

# floral management

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THE FLORAL BUSINESS AUTHORITY

NOVEMBER 2016 | VOLUME 33 | NUMBER 9

# THE OF THE PARTY

Green Valley's 'Tabledance' Oriental Lily turned judges' heads and earned top honors at SAF's 2016 Outstanding Varieties Competition



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# floral management

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## Viewpoint BY JOOST BONGAERTS

### TALKING UP FLOWERS

> Here's a test for you to try on yourself (or a member of your team): pick up a flower in your design room and write the best description you can of that variety.

If you're like a lot of industry members, your description might read something like: "red rose with 50-cm stem; green foliage." Maybe you included bloom size or vase life. That description is technically accurate, but does it paint a picture of the flower?

More important, if you put yourself in your customers' shoes, would a run-of-the-mill description like that make you want to buy that flower? Would it create excitement?

For the past eight years, I've judged the Society of American Florists' Outstanding Varieties Competition. In that time, I've learned some things about how industry members at each step of the supply chain can help better position flowers. This year, I realized again that many of those things involve education — and creativity.

Every year, breeders and growers put their very best varieties up against each other. A panel of six judges makes the final ribbon call, but during the competition, hundreds of floral industry members make their way through the hall, checking out the varieties and taking notes. Varieties are presented with a brief description of outstanding traits as they relate to physical characteristics (color, scent, stem length, flower size and appearance, etc.) as well as attributes such as vase life.

Those printed cards provide valuable information on what makes the variety special — and ribbon-worthy. In my view, it is very important for the grower to supply as much information as possible. I've seen varieties displayed with only a few words (e.g., red standard rose; 50-cm stem). Compare that approach to how Green Valley Floral described the Best in Show winner Oriental Trumpet lily, 'Table Dance':

*"A beautiful pink Oriental Trumpet lily that is unique in this class of lilies. For consumers, they are getting a lily that has a bit of a sweet smell but not overpowering. It will give them large blooms and when*

*the flower is still closed, the buds have a darker pink color that will add to decorative effect in the arrangement."*

See the difference? The 'Table Dance' description provides physical descriptions, engages other senses (smell) and hints at the value of the flower to retailers and consumers. Those details are important, to growers selling their flowers to wholesalers and retailers, and to retailers enticing their customers to spend discretionary income.

For all the beauty of flowers, I think many of us could do a better job describing flowers in words that really capture their beauty and value. That requires us to put effort into writing good descriptions and sharing them with our customers, swapping out clichés and jargon for unique expressions, trading "red" and "orange" for "scarlet" and "pumpkin."

Maybe it's time for more of us — breeders, growers, wholesalers and retailers — to start engaging our teams more, encouraging our staffs to help us brainstorm memorable descriptions together. We can all continue to promote and advertise flowers to the end user and educate them about the specific flowers, including care and handling. Using a back story on where a variety is grown is also interesting for many consumers, although, if you ask me, we are better off as an industry promoting all flowers to all Americans, not singling out or putting down one growing region over another.

Employing language that is specific and vivid to describe our beautiful products can help us elevate all of our flowers and plants from commodities to gifts and experiences, and that shift could translate into real dollars, making the effort well worth our time. 🌸

**Joost Bongaerts is the CEO of Florabundance Inc. in Santa Barbara, California. [joost@florabundance.com](mailto:joost@florabundance.com)**







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## What Inspires Us

> While revisiting my notes from the 20-plus educational sessions at SAF Maui 2016, I ran across some real zingers from speakers. Here's just a sampling of my favorite soundbites, which range from the confessional to the reproachful to the menacing:

The confessional: **"My name is Brad Denham and I'm a failure. Again."** That may have been the last thing attendees expected to hear from one of the floral industry's most prolific and successful entrepreneurs. Denham's point: Failure is imperative to entrepreneurial success (he outlined a few of his own as proof).

The paradoxical: **"The less involved you are, the more your shop is worth."** That's from Kyle Brown of Lone Star Group based in Austin, Texas. In a session called "What's Your Exit Strategy?", Brown, who's purchased several flower shops, implored business owners hoping to maximize the value of their shop to start extricating themselves from the business's brand sooner rather than later.

The reproachful: **"I've yet to hear a mechanic apologize for how much he's charging to fix your car."** No one admonishes the way sales and customer service trainer Tim Huckabee admonishes. His point with this chide: Don't apologize for charging for delivery and other extra services.

The predictive: **"This year you'll start seeing reptiles and snake skins."** Michael J. Skaff, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, shared this tidbit when he presented the 2017 Floral Trends Forecast.

The simple: **"What do you think is causing this behavior?"** HR consultant and perennial SAF convention favorite Glenna Hecht suggested this question as a starting point of a dialogue with a "difficult" employee.

The illuminating: **"Forty percent of Facebook users have never signed onto Facebook on a computer."** Anyone still not convinced about the importance of having a mobile-ready website likely came around after hearing this statistic from Crystal Vilkaitis in her session about social media advertising.

The forthright: **"Be prepared to work hard. It's not easy. You get rejected a lot."** Nikki Lemler's seemingly cautionary advice about developing corporate accounts was accompanied by a slew of ideas for how she has made her corporate sales skyrocket at Welke's Milwaukee Florist.

The empowering: **"I literally know every day if a designer has made me money or cost me money."** Kaitlin Radebaugh, AAF, followed that declaration with a rundown on how her incentive program works at Radebaugh Florist & Greenhouses.



The menacing: **"Amazon is scary. When I mention it, you should start to tremble."**

Whether anyone in fact trembled after hearing retail strategist Jim Dion say this is anybody's guess, but if you're as intrigued by this as we were, be sure to read our December issue.

In fact, that's what we're doing with so much of what we soaked in at SAF Maui 2016 — sharing it with you. This month's issue highlights several of the high points from the event, but those "zingers" above and many more are the springboard for a good year's worth of content in Floral Management. Want to get a closer glimpse now? SAF members can access the handouts and presentations from all of the sessions at safnow.org. (search "Maui handouts"). 🌸

**Kate Penn**  
[kpenn@safnow.org](mailto:kpenn@safnow.org)

## More Online ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON [WWW.SAFNOW.ORG](http://WWW.SAFNOW.ORG)



### WHERE'S THE INDUSTRY HEADED?

Want to get all the details SAF CEO Peter Moran shared in his much-anticipated State of the Industry address during SAF Maui 2016 (p. 30)? SAF members can check out the video of his presentation by searching "State of the Industry" at [safnow.org](http://safnow.org)



