand customers on good Saturdays. It also helps that we are the only vendor who only sells cut flowers. We have many loyal customers who tell us that we are the only reason that they come to the market.

We are making plans for next year and part of that planning is to streamline our operation and perhaps cut back on some parts of it. That is going to be a tough decision and one that is going to take a lot of thought and planning. Part of what makes the decision so difficult is that we have two very successful legs of the operation: the fabulous Farmers' Market and our 45 florists, many of whom depend on us for unique flowers and grasses to enhance their bouquets.

We are planning on converting our lily shade houses into regular hoop houses (and moving them to higher ground) to give us more indoor room for lilies. We are convinced that Dave Dowling was right about raising them indoors in crates, but some of us have to learn for ourselves. The project of moving the hoop houses means that they have to be dismantled, moved and then erected again. The goal is to give us more covered space for the lilies.

Bottom line is that we have lived with the motto "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." So I would encourage any of you who might be having a rough year to hang in there. Plant more, and different things. Experiment with new things, search for new information and knowledge to help you grow and grow and grow.



## SOUTH-CENTRAL

*Josie Crowson*

Josie's Fresh Flowers  
josie@josiesfreshflowers.com

Smart florists are getting the message that “local” is a great selling point, and that “local” emphasis is paying good dividends for some of our members. Cynthia Alexander (The Quarry Flower Farm), for example, has formed an alliance with a local florist in her town of Celina, Texas. Her florist promotes “local Celina flowers” especially for local civic events, teacher bouquets and charity events. Cynthia says this promotion has really boosted her sales this season. Rita Anders (Cuts of Color) also benefits from a local “green” florist, who loves her organic flowers, often ordering several times a week. This florist also featured Rita’s flowers at a big event-planning show, giving her exposure to many more prospective customers. Both Cynthia and Rita plan to work with these florists on weddings and other events next year. Cynthia gets inquiries for local wedding flowers from brides all over the Dallas area, but she doesn’t want to take on that wedding work all by herself. Her florist has agreed to coordinate the planning and make the designs, while Cynthia furnishes her beautiful flowers. Sounds perfect! Rita has a similar arrangement with her “green” florist, who will be working with her on events and weddings next year.

Here in Nacogdoches, it’s our historic downtown hotel that is showing real appreciation for local flowers. The new owner, a hometown girl with lots of imagination, has turned this rather outdated facility into a new hotspot, complete with comedy nights, jazz on the patio and a terrific new chef. She also believes in supporting local businesses including local farms and has instructed her staff to buy my flowers! The hotel has been a regular customer this year. What’s more, the hotel’s creative designer is enthusiastic about unusual flowers and foliage, and knows what to do with them. It was a thrill to walk into the hotel to make a delivery and see a huge spectacular arrangement of my pineapple lilies and ‘Limelight’ hydrangeas. If you come to Nacogdoches, be sure to stay at the Hotel Fredonia.

I learn a lot from talking with our growers. This month I learned that I give up on lilies too early in the season. After a few failures, I stopped planting lilies in the summer, thinking

that they just can’t take the Texas heat. So I was surprised to learn that some of our Texas growers are having good success with lilies even during the 100+degree days of August. Kim Haven (Billabong Fresh Flower Farm), for example, plants lilies in crates all through August, expecting blooms in October and November. She puts her crates on top of mulch and under 60 percent shade cloth. Her most recent plantings were two Asiatics, ‘Loreto’ and ‘Blackout’. Rita Anders also plants lilies in crates under shade cloth all through August, and has good luck with them. Rita gets recommendations from Ron Beck, Gloeckner’s bulb manager, for varieties that can handle the heat. Her recent plantings include ‘Brunello’ (Asiatic), ‘Menorca’ and ‘Sulpice’ (LA hybrids). Rita plants her bulbs in mushroom compost, adds a light layer of potting medium and tops it off with more mushroom compost. After that, she never adds fertilizer and the lilies turn out beautifully. Rita uses another trick to spread out her bloom period: when she receives her bulbs, she plants them all in crates, then puts some crates outside and some in the cooler at 40 degrees. After the lilies in the cooler begin to emerge, she moves them outside. Since these lilies bloom a bit later than the first batch, she has blooms for a longer period of time.

One thing you can say about most flower growers—we certainly have fluid business models. We are always ready to try a new product or marketing technique. Over time, we may shift our focus from florists to farmers’ markets to event work and back. We are all trying to find the right mix for our particular market, stage in life, current interests, etc. Thus we see Kim Haven, Cynthia Alexander and Rita Anders all moving into more wedding and event work, in addition to their florist and farmers’ market emphasis.

My business also has shifted some this year, mainly because my bucket subscriptions became a much larger share—I had 30 subscribers this year, many of whom signed up for 12 weeks. Thinking that bucket subscribers should be good candidates for a floral design workshop, I decided to give this a try. A recent renovation to a mobile home on our farm gave me a perfect spot to hold a workshop, but, unlike some of our growers, I’m not ready to teach floral design. I found a good instructor: Michael Maurer, horticulture professor and floral design instructor at SFASU (and a new ASCFG member). Because this was a trial workshop, I limited attendance to just 10 people. Some who signed up were bucket subscribers as I expected, but others were farmers’ market or new customers. For a fee of just \$50 (too low, I know), participants



got a two-hour basic design class, a bucket of flowers and two containers. Michael demonstrated several designs and helped attendees as needed, and everyone seemed to have lots of fun. I'm hoping to hold more workshops next year, perhaps with a variety of instructors and topics. With the right fee structure, they could be a new moneymaker and a great way to get rid of surplus flowers too.



## WEST

**Christof Bernau**

UCSC Center for Agroecology  
christof@ucsc.edu

Greetings from the cool environs of coastal California. As you may well know, California is the land of microclimates and what holds true for growers close to the coast may be entirely untrue for folks just 15-20 miles inland. The state of California, roughly 750 miles long from north to south, and 200 miles wide from west to east, has an incredibly variable geography and range of climate patterns that affect each of us as growers quite differently. While the rest of the country and interior California swooned and wilted under the extreme heat that was rampant this summer, the foggy coast of California rarely saw full days of sunshine or temperatures above 65 degrees. Cool days turned into weeks without the blessing of warm sunny days. When the grip of the fog was occasionally broken, we were treated to brief forays into the 90s, making for rather abrupt and shocking transitions for plants and growers alike.

All of this translated into a season of long flower stems and good blossom color as our plants stretched for what little sunlight was available, and were able to maintain vibrant flower color because they were rarely washed out by exposure to days of intense light conditions. For growers in our area, this has also meant that many crops have had relatively long cutting periods, as well as more overlap in the bloom window of succession plantings. However, lacking the strong stimulation from the sun, almost across the board, coastal growers are reporting decreased plant productivity and higher incidence of disease. Particularly in the disease realm, we have seen far greater presence of mildew on crops such as larkspur, calendula, dahlias and zinnias, along with rust finding its way onto field-grown snapdragons much earlier in the "summer" than we would normally expect. As is often the case, ecology has a complex and region specific way of playing out, with benefits such as longer stems, better colors and longer cutting windows, contrasted with the challenges of increased disease pressure and lower stand productivity for the species that usually grace us with multiple cuttings.

In speaking with several growers across the region, I've found that sales of basic crops like dahlias, zinnias, asters, snapdragons, sunflowers, gladiolas, stock and mixed bouquets have been steady this season, with direct market retail customers not showing significant signs that they are cutting back on flowers as a result of the down economy. However, many growers report that their sales of specialty crops like tuberose, lilies and dwarf/colored callas are slightly down for 2010. Perhaps consumers are trying to save a little bit of money, but are still showing their love of flowers by prioritizing less expensive selections. Given the long vase life of the above mentioned specialty crops, perhaps we as growers just need to work more on consumer education so that people know they are really getting tremendous value along with distinctive beauty and fragrance from some of the more unique items we grow.