### SEARCH AND YOU SHALL FIND

Trying to locate that that article about the florist in New York with the event business? Or that cool holiday open house idea? Search for them and any other topic in Floral Management's digital edition archives — log onto the digital edition and use the search tool to locate past articles (be sure to click on "all past issues" if you're not sure which issue the article you're looking for was published). [safnow.org/floralmanagement](http://safnow.org/floralmanagement)



### CHECK OUT THE ACTION

Look for colleagues, friends, vendors, customers — and yourself, if you were there — in the online gallery of photos from SAF Maui 2016 (above: IFD's 2017 Floral Trends Preview). Scroll through the photo stream to see random shots, or click on "Albums" to view photos organized by event. [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline)



### HOW THEY DID IT

Watch five successful floral industry members share inspiring stories on how they got their start, launched a big idea or hit refresh to start over. Charles F. Kremp 3rd, AAF; David Daneshgar, Bill Fernandez, Sally Kobylinski and Paul and Nancy Godbout (above) shared their stories in a TED-talk like format at SAF Maui 2016. See the videos of their talks by searching "How I Did It" at [safnow.org](http://safnow.org)



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## More than a Nice Warm Breeze

> While the tropical locale of SAF's 132nd annual convention might suggest not much "work" was done, comments from attendees suggest quite the opposite.

There is an energy at [SAF's convention] that will charge you and your business! You will learn, connect with others and have fun in the process! In the end, you will take that positive energy and new knowledge back to your business — priceless.

**Nancy Godbout, Jacques Flowers, Manchester, New Hampshire**

The most inspiring resource for improvement in our industry! Exceptional use of time.

**Chanda Mines, Bagoy's Florist & Home, Anchorage, Alaska**

I really enjoyed networking with my fellow florists and just listening to what works in their shop and how they do things. Got to meet amazing people and wholesalers. I definitely will be back!

**Nicole Palazzo, City Line Florist Inc., Trumbull, Connecticut**

Meeting fellow florists and sharing information is priceless. The SAF staff cares about our success and has an abundance of information. All we have to do is ask for it.

**Lorrie Anderson, Country Florist of Waldorf Inc., Waldorf, Maryland**

I recommend that anyone who wants to improve their business should attend SAF's convention and see what new things you can learn.

**Robert Bryant, Flowers By Robert Taylor, West Covina, California**

The programing and social events are a perfect springboard for networking without feeling forced or contrived.

**Gayle Smith, Chrysal USA**

The rock solid reason for this convention's success is the people who take part in the event. They are more engaged, more passionate about continuing education, more curious about "what's next" and more interested in gaining new and quality connections to grow their real, local floral business.

**Michael Delgorio, UFN** 



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# SAF in Action

## SAF MAUI 2016 ATTENDEES SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

> Cutting-edge tech information, tips on bringing out the best in employees and improving sales, big-picture perspectives on economic and consumer trends, insight on exciting products and smartphones filled with new contacts are some of the souvenirs Society of American Florists members brought home from SAF Maui 2016, the association's 132nd annual convention, held in Hawaii this September.

More than 400 floral professionals from every segment of the industry came together for the convention, which featured 38 educational sessions and events. Practical tips — the kind a business owner can take home and implement — make up the programs, and this year lived up to that history, said **Rakini Chinery, AAF, AzMF, of Allan's Flowers & More** in Prescott, Arizona.

"From previous conventions, I have streamlined my holiday ordering and production, taken sales to new levels and created a culture of excellence with my team of employees," Chinery said.

"This year, I am looking forward to [using convention tips to start] creating videos, getting my entire business on the Google for Business platform and creating destination shopping as we expand our shop in the next few months."

**Justin Watanabe said the Watanabe Floral** team in Honolulu started implementing tips from several sessions, including "Don't Get Caught Doing What Worked Yesterday When Customers Are Obsessed with What They Want Tomorrow" by retail trainer James Dion, "Dealing with Difficult Employees" by HR expert Glenna Hecht of Humanistic Consulting and "Motivate Them! Become a Better Sales Coach" by floral sales and training guru Tim Huckabee of FloralStrategies.

**Sally Kobylinski of In Bloom Florist** in Orlando, Florida, a "How I Did It: Beginnings" panelist, got a lot out of social media pro Crystal Vilkaitis' session, "ABCs of Social Media Advertising." In the week and a half after she returned home, Kobylinski converted her Instagram page to a business profile, imported email contacts into Facebook, and experimented with Facebook Events and Facebook Live. The Facebook Live post is paying off. "Our engagement was 10 times that of a typical post," she said.

**Shelley Pease, AAF, of Shelley's Flowers** in Waldoboro, Maine, said she left convention knowing how to better

leverage Google AdWords thanks to presenters Renato Sogueco of BloomNet and Google Account Executives David Sanchez and Eliza Coogan. She also learned how to better serve brides in "**Work Smarter, Not Harder, On Events**" with Zoë Gallina of Botanica International Design & Decor Studio in Tampa, Florida.

For **Jane Iarussi of Cole Gardens** in Concord, New Hampshire, the highlight was the "2017 IFD Floral Trends Preview" by Michael Skaff, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Skaff Floral Creations in Savannah, Georgia. It was "the best [trends session] I have been to — ever," she said. "The session was a predictor for 2017 colors and schemes. It was a window to the future."

**Rachel Martin of Ballard Blossom Inc.** in Seattle, Washington, said she picked up tips on pay-per-click advertising, and ideas for design and pricing. The event also gave her invaluable time away from her business. "I always get a boost, personally and professionally, from attending SAF's events," she said. "I believe it is imperative that we take time away from our businesses to gather with floral professionals to get new ideas, make connections and recharge."

Get more convention tips from the session handouts at [safnow.org/maui16handouts](http://safnow.org/maui16handouts). 📄

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND SAF PALM BEACH 2017 AT THE BREAKERS IN PALM BEACH, FLORIDA.



## Statistical snapshot of SAF Maui 2016

13



Sylvia Cup Designers

38



Educational programs & workshops

39



Expert speakers & panelists

88



First-time attendees

184



Varieties of flowers, foliage & plants

410



Attendees from 41 states and 4 foreign countries

5,066



Miles traveled most distant U.S.-based attendee (Waldoboro, Maine)



# SAF in Action



**FORECASTING** Michael Skaff, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Skaff Floral Creations in Savannah, Georgia, announces the **"2017 Floral Trends Preview."**



**SAY YES TO THE PROCESS** Zoë Gallina shares best practices at Botanica International Design & Decor Studio in Tampa during **"Work Smarter, Not Harder, On Events."**



**LOVE IT AND LEAVE IT "What's Your Exit Strategy?"** panelists share their experiences with business exit strategies: Carol Caggiano, AIFD, PFCI, of A. Caggiano Inc. in Jeffersonston, Virginia; Martin Meskers, AAF, SAF President, and his son, Tyler Meskers, of Oregon Flowers Inc. in Aurora, Oregon; and Kyle Brown of Lone Star Group in Austin, Texas.



**PERFORMANCE PAYOFFS** Jeanna and Steve Furst of Furst Florist and Greenhouses in Dayton, Ohio, listen to **"Incentive Plans That Work"** with Christopher Drummond, AAF, of Plaza Flowers in Norristown, Pennsylvania; Rachel Martin of Ballard Blossom Inc. in Seattle; and Kaitlin Radebaugh of Radebaugh Florist & Greenhouses in Towson, Maryland.



**WELCOMING COMMITTEE** SAF President Martin Meskers, AAF, of Oregon Flowers, Inc., in Aurora, Oregon, and his wife, Helene, greet one of the 88 newcomers during the convention's First-Timers Reception.



**MAUI'D** "I never thought I would come to my first SAF conference with my boyfriend and leave as husband and wife," said Lindsay Rakowski of UFN, who spontaneously moved up her wedding to take advantage of the idyllic setting. "Thank you so much for inadvertently choosing the perfect, most romantic place for our wedding. We look forward to celebrating our first-year anniversary at The Breakers," the site of next year's convention. The couple married on the beach in a traditional Hawaiian ceremony in the days after this year's event.



**THREE FIRST-TIMERS** First-time attendees Jacqueline and Valerie Lee Ow of J. Miller Flowers & Gifts in Oakland, California, and Toi Mulligan of The Gilded Lily Florist in Spokane, Washington, get ready to network at the SAF President's Welcoming Reception.



**EARLY BIRDS** Nicole Palazzo of City Line Florist Inc. in Trumbull, Connecticut, and Frank Zepeda of Murrieta V.I.P. Florist in Murrieta, California, grab front seats to hear Google exec Loren Hudziak and BloomNet Vice President of Digital Strategy and Education Renato Soguelco explain **"Streamlining Your Shop in the Cloud."**



**GOOGLE GIGGLES** Who knew **"Streamlining Your Shop in the Cloud"** could be so much fun for Robert Bryant, AAF, AIFD, of Flowers By Robert Taylor in West Covina, California, and Rakin Chinery, AAF, AzMF, of Allan's Flowers in Prescott, Arizona.



**NOTE TAKERS** Dirk Lorenz and Randy L. Pinto jot ideas for **"Dealing with Difficult Employees"** at Fremont Flowers and Gifts Inc., in Fremont, California.



**INSPIRED** Kelly McKeone, of Teleflora Inc. in Los Angeles, California, and Elizabeth Roesser Atwood of Farm Exports Inc. in Boise, Idaho, soak in the inspiring stories during **"How I Did It: Beginnings."**



## SAF in Action

### SAF HONORS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS

> SAF recognizes the industry's most accomplished individuals during the annual convention's Stars of the Industry Awards Dinner. Here is a look at who received accolades at SAF Maui 2016. 🌺



**FLORICULTURE HALL OF FAME** Dwight Larimer, AAF, PFCI, president of Design Master Color Tool Inc. in Boulder, Colorado, received the floral industry's greatest honor, induction into the Floriculture Hall of Fame. Shown with his wife, Dawn, their two sons, Garrett and Nick, and family friend Adley Kent. (Read more on p. 33.)



**SAF PRESIDENT'S AWARD** Gay Smith, technical consulting manager for Chrysal USA in Miami, Florida, received the SAF President's Award. Smith is an internationally recognized expert in floral care and handling and a dedicated volunteer to the Outstanding Varieties Competition at the SAF convention.



**PAUL ECKE JR. AWARD** The country's largest flower bulb grower, Leo Roozen, AAF, president of Washington Bulb Co. in Mt. Vernon, Washington, is the recipient of the Paul Ecke Jr. Award. Here he is with wife, Michelle. Previously the Golden Bouquet Award, the award was renamed in 2002 in memory of Paul Ecke Jr., AAF, and recognizes exemplary devotion to profession, industry and community. "To say that flowers are part of Leo's DNA is an understatement. In fact, the name Roozen means 'roses' in Dutch," said Bob Williams, AAF, PFCI, of Smithers-Oasis - North American Operations in Kent, Ohio, and member of SAF's Awards Committee. "The floral industry applauds the dedication he has shown to his business, community, family and the entire floral industry for the past 40 years."



**TOMMY BRIGHT AWARD FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN FLORAL PRESENTATION** Tom Bowling, AIFD, PFCI, of Fairfield, Ohio, was honored with the Tommy Bright Award. "Tom is recognized among his peers as the consummate professional speaker and educator, who makes every concept easy to understand," said PFCI Chairman Damon Samuel AAF, AIFD, NAFD, NMF, PFCI, of the Bill Doran Company in Omaha, Nebraska.



**ALEX LAURIE AWARD FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION** Brian E. Whipker, Ph.D., a professor of floriculture at North Carolina State University, received the Alex Laurie Award for Research and Education. Whipker is an internationally acclaimed expert in the fields of plant growth regulators and plant nutrition and has developed numerous tools and resources for the industry.



**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FLORICULTURE (AAF)** The American Academy of Floriculture salutes volunteer service to the industry and local communities. Newly inducted AAF members are (from left): **Cathy Reifschneider, AAF**, of Teleflora, Inc., in Phoenix, Arizona; **Kaitlin Radebaugh, AAF**, of Radebaugh Florist & Greenhouses in Towson, Maryland; **Michael R. Pugh, AAF**, of Pugh's Flowers in Memphis, Tennessee; **Nikki Lemler, AAF**, of Welke's Milwaukee Florist in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and **Susan Klein, AAF**, of Klein's Floral and Greenhouses in Madison, Wisconsin.



**PROFESSIONAL FLORAL COMMUNICATORS – INTERNATIONAL PFCI** is the mark of the floral industry's finest floral educators. PFCI toasted its three new members who were unable to attend: **Bradley Craig Beck, AAF, PFCI**, of Design Master Color Tool Inc. in Boulder, Colorado; **Justin Degonia, AIFD, PFCI**, of New Leaf Flower & Plant Shop in Poplar Bluff, Missouri; and **Jenny Thomasson, AIFD, PFCI**, of Stems in Florissant, Missouri.



## SAF in Action

## FOUR FLORAL BUSINESSES RECEIVE THE 2016 CENTURY AWARD

> SAF celebrated four businesses with the Century Award, honoring companies that have been in business for 100 years or more. 🌿



From left: **Jacques Flower and Garden Center** in Manchester, New Hampshire (Paul and Nancy Godbout); **Schneider's Florist** in Springfield, Ohio (Kathy Ardle, with Awards Committee Chair Dave Gaul) and **Welke's Milwaukee Florist** (Steve and Nikki Lemler, AAF). SAF also recognized **Imlay Florists** (unable to attend) in Zanesville, Ohio.