## NORTHWEST

**Diane Szukovathy**

Jello Mold Farm  
diane@jellomoldfarm.com

It's been a challenging growing year here in Mount Vernon, and not for the reasons one would expect. I generally keep mum on weather complaints in mixed ASCFG company because Pacific Northwest weather is blessedly free of hurricanes, tornadoes, extreme heat and softball-sized hail. There's not much drama in slow atrophy from lack of heat and sun, watching the peonies rot in June, the basil stunt (in the hoop house!) in July, or reading the words "persistent saggy trough" in the NOAA weather forecast discussion for late August. There's not much "Eureka!" in it, more like watching a slug cross the road.

There, I did it: a full-on complaint.

Okay, the weather has presented its challenges, mostly that everyone wants orange dahlias to make up for the lack of sun and we can't possibly supply the demand. That has truly been our challenge for 2010.

Over the past three years our reputation for having fresh and beautiful flowers, foliage, pods, etc. has spread through the Seattle area. Over and over we hear from our florist customers that it is very difficult to obtain quality and interesting local product. To prove their point, they will drive across town to meet our delivery truck or shop from our farmers' market booth, maybe just to buy \$50 worth of items to set their work apart; usually to buy a whole lot more. Some speak wistfully about the materials that Portland, San Francisco and L.A. designers have to work with. A few other small local farms besides ours supply Seattle with quality local product, but there is not a large volume, no organized distribution system and only scattered awareness among potential customers.

I have puzzled about this vacuum of supply for a while. Seattle is known for being progressive, environmentally aware and artsy. Across the board “sustainability” and “buy local” are big movements here. The city is full of florists, event planners and grocery stores. Certainly the demand exists. Among the two major wholesale flower outlets and a few smaller ones as well, none have seen fit to partner with and support local growers. Instead, Seattle’s wholesalers continue with a forty-year habit of buying almost exclusively from the world’s second largest flower auction in Vancouver, B.C. In a way it makes sense for them. Two hours’ drive, a one-stop shop, and duty free to boot.

Nothing wrong with that, except that variety and local supply are not made available to their customers who are hungry for it. And in 2010, it seems a little ridiculous for a major U.S. city to be served almost exclusively by imported product, especially cut flowers, whose freshness is the ultimate currency.

During this June’s Northwest Regional Meeting at Charles Little & Company in Eugene, a number of Washington and Oregon growers gathered for an informal roundtable discussion. Among growers who’ve been at it a while, the term “cracking Seattle” came up, as in the sales potential exists, but not a distribution system. Many of the Oregon growers sell at Portland’s wholesale flower market, which is a growers’ cooperative. Seattle just doesn’t have anything like that. Yet.

It became apparent at the meeting discussion that if some of Oregon’s medium-sized growers - who produce enough product to supply a market - could team up with Washington’s growers and invite Idaho and Alaska to join us, we could “crack Seattle” in a big way. After the meeting, we all diverged to our farms, many of us to the busiest part of our growing year. And I just couldn’t stop thinking about the potential of these ideas.

In followup conversations with some of the growers who were present at the meeting, it was discussed that it would be wonderful to have a low overhead setup so we can start selling next spring, some type of wholesale farmers’ market. Ideally we can segue from this platform to a more permanent warehouse type setting for 2012. Perhaps we can take advantage of the internet to collectively market our products. We want to be a quality professional wholesale outlet, selling top-notch local product, from a variety of ASCFG producers. Ideally we can do this and still maintain individual farm identities so customers can put a face to the flowers they are buying.

When Dennis and I run these ideas by our Seattle florist customers, they literally jump up and down with excitement. I see unplowed ground and a lot of potential. We would personally benefit by helping to grow a vibrant local industry and helping our customers get more of what they want, when they want it. Saving time is so important in this business, especially for small and medium growers.

Speaking personally, I would love to spend more time on the farm growing, less time at the computer or on the road selling product. The potential is huge and the winter months loom ripe for the planning.

**A Gallery of Genetic Masterpieces**

**Aster**  
Matsumoto • Serenade

**Lisianthus**  
Mariachi® • Excalibur • Rosita

**Sunflower**  
Sunbright • Sunbright Supreme

**Stock**  
Vivas • Cheerful • Quartet

**Campanula**  
Champion

Contact your distributor for over 130 varieties of genetic brilliance.