## "ELVIS ALOHA FROM HAWAII" ROCKS THE SYLVIA CUP DESIGN COMPETITION

> Thirteen floral designers competed this year in the Sylvia Cup Design Competition, the country's longest running live floral design competition. After the surprise announcement of this year's challenge theme — "Elvis Aloha From Hawaii" — contestants had just two hours to create three designs: wearable flowers, a sympathy tribute, and a bridal bouquet.

Here is a look at the Sylvia Cup at SAF Maui 2016. 🌿



**A ROCKIN' SPECTACLE** The longest-running live national design competition, the Sylvia Cup began in 1967 and is named for Sylvia Valencia, a prominent designer and long-time SAF supporter.



**TOP THREE** **Derek Woodruff, AIFD, PFCI, CF** (left), owner of Floral Underground in Traverse City, Michigan, won the grand prize in the Sylvia Cup Design Competition. As grand prize winner, Woodruff receives a trophy cup, \$3,000 and complimentary registration to SAF Palm Beach 2017. Woodruff received first runner-up honors in the 2015 and 2014 Sylvia Cup contests. **Paul Latham, AIFD**, creative/director and co-owner of Fleur de Lis Events & Design in Louisville, Kentucky, was first runner-up and received \$500; and **Tricia Upshaw, AIFD, AMF**, of Shirley's Flower Studio Inc. in Rogers, Arkansas, sponsored by the Mid America Design Competition, was second runner-up and received \$250.



**ALL SHOOK UP** Among the 13 floral designers competing in the Sylvia Cup Design Competition were seven members of the American Institute of Floral Designers, seven past Sylvia Cup contestants and two contestants sponsored by state floral associations.



**FRESH GOODS** Contestants had a lush supply of fresh flowers and foliage provided by Certified American Grown. Shown: Gloria Gonzalez, A Secret Garden Florist, Ventura, California; Valerie Lee Ow, J Miller Flowers and Gifts, Oakland, California; and Sandy Schroeck, AIFD, PFCI, Trend on Design, Eden Prairie, Minnesota.



**TERRIFIC TOOLS** All of the design supplies used by contestants were provided by Smithers-Oasis, which also sponsored the nearly \$4,000 in cash awards. Shown: Lakhena Mae Chim, Angkorian Designs, Long Beach, California.

ELVIS™ IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF THE ELVIS PRESLEY ESTATE. SAF'S "ALOHA FROM HAWAII!" EVENT IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH THE ELVIS PRESLEY ESTATE OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION.

# Hands On

TIPS, TRENDS AND TACTICS FOR THE SAVVY RETAILER

## FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT

### GEORGIA FLORIST PLAYS UP POTTERY BARN PARTNERSHIP



**FRUITFUL PAIRING** For several years, Christy Hulsey of Colonial House of Flowers in Statesboro, Georgia, has collaborated with Pottery Barn on a series of blog posts that play up the company's new seasonal goods and give tips on how to incorporate flowers and plants into home décor, including a succulent wreath.

➤ When Christy Hulsey got a call several years ago about a potential collaboration with Pottery Barn, her first thought was: Why me?

Hulsey was a big fan of the brand, but at that time the nearest Pottery Barn store was about three hours away from Hulsey's Colonial House of Flowers in Statesboro, Georgia. The project the company wanted Hulsey to tackle, a stylized blog post that played up some of the national chain's newest offerings, wasn't exactly in her wheelhouse.

"I'm not a blogger or a stylist," said Hulsey, who was also recently named Mayesh Wholesale Florist's 2017 Design Star. "The whole concept was all very new to me."

Her second thought: Pottery Barn? Yes, please.

Today, Hulsey works regularly with Pottery Barn, creating blog posts (or editorial features in Pottery Barn parlance) for each new season. Through the partnership, Pottery Barn hopes Hulsey will show off new company home décor items, including on-trend containers, in real-world settings. In return, Hulsey gets to hitch her small business to a much larger retail star, whose aesthetic ("classical and traditional with a twist," as Hulsey describes it) perfectly matches the look and feel of Colonial House of Flowers. (And whose marketing budget is much, much bigger — more on that in a sec.)

"Pottery Barn is one of the few national brands I really love, so it's been a good fit for me — it's not just business, but emotional," Hulsey said.

Each post begins when Hulsey chooses a handful of her favorite items from the company's new seasonal collection. From there, she sets up a small photo shoot, often with the help of friends, family and other area small businesses, to show off those goods and how to use them alongside flowers and plants.

In a post from last summer, for instance, Hulsey showed Pottery Barn customers how to make a succulent centerpiece with a 31-inch wide cast cement and fiberglass scallop shell, created specially for the company by the Scottish artist Richard Taylor. With the help of her sister, Amanda, friend Katie Bostick of Viola's Market in Saint Simons Island, Georgia, and the photographer Sarah DeShaw, Hulsey led readers through step-by-step instructions, with a good dose of humor and fun.

"I knew this piece would be a whole new level of gorgeous fun," she promised. "[It's] a whole new level of summertime chic."

Hulsey's natural writing style and sharp design eye are two of the reasons Pottery Barn values the relationship, said Courtney Lake, social media manager for Pottery Barn. The company works with an undisclosed number of "influencers" like Hulsey to promote its brand, usually scouting small business owners and bloggers on social media and online.

"When we look for influencers to work with on our editorial features, we look to those individuals who not only have audience reach but a definitive viewpoint or voice," Lake explained.

While Hulsey isn't paid for the posts, she does get to keep the items from the shoot, and she can then share each post with her customers and benefit from the exposure of Pottery Barn's significant marketing engine: Lake said Hulsey's posts are seen by more than 300,000 monthly blog visitors and more than 2.5 million people on the company's social media channels. That's a win-win, according to Lake.

"We love that Christy and her team's approach to florals dovetails nicely with our brand ethos of casual, laid back living with a refined edge," she said. "Bringing in greenery is a part of creating a home that is not only beautiful but healthy." 🌿



**LIFE AT WORK**  
**SAY YES!**

> Imagine that you've come up with a way to get a time-consuming task done — say, Christmas open house set-up. As you delegate tasks, a staff member raises her hand meekly and says, "I have a better idea."

If your first impulse is to bang your head on the nearest table, plenty of owners and managers would sympathize, but employee engagement expert David Sturt suggest a different approach: Listen to the idea, stay open-minded and try hard to say yes.

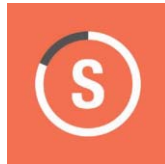
"[Managers] have usually spent quite a bit of time try to get their processes working and are on the hook for delivering results, so when employees come to them with new ideas, the natural thing that happens to managers is to protect the current processes," he recently told Jeremy Hobson, host of the radio show Here & Now.