 **SAKATA**  
www.sakata.com



**DAHLIA TUBERS**

Large selection for cutflower production



Ph: 269-673-8714  
www.bannerflowerfarm.com

We have some help available from the Washington State University Agriculture program through a WSDA grant, but we still need to do the majority of the work ourselves and that will take commitment. By starting small and testing the waters without the heavy burden of a building lease, I believe we have a good chance of creating a solid and lasting enterprise. If you are interested in being part of this exciting project, please contact me.

Finally, a resounding thank you to Bethany and Charles Little, who so generously opened their hearts, farm and home to our 2010 Northwest Regional Meeting. And we were so lucky to have Debra Prinzing and David Perry present. We very much appreciate their incredible gift of documenting our event. And a thank you to those of you who took time out of your busy lives to attend our meeting and make it the vibrant event that it was.

## The ASCFG Welcomes its Newest Members

**Joost Bongaerts**, Florabundance, Inc., Carpinteria, CA  
**Brenda Cole**, Nacogdoches, TX  
**James Daly**, Smithers-Oasis/Floralife, Kent, OH  
**Kendra Dewig**, Dewig Flower Farm, Princeton, IN  
**Dana Dore-Hadad**, Chicory Blue Gardens, Spencerport, NY  
**Nancy Dueitt**, Columbia, MS  
**Kate Field**, Gateway Technical College, Kenosha, WI  
**Kathy Frizzera**, Ravenflight Gardens, Fairbanks, AK  
**Aislinn Gandy**, Cedarville, NJ  
**Dan Groh**, Carlin Horticultural Supplies, Milwaukee, WI  
**Melrose Haas**, Melrose's Farm, Smithfield, NC  
**Lynn Hartman**, Hartman's Herb Farm, Barre, MA  
**Karen Jordan**, Deerwood Nursery, Zirconia, NC

**Brian Keller**, Oak Hill Tree Farm, Grand Bay, AL  
**Cindy Kellogg**, Our Garden Ltd., Volo, IL  
**Richard Lazarski**, Chicago, IL  
**Garry Legnani**, Smithers-Oasis/Floralife, Kent, OH  
**Eva Nyerges**, Lexington, KY  
**Gail Parlatore**, North Fork Gardens, Blaine, WA  
**David Perry**, David Perry Photography, Seattle, WA  
**Jeannette Polhamus**, Jeannette's Bloomers, Leesburg, NJ  
**Mitchell Rand**, Ball Horticultural Company, Guilford, CT  
**Arthur Schwab**, Black Earth, WI  
**Jean Snoeyink**, Summertime Blooms, Caledonia, MI  
**Terry Stamback**, Bear Creek Farms, Inc., Stillwater, OK  
**Gita van Woerden**, Animal Farm, Houston, TX  
**Erin Windham**, Windham Gardens, Granby, CT

## THANK YOU

### ASCFG Research Foundation Supporters

Chet Anderson  
Ursula Brons  
Maureen Charde  
Ron Chaskelson  
Therese Collins  
Leah Cook  
Bud Cottrill  
Simon Crawford  
Frank Dickson  
Dave Dowling  
Jason England  
Matt Gerald

Amy Hicks  
Betsy Hitt  
Knox Johnson  
James Kelly  
Wanda Kelly  
Mark & Sandy Kurtz  
Beverly Lacey  
Jerry Meyer  
Colin McLean  
Sherri Michelbach  
Tom Parker

Skip Paul  
Ed Pincus  
Monika Roth  
Bev Schaeffer  
Vicki Stamback  
Cathy Sutcliffe  
Jo Anne Thomas  
Joan Thorndike  
Susie Whaley  
Chris Wien  
Harold Wilkins & Bryan Gjevre  
Johnathan Yu

## 2011 Buyers' Guide and Phone Book

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

Remember, the Phone Book is simply that – a directory of current members' contact information, with a small resources section. It is distributed only to ASCFG members. The Buyers' Guide is a tool for flower buyers, and for growers who want to sell to them. It is distributed to thousands of buyers across the country,

and many more copies are requested throughout the year.