The trouble with that approach? If you don't engage employees and act on their suggestions, you'll miss out on good ideas — after all, your employees are often the people confronted with the downsides of any process (say an open house check-out area set up on the wrong side of store.) More problematic in the long run: employees who aren't asked to contribute real ideas won't feel true ownership in your business and are more likely to tune out or move on.

If you [shut] down ideas regularly, "your team members are not going to keep coming up with new ideas, and they'll start to believe you ... aren't into progress, aren't into innovation," Sturt said. "They sort of turn their brain off, they turn their creative energy off. That ends up hurting teams. You have to be really, really careful about what you say 'no' to." 🌿

**TECH GADGETS**  
**TIME-SAVER APPS**

> Feeling crunched for time as you head into the holiday season? In a recent issue of Inc. magazine, Laura Garnett, a performance strategist, offered some of her favorite apps for business owners who need to pack a lot of activity into a short period of time:



■ **Streaks** lets users pick as many as six activities or habits they'd like to integrate into a daily or weekly routine. Once your goals are set, the app encourages you to complete those tasks and build a streak.



■ **Proppy** helps users create professional proposals. It includes a dashboard that tracks the status of all your proposals and allows for seamless collaboration across your team.



■ **Mixmax** is an email add-on that comes with a suite of features: tracking, meeting scheduling, canned responses, email send scheduling, snoozing and more. 🌿

**BEST PRACTICES**  
**THE SLEEP CYCLE CURE**

> To break through to the answer of a troublesome challenge, hit the hay. That's according to new studies, as reported by Forbes magazine, that show how much problem-solving happens as we sleep. Here are tips from Forbes on how to reshape your nighttime and early morning routines to encourage more of that downtime problem-solving:



■ **Relax.** Spend a half-hour before bed thinking about the problem you'd like to address.

■ **Take note.** Write down the problem that's bothering you before you fall asleep. When you wake up, note any thoughts or dreams.

■ **Be mindful.** As you make yourself a tea or coffee, jot down what's on your mind for 30 minutes. Don't dwell too much on the words.

■ **Reflect.** After you've read back what you've written, "let the council of your conscious mind debate it." In other words: Think over what you've written and see if a solution hasn't become clearer. 🌿

**BENCHMARK**  
**THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR**

> Three-quarters of Society of American Florists members plan to hold their holiday open house this month, according to an association survey earlier this year. Nearly a quarter say they'll wait until December. (About 5 percent pulled out the tinsel early with open houses in October.) 🌿

**Most Popular Day of the Week for Holiday Open House**

Monday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sunday	Saturday
2%	5%	17%	41%	45%	61%

**SOURCE:** SAF Holiday Open House Survey of SAF members, May 2016

# On My To-Do List

## DECEMBER 2016

Twitter, Facebook posts 
 Calls to b-days, anniversaries 
 Change website products to reflect buying trends 
 Attend networking event

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>THANKS</b> for help with this month's calendar from Lori Wheat, AAF, of Lafayette Florist, Gift Shop and Garden Center in Lafayette, Colorado, and her holiday planning playbook.</p>				<p>1 </p> <p>WORLD AIDS DAY</p>	<p>2 </p> <p>Blog post: Hanukkah gifts</p>	<p>3  </p> <p>Review and organize VDay photos for promos</p>
<p>4 </p> <p>Go out for coffee. Take a breather!</p>	<p>5 </p> <p>Debunk poinsettia toxicity on Facebook</p>	<p>6  </p> <p>Review VDay staffing needs</p>	<p>7  </p> <p>PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY</p>	<p>8 </p> <p>Develop contingency plan for no-show VDay drivers</p>	<p>9 </p> <p>Blog post: Holiday party host gifts</p>	<p>10  </p> <p>Post pics of non-red poinsettias</p>
<p>11 </p> <p>Check out "On Being" or "The Moth" podcasts.</p>	<p>12 </p> <p>Remind staff members to keep holiday notes</p>	<p>13 </p> <p>Develop VDay web management plan</p>	<p>14  </p> <p>Take photos of in-store displays</p>	<p>15 </p> <p>Create/update VDay in-store signage</p>	<p>16 </p> <p>Invite reporters to your shop for holiday fun</p>	<p>17  </p> <p>Blog post: Christmas centerpieces</p>
<p>18 </p> <p>One week to Christmas!</p>	<p>19 </p> <p>Web check in: Bump up slow sellers</p>	<p>20  </p> <p>Web check in: Bump up slow sellers</p>	<p>21  </p> <p>WINTER SOLSTICE</p>	<p>22 </p> <p>People are working hard! Praise a team member publicly.</p>	<p>23 </p> <p>Ornament sale</p>	<p>24  </p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE</p>
<p>25 </p> <p>CHRISTMAS DAY</p>	<p>26 </p> <p>KWANZAA</p>	<p>27  </p> <p>Staff thank you lunch</p>	<p>28  </p> <p>Ask staff for holiday feedback</p>	<p>29 </p> <p>Compile holiday notes</p>	<p>30 </p> <p>Thank temp help</p>	<p>31  </p> <p>NEW YEAR'S EVE</p>
<p>HANUKKAH</p>						

## I RECOMMEND: LISTENING AND LEARNING

Gayle Smith, Technical Consulting Manager, Chrysal USA



Society of American Florists' 2016 President's Award Winner (shown here, after surprise announcement at SAF Maui 2016)

I love words. I appreciate how different arrangements of these seemingly simple building blocks become super-charged with power. It's fascinating how people gather words together to express an idea, describe a concept or tell a story. The word embodied in my world this year is *gratitude*.

I am a big fan of "The Moth Radio Hour" which features people telling true stories to a live

audience. The stories are not only intriguing, they are thoughtful. Another radio show I'm hooked on is "On Being." The host, Krista Tippett explores ideas and questions about what it means to be human — I love being nudged to think about ideas bigger than my daily grind. Considering others' points of view helps me expand my sense of self.

A book I recommend is "The Oregon Trail, A New American

Journey" Rinker Buck. The way Buck interweaves history with his own story of crossing the Oregon Trail is compelling, and the can-do spirit of those who braved the frontier crossing is inspiring.

If finding a pocket of quiet seems unattainable in your noisy life, I recommend yoga. Just a few minutes of quieting the mind to shut out non-stop chatter makes a huge difference on my daily outlook.





drop-shipping got you down?



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Dear Tim...

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THANKSGIVING?

**Our Thanksgiving sales are a fraction of what they used to be. What happened, and how can I get more holiday orders?**

POLLY HUNTER, CO-OWNER | FORD'S FLOWER SHOP | CARNEY'S POINT, NEW JERSEY

**It would be easy to blame the usual suspects — the internet and mass marketers.** But I believe there's more to it than that: Retail florists can take some of the blame for the drop in their Thanksgiving sales. And that's because many are not promoting the holiday earlier and in a bigger way. After all, we still celebrate Thanksgiving in a big way, but clearly there has been a shift in consumers' flower buying patterns. But all is not lost — you can take some proactive steps to regain and rebuild that lost traffic.

### Show Your Stuff

This sounds like a no-brainer, but if you want customers to order their holiday flowers from you instead of through another vendor, you need to solicit that business. If the extent of your effort has been to put a Thanksgiving poster in your window, that's not enough. Take it to the next step and let shoppers see real examples of centerpieces in your store. Using permanent botanicals, create a beautiful example of your Thanksgiving centerpiece design and display it prominently at the front on your store with some enticing signage: (Try: "Order your holiday centerpiece TODAY and get FREE DELIVERY.") Additionally, keep a live version in the cooler on display (in case customers don't see your floor sample). Yes, you will have to replace that every few days, but treat that cost as part of your advertising budget.

### Let Your Fingers to the Walking

You have all the holiday orders in the system from last year, so why not use that information to solicit pre-orders and give your customers superior customer service? Run a list of orders delivered on Monday through Wednesday of the holiday week last year and start dialing. Your conversation should be short and sweet, along the lines of, *"Hi, it's Tim calling from Ford's Flower Shop. Last year you ordered a Thanksgiving centerpiece from us, and I'm making a courtesy call to tell help you with this year's order..."*

Once you have that customer on the line, qualify their needs by table shape and size, and offer to embellish their design with the addition of candles for an extra \$X. (For a customizable sales script email [tim@floralstrategies.com](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com).)



**Tim Huckabee** is the president of FloralStrategies, which provides sales, service and POS system training to the retail and

wholesale sectors of our industry. Tim and his staff have been traveling the globe since 1997 to educate florists of all sizes to engage customers in bold new ways while learning how these successful shops operate on all levels. [tim@floralstrategies.com](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com)

**Got a sales or service challenge?** Tell Tim about it, and he'll tackle it in an upcoming column. Email [tim@floralstrategies.com](mailto:tim@floralstrategies.com), or call him, (800) 983-6184.







M

— MAGNUM —



# MAGNUM

**XXL FLOWER****HUNDREDS OF PETALS****STRONG STEM****LONG LASTING BEAUTY**

The word 'magnum' means 'big', and this is exactly why we called this disbudded chrysanthemum Magnum. Its flower is huge: to call Magnum a size XXL is no exaggeration! Not only does its flower get even bigger in the vase as the weeks go by, but it also becomes more spherical. This large eye-catching white flower with bright green at its centre is simply packed with petals. In fact, Magnum has so many ray petals that the flower never opens completely to reveal any disc petals in its centre, even after weeks in the vase. Magnum is an ultra-strong variety that has passed every transport and post-harvest shelf life test with ease – and without any sign of petal damage or loss. These chrysanthemums are delivered in a net – not to prevent any damage but simply to get enough of these large flowers into their box. This unique flower with its high petal count, sturdy stems and beautiful green leaves has already reaped rave reviews. With the introduction of Magnum, Deliflor is taking a new step in chrysanthemums. Magnum will become available in quantities of around 40,000 stems a week early in April.

**More information**

[www.deliflor.com](http://www.deliflor.com), [info@deliflor.com](mailto:info@deliflor.com), [www.facebook.com/deliflor](https://www.facebook.com/deliflor)

**DELIFLOR**

Chrysanthemum

## Fresh Choices TREND-SETTING TIPS FOR BUYING FRESH CUT FLOWERS AND GREENS

### SUCCULENTS ARE HAUTE, HAUTE, HAUTE

➤ Since succulents landed on customers' radars back in 2010, their status has continued to rise.

"I sell more succulents than ever," said Nic Faitos of Starbright Floral Design in New York City. "It's like the modern version of 'Tulip Mania' that hit Europe in the 1600s." Among his clients' favorites: succulent gardens, terrariums, succulents planted in the moss of orchid plants and buttonhole boutonnieres.

To his north, Jackie Levine of Central Square Florist in Cambridge, Massachusetts, sells "tons" of 2- to 4-inch succulents. Located near a subway stop, "we have a steady stream of walk-in customers, and they gravitate to petite designs they can easily carry," she said, adding that many young women buy them to brighten up their dorm rooms.

In Chicago, Walter Fedyshyn, AIFD, PFCI, of Kehoe Designs reaches for succulents regularly for hotel and corporate accounts. "When the design has to last a week, succulents are the answer," he said. "Plus, they provide a distinctive focal point when mixed with greenery and

showy flowers." And they're great for the shop's bottom line: When Fedyshyn dismantles these designs, he saves the succulents for future use.

Phoenix brides clamor for succulents, especially colored-varieties and grafted cacti, said Cheryl Denham of Arizona Family Florist. "They add interesting texture to bouquets, make popular favors for guests and lend an undeniable 'Arizona ambiance' to the celebration."

Christy Hulsey of Colonial House of Flowers in Statesboro, Georgia, overhears people from age 8 to 80 in her shop declare succulents "the cutest things ever." She receives frequent requests for succulent headbands for photo shoots. "They are the easiest things ever to make — all it takes is some glue — and customers will pay \$100 or more for them," she said.

Here's a taste of succulents' scope of shapes and colors. Find more varieties, as well as florists' designs, at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline). 🌿

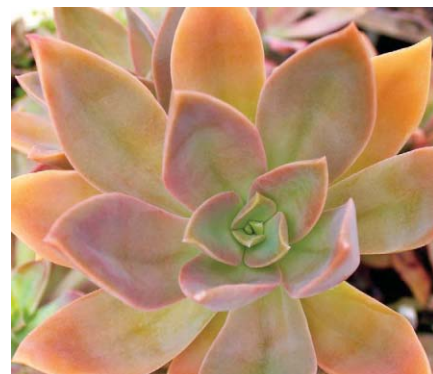
**Katie Hendrick** is a contributing writer for Floral Management. [khendrick@safnow.org](mailto:khendrick@safnow.org)