All members are included in the Phone Book; only those growers who indicate they want to be listed in the Buyers' Guide will be.

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

## Alicain Carlson Honored by NCSU



Alicain Carlson, former employee of Lynnvale Studios and currently one of John Dole's masters student at North Carolina State, has received the Roy A. Larson Floricultural Scholarship for graduate and undergraduate students interested in the field of floriculture.

The North Carolina Commercial Flower Growers Association and North Carolina State University established this scholarship in recognition of the late Dr. Roy A. Larson's

contributions to the floricultural industry through his teaching and research. Dr. Larson was a faculty member in Horticultural Science from 1961 to 1996, a recipient of teaching awards from NC State and the American Society for Horticultural Science, and was named ASHS fellow. The scholarship is awarded to one or more undergraduate or graduate students based upon scholarship, leadership, character and potential for service in the field of floriculture.

## Amy Hinkle Wins AFE Scholarship



Amy Hinkle, a co-winner of the 2009 ASCFG Dave Dowling ASCFG Scholarship, was recently awarded the Harold Bettinger Memorial Scholarship from the American Floral Endowment sponsored by Bioworks IPM. The Bettinger Scholarship is intended for horticulture students, sophomore through graduate levels, who have a major or minor in business and/or marketing with the intent to apply their education to a

horticulture-related career business. Harold Bettinger was a partner in Bettinger Farms of Swanton and was one of the first progressive growers to convert his bedding plant production from wooden to plastic flats. Bettinger Farms now grows greenhouse and field vegetables. The BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship is intended for students pursuing a career in floriculture. While not mandatory, it is strongly desired that students be interested in furthering the use of integrated pest management or sustainable practices; preferences will be given in this area. Students are selected on the basis of sound academic performance and a grade point average of 3.0 or better.



### What's New in Members Only?

Type a keyword into the search box, and find read discussions going back more than ten years.

The Cut Flower Quarterly is the only national periodical dedicated to the commercial production of cut flowers. Pull up a chair for some intensive reading.

Who's doing cut flower research in your state? What's the latest information on pest control? What cut flower trials can you visit? Find answers at this link.

Find out some average prices for farmers' market and retail florist sales here.

Bulletin Board	Useful Links
Quarterly - Current	Quarterly - Back Issues
Phone Book	ASCFG Documents
Floriculture Research	Pricing Cut Flowers



## Is Your 'Local' Florist Really Long-Distance?

Flowers are a great way to celebrate a birthday, cheer up a sick friend, or simply brighten someone's day. Your local florist is just a phone call away, or so you think. Some unscrupulous telemarketing firms are posing as local florists, charging you higher fees and taking business away from legitimate florists in your town.

Here's how the deception works. A telemarketer takes out a bogus listing in the white pages of your telephone directory. The company may use your town's name in its own to make you believe it's local. Or, the name of a legitimate local florist may be listed with a different local phone number. For example, Greenville Florists.

When you call, you're unknowingly forwarded to an out-of-town telemarketing operation. The telemarketer takes your order and credit card information for payment, and forwards your order to an area florist. The telemarketer pockets a processing fee and usually a percentage of the sale as well. You don't realize you've been scammed until you get higher than expected charges from an out-of-town company on your credit card statement, or learn that the flowers weren't delivered as ordered, or were never delivered at all.

### How to Protect Yourself

To ensure you receive the best quality flowers:

- Ask neighbors, family, friends, and co-workers for recommendations.
- Deal only with shops which list a street address with their phone number. If you're asking directory assistance for a number, also ask for the street number

and address. If there isn't one, consider doing business with another florist.

- Check out the florist you're considering with the local Better Business Bureau and consumer protection officials in your area. Or, if you're ordering flowers from a local shop in another city or state, contact the consumer protection officials there. Ask if they have any unresolved consumer complaints on file. Also ask them to verify the street address.