**ECHEVERIA 'LOLA'**  
Dramm and Echter



**ECHEVERIA 'PULIDONIS'**  
Dramm and Echter



**GRAPTOVERIA 'FRED IVES'**  
Mountain Crest Gardens



**ECHEVERIA 'PERLE VON NURNBERG'**  
Ocean View Flowers



## Fresh Choices



**Echeveria 'LUCITA'**

Dramm and Echter



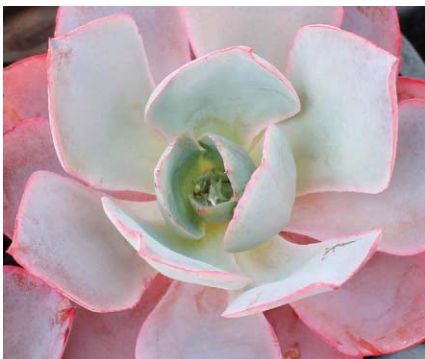
**Echeveria 'MEXICAN SNOWBALL'**

Dramm and Echter



**Echeveria 'PEARL'**

Dramm and Echter



**Echeveria 'AFTERGLOW'**

Mountain Crest Gardens



**Echeveria 'IMBRATICA BLUE ROSE'**

Mountain Crest Gardens



**Echeveria 'SUBALPINA'**

Mountain Crest Gardens



**Jovibarba 'HEUFFELII IRENE'**

Mountain Crest Gardens



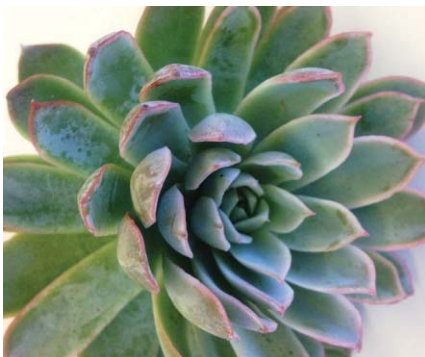
**Sempervivum 'CEBENESE'**

Mountain Crest Gardens



**Echeveria 'ELEGANS'**

Ocean View Flowers



**Echeveria 'RONDO'**

Ocean View Flowers



**Echeveria 'RUFFLES'**

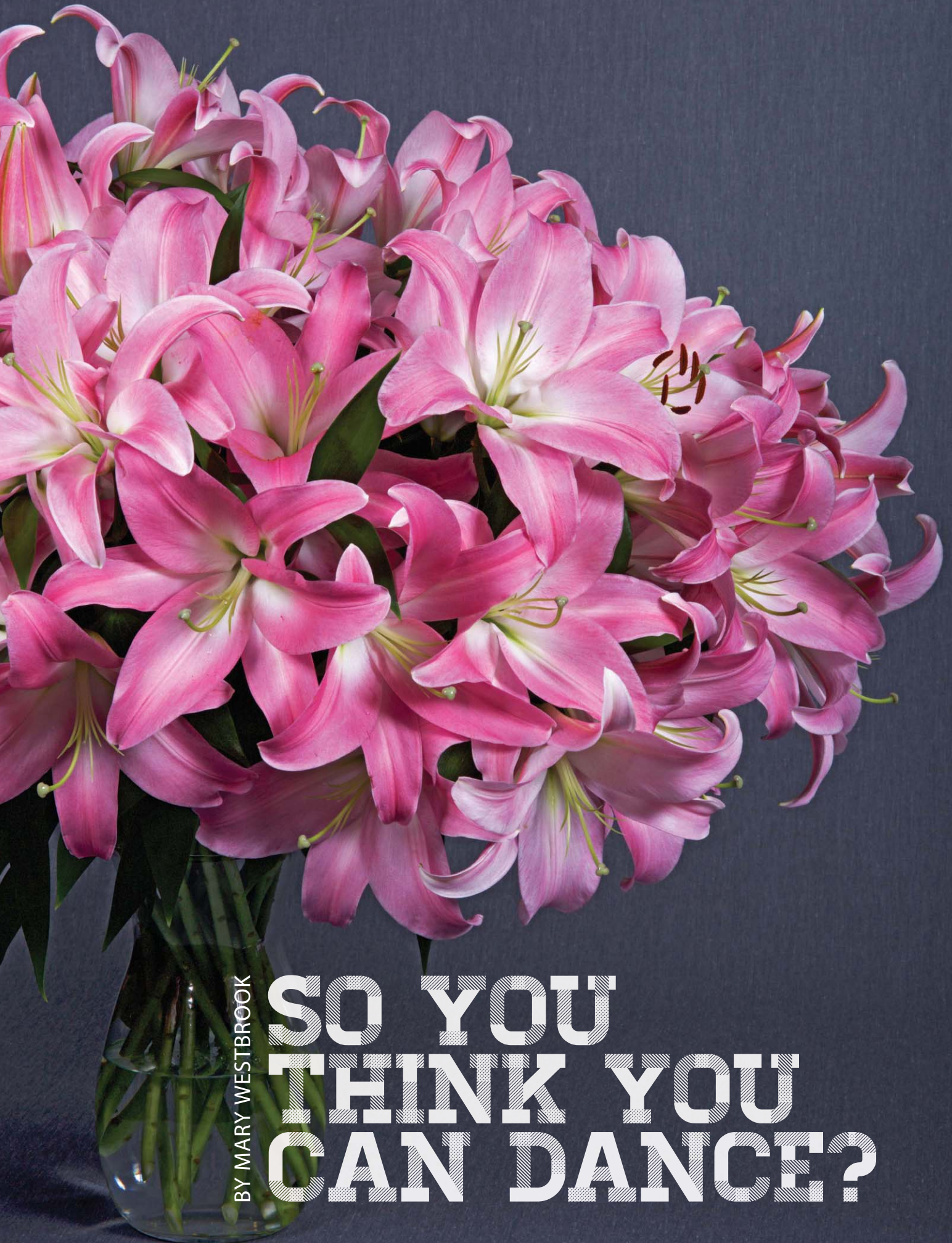
Ocean View Flowers



**Echeveria 'RUNYONII'**

Ocean View Flowers





BY MARY WESTBROOK

# SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE?



**Large, upright heads. Perfect, pink coloring and blooms. Subtle fragrance. Green Valley Floral's 'Tabledance's' outshone a tough field of competitors in SAF's 2016 Outstanding Varieties Competition.**



**BEST IN SHOW**

**'TABLEDANCE'**

Green Valley Floral

**A**mericans will (finally) cast ballots this month in one of the most contentious presidential elections in history, choosing between two of the least popular candidates to ever run for the office. Fortunately, in another highly competitive face-off this September, the opposite was true: too many good options.

The Society of American Florists' Annual Outstanding Varieties Competition during SAF Maui 2016, the association's 132nd annual convention, showcased 84 varieties from 20 growers in Florida, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Idaho and Tennessee as well as Colombia and Ecuador. The varieties represented the very best in industry breeding and growing standards. A panel of six judges from across industry segments reviewed the varieties to come up with 19 blue ribbon winners and one super-star best in show: 'Tabledance,' an Oriental trumpet lily from Green Valley Floral in Salinas, California.