- Ask the florist to itemize the charges. In addition to the price of the arrangement, most florists charge a delivery fee and taxes if you live in the same state.

- Ask the florist for directions to the shop. If they hesitate or refuse, consider this a red flag, and avoid doing business with the florist.

### When a Rose is a Ruse: What to Do If You've Been Scammed

If you placed an order through a wire service, a toll-free number, or a local florist, call the toll-free number of the florist and describe the problem. Many wire services will work with the filling florist to fix the problem or refund your money.

If your arrangement was never delivered, and you paid by credit card, you can dispute the charges with the card issuer.

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit [ftc.gov](http://ftc.gov) or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP.

## Alaska Peony Growers Join Forces

Agricultural experts in Alaska say the state might be ready to make its mark on the world peony market, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* reported in July. The newspaper's account of a four-day conference at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks examining the promise of peonies said speakers predicted that international demand and the unique northern growing season could make the show flower Alaska's next crop.

Peonies in Alaska bloom from late June to September, when the flowers are dormant in other areas of the world. There are 41 peony growers in the state.

Among the dozens of growers, researchers and marketers invited to make presentations at the conference was (ASCFG member) Harrison 'Red' Kennicott, president and CEO of Kennicott Brothers in Chicago, who has close ties to both peonies and Alaska. Mr. Kennicott's great-great-grandfather began growing peonies commercially near Chicago in 1836. Another ancestor, Robert Kennicott, led two expeditions to Russian America, now Alaska, and died there in 1865. His notes were used by Secretary of State William H. Seward to establish the case for the 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia for two cents an acre, at the time called "Seward's Folly."

Harrison Kennicott told the conference that he and his son grow peonies at 11 locations, including Alaska, under the name Midwest Blooms, and sell them through the Kennicott Brothers wholesale firm. He stated that Alaskan peonies are finding a good market.

"We have found peonies to be a very popular cut flower with supermarket buyers, and the demand is increasing each year," he told *The Produce News* in an August interview. "Accordingly, we are

expanding our production in all locations – especially where we can produce peonies in the off-season. Peonies are a long-term crop in that it takes at least four years from the time of planting for them to come into full production.”

Alaska fits into Mr. Kennicott’s peony plans well, because Alaskan peony production comes when there is no other commercial peony production in the world. “The quality of Alaskan-grown peonies is superb. The flowers are large and the colors are intense. But the Alaskan peony industry is in its infancy, and it will be several years before there will be sufficient quantities to make a big impact in the marketplace. Production costs in Alaska are higher and shipping costs are also high because everything must travel by air. For all of these reasons, we expect Alaskan peonies to be selling at premium prices in the foreseeable future.”

*Reprinted from The Produce News/Floral Marketing September 6, 2010*

**The Baltimore City Paper has chosen ASCFG Member Ellen Frost's Local Color Flowers as its "Best Green Business"**



Ellen Frost at Local Color Flowers is serious about being green and buying local. Her event florist business uses only locally-grown flowers, even if that means

she can't do business in the winter when nothing's blooming. Buying local not only helps the local economy and farmers, it cuts down on the preservatives and fossil fuels used to ship flowers in from Latin America. All of this wouldn't matter a lick, though, if the end product looked how good-for-you food sometimes tastes. Fortunately, Local Color's arrangements are gorgeous, edgy but feminine, and bursting with color— not to mention actually cheaper than many other shops. Beautiful, affordable, and environmentally friendly floral arrangements smell pretty sweet to us.

**Johnny's Selected Seeds**  
An employee-owned company

**Fastest Delivery in the Business**

- Plant your crops on time
- Meet contract deadlines
- Plan resources efficiently
- Satisfy your market demand

Johnny's delivers what you need when you need it!

**Online at [Johnnyseeds.com](http://Johnnyseeds.com) or call 1-877-564-6697**

Winslow, Maine U.S.A.

**SELLING LOCALLY?**

**You should be reading *Growing for Market***

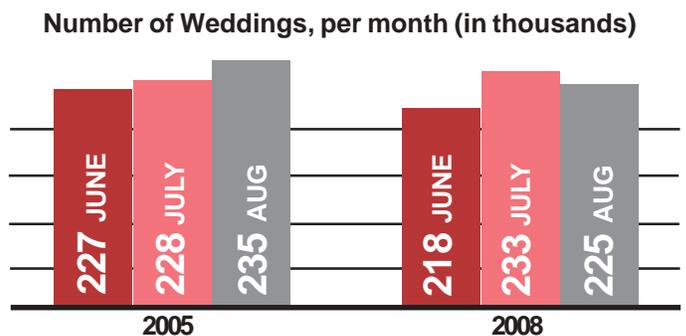
Since 1992, *Growing for Market* has been the premier periodical for direct-market farmers. GFM covers cut flowers in every issue (with Pamela and Frank Amosky writing again in 2009!), plus news and innovations in farmers markets, CSA, on-farm markets, selling to chefs and florists, and more. In print or online.

800-307-8949  
[www.growingformarket.com](http://www.growingformarket.com)

**Red, White, and I Do: July is No. 1 for Weddings**

June brides just aren't what they used to be - the most numerous. July has bested June, the traditional wedding month. And October is working its way up the charts too, coming in fourth in 2008. Total weddings in 2008: 2.16 million. In 2005: 2.23 million.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



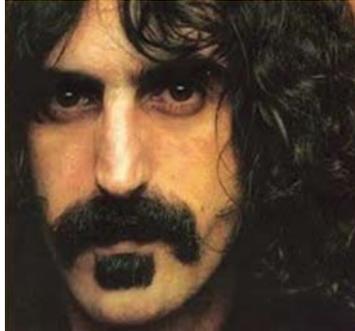
# From the DIRECTOR

Judy Laushman

In this issue's Grower Profile, I titled one paragraph "Mothers of Invention". It was a somewhat lame play on words: Jennifer Moeller has two children, and is also an innovative, imaginative entrepreneur.

Puns aside, Jennifer is a model of most ASCFG members: growers who deal with the vagaries of farming, marketers who see a niche and decide to fill it, and business people who run their companies with a firm and optimistic hand. When those growers encounter obstacles like bad weather or disappearing workers, they don't throw up their hands. They find solutions, retrofit machinery, create new designs. They just make it work. And when opportunity knocks, or at least lingers outside the door, they don't wait for someone else to open it.

When Alaska peony growers realized they had a lock on the late summer market, they organized a meeting to explore the best methods to capitalize on



that opportunity. Red Kennicott came along, and a new relationship was born.

In the Pacific Northwest, people like Pat Zweifel and Diane Szukovathy know that Seattle wholesalers should be buying their local flowers, not always shipping most of them in from the Vancouver auction. They're already brainstorming about how to bring together Oregon and Washington growers to form a sort of marketing co-op, or as Diane calls it in her Regional Report, "some type of wholesale farmers' market." Knowing the energy that Pat and Diane bring to their own farms, expect to hear more about this venture after the new year.

One of the best examples of growers creating a true partnership is Fairfield Flowers, based in Madison, Wisconsin. Nine growers, including founder Carol Larsen, Joe Schmitt, Kate Cooper and others, grow seasonal fresh flowers for florists and events. More than 150 different annuals, perennial and woodies, all grown organically, are delivered to a wide swath of south-central Wisconsin. Each farm produces a wide range of cut flowers, some crops overlap, but their combined forces result in seven months of quality flower production. Their florists are delighted to see the Fairfield Flowers van arrive.

Want to know about more inventions and partnerships? Come to the 2010 Conference in Tulsa. Monday night we're holding a session called "Lessons Learned: If I Could Do it Again". Growers will share their best ideas, and bemoan some of their worst: What happened to that new variety that was going to make a million dollars, but bombed at the market? What's really the best season extension device? Why did I think a Honda Civic was the best delivery vehicle? You'll learn a lot from this session, and have fun doing it.

**G&M Ag**  
**Supply Company LLC**

—Your Source For—

- Frost Fabric
- Row Covers
- Mulch Films
- Plug Trays
- Flats & Pots
- Poly Film
- Greenhouse Structures
- Flower Support Netting

**1-800-901-0096**

815 W. Country Lane  
Payson, AZ 85541  
[gmagsupply@npgcable.com](mailto:gmagsupply@npgcable.com)  
Catalog on website

[www.gmagsupply.com](http://www.gmagsupply.com)



There's a new section on the ASCFG web page, and it needs your input. Go to [www.ascfg.org](http://www.ascfg.org) and click on the "ASCFG Videos" link to see videos of ASCFG

members. If you already have some brief clips of your farm, your florist shop or your farmers' market, please send to us. If you have a Flip or other digital camera, make your own video: give us a tour of your fields or greenhouse, show us your favorite flowers or your most recent wedding or event designs. They're simple to make, and easy for us to share.

## Cut Flowers of the World: A Complete Reference for Growers and Florists

By Johannes Maree and Ben-Erik Van Wyk  
Timber Press 2010

Amy Stewart called *Cut Flowers of the World* “the ultimate cut flower book”. Since I’m partial to another cut flower book published by Timber Press, I would amend this characterization to “the ultimate *photographic* cut flower book.

The book includes a massive number of color photos – 778, to be exact – which is a great advantage for those of us who may not know what *Lachenalia aloides* or *Serruria florida* look like. This is likely, as both are South African natives rarely seen or grown in the Americas.

The inclusion of such unusual plants is what makes this book valuable. ASCFG members have never met a plant they didn’t like or try to make a cut flower of, so the expansive collection of plant material here is fascinating. The many beautiful photos are better than any catalog description.

North American natives like huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), *Eupatorium* and *Euphorbia* are present, as well as standbys like monarda, coneflower, eucalyptus and tuberose. But it’s easy to imagine a grower spotting burrawang (*Macrozamia communis*), whose foliage has a 3-week vase life, and thinking, “Hey, I can grow that. I should get that.”

The introductory sections cover topics like international cut flower production, harvest and postharvest practices, flower characteristics, and marketing. Veteran ASCFG members probably won’t find much here that they don’t already know, but those just entering the market might just learn a thing or two. And the rest of us can always use a refresher.

Judy Laushman

### 2010 Conference Sponsors

#### **GOLD:**

American Takii

GeoSeed

#### **SILVER:**

Abbott-lpco

Syngenta Flowers

#### **BRONZE:**

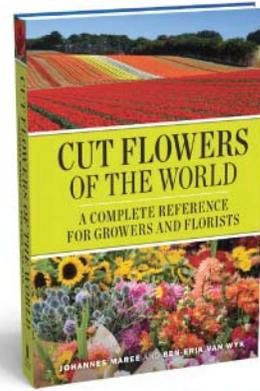
Ball Horticultural Company

Gro ‘n Sell

North Creek Nurseries

PanAmerican Seed

NEW FROM TIMBER PRESS!



### Cut Flowers of the World

A COMPLETE REFERENCE FOR GROWER'S AND FLORISTS

By Johannes Maree & Ben-Erik van Wyk

\$39.95 • available now

This comprehensive and invaluable guide features more than 350 key flowers grown for the florist trade. Includes more than 700 gorgeous color photographs and helpful tips on selection, handling, usage, cultivation, harvesting, and much more.

Available at [www.timberpress.com](http://www.timberpress.com)  
and wherever great books are sold.



**TIMBER PRESS**

### ATTENTION!

#### Commercial Growers

Flower Bulbs direct from the grower in Holland.  
Pre-cooled or non-cooled  
Flower Bulbs for:  
Greenhouse production  
Field production  
Support and service to growers.  
Specializing in Dutch Iris, Lilies and Tulips

# BulbMark

“The basics of growing”

Ph: 1-800-868-0426 Fax: 1-910-762-4148

E-Mail: [orders@bulbmark.com](mailto:orders@bulbmark.com)

Website: [www.bulbmark.com](http://www.bulbmark.com)



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

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers  
presents

# Focus on Flowers



November 8-10

Tulsa, Oklahoma

2010 National Conference & Trade Show