"'Tabledance' is amazingly beautiful, fragrant and interesting," said judge Lani Callister, the fresh flower manager at Ensign Wholesale Floral in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The variety has large pink blooms that darken as the flower opens (as a starting point, think Pantone's Rose Quartz 2017 color of the year). As an added bonus, the blooms have design appeal aplenty both when closed and open, said Janet Louie of Green Valley.

"It's really a unique variety in this class of lilies," she added. "For consumers, they are getting a lily that has a bit of a sweet smell, but not overpowering."

Toomie Farris, AAF, AIFD, of McNamara Florist in Indianapolis was one of the 400-plus convention attendees to check out the competition during SAF Maui 2016. He called 'Tabledance' "simply amazing," an assessment attendee Tim Farrell AAF, AIFD, of Farrell's Florist in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania, echoed. The Best in Show title, he said, was "so well-deserved."

"It has magnificent blooms," he said. "And that medium pink fading to white in the center?" In a word? Dreamy.

And, as it turns out, practical. Joost Bongaerts of Florabundance in Carpinteria, California, has judged the competition for a number of years and likes to focus on the commercial appeal of flowers (and the profitability they

add to florists' businesses). Examining 'Tabledance,' he saw a strong, consistent color even after the blooms had opened and "a nice buildup of buds."

"It's easy to pack for growers and shippers, which is a great thing for wholesalers and florists," he said. "Plus [the bloom] is upward facing — it looks right at you. That's unusual."

Attendees who noted fierce competition particularly among the lilies this year may have been onto something. 2016 blue ribbon and best in class winners include six lilies and only four roses (standard, spray and garden). That's a significant change from last year, when judges awarded blue ribbons to 11 roses and only three lilies.

"The entire lily category was so beautiful," admitted David Mitchell, AAF, of Mitchell's Flowers in Orland Park, Illinois, a longtime convention attendee and former SAF volunteer leader. "It was hard to choose a favorite."

But choose favorites we must. Read on for coverage of best in class and blue ribbon winners from this year's event. Be sure to visit [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline) for a full list of winners, including red ribbon honors and participating companies.

## WHAT MAKES A WINNER?

The Society of American Florists' 2016 Outstanding Varieties Competition showcased 84 varieties from 20 growers in Florida, California, Oregon, Hawaii, Idaho and Tennessee as well as Colombia and Ecuador. Judges scored each entry based on color and commercial appeal; stem and foliage; bloom form and size; and overall presentation. Judges evaluated specific categories of flowers; the highest scored entry of each won "Best in Class." To provide a range of perspectives, the judging panel included three growers, three wholesalers and three retailers.

Photos by Greg Hoxie

**BEST IN CLASS**



**Standard Rose**  
**'Black Pearl'**

Rosaprima International

Rosaprima International describes 'Black Pearl' as "the crown jewel" of the company. With its soft, velvety petals, the characterization isn't surprising. 'Black Pearl', which is grown exclusively by Rosaprima, has a sophisticated crimson hue and a large bud size, making it a knockout selection for weddings and event work, when flowers need to impress — and last. For all its romance, however, 'Black Pearl' won over David Boulton, AAF, PFCI, of Flowers by George Inc. in Arlington, Washington, with its more practical charms, including its staying power. "It has a 13-day vase life, so that's impressive," Boulton noted, adding that he also "loved the way 'Black Pearl' opened up" over the course of the competition.



**Garden Rose**  
**'Juliet'**

Green Valley Floral

'Juliet' is already one of the "most popular English cut roses" available on the market, according to Janet Louie of Green Valley Floral, and convention attendees were quickly enchanted by the variety's soft peach shades. "They create a feeling of warmth and romance," Louie noted. (An effect enhanced by the rose's very light fragrance and deep cupped shape.) Mitchell called 'Juliet' his "favorite rose" of the competition. "It had that beautiful soft peach color and great petal count," he said. "It would be great for a bridal bouquet."



**Spray Rose**  
**'Brilliant Stars Yellow'**

Connectaflor

'Brilliant Stars Yellow' wowed judges with its consistent, medium gold color. With six to nine flowers per stem, the spray rose also packs plenty of value — each stem can go far in designs. The sunny blooms open uniformly and are complemented by deep green foliage and strong, sturdy stems (another design room plus). Expect a two-week vase life. "I loved 'Brilliant Stars Yellow'," said judge Rakini Chinery, AAF, AzMF, of Allan's Flowers in Prescott, Arizona. "The laterals were so long and the flowers on each stem were perfectly formed."

**VIRAL VARIETIES**

We couldn't help but notice that many of the exhibiting companies presented loads of information on varieties that would be well-suited to a consumer audience outside of the floral industry. With that in mind, we refashioned some of the Best in Class-related descriptions into customer-friendly social media posts, all set for your networks (along with, of course, a crisp, cool photo of each variety):

"Fun fact! Serruria, one of the most delicate flowers in the Proteaceae family, was technically extinct in the wild for almost a century until an accidental fire germinated seeds in South Africa's Franschhoek Mountains. Conservation efforts in the 1960s and '70s saved it — and it's available TODAY for your next floral order."

"Long laterals and six to nine flowers per stem? #squadgoals Let us show you how the always cheerful 'Brilliant Stars Yellow' can stretch your event budget."



**BEST IN CLASS**



**Chrysanthemum**  
**'Magnum'**  
Deliflor

Judges commenting on 'Magnum' all employed some kind of superlative to talk up its size: Big. Enormous. Huge. No wonder. According to Juan David Lecuona of Deliflor, the supersized chrysanthemum actually gets "even bigger in the vase as the weeks go by. It also becomes more spherical." The flower has a 20-day vase life, along with a bright green center and lots (and lots) of pure white petals. Indeed, 'Magnum' has so many ray petals that the flower never opens completely to reveal any disc petals in its center, even after weeks in the vase," Lecuona said.



**Gerbera**  
**'Glamour'**  
Green Valley Floral

'Glamour's' bubblegum pink hue is sweet, but behind the cuteness is one sturdy flower. Sporting a contrasting black center and double flower, 'Glamour' beat out many other high-caliber gerbs in this year's field to snag Best in Class honors. A big part of the appeal? That user-friendly, on-trend pink color. "It really had a great color among a strong category," Farris said. Adding to the overall look are multiple layers of thick petals, which create depth in its appearance. 'Glamour' will stand up to your design room needs, too: Its head is supported by a thick, strong stem with plenty of length.



**Alstroemeria**  
**'Jewel'**  
Flores Funza

'Jewel' combines a Palm Beach-ready palette (lavender bloom, green foliage) with major design appeal. The flower boasts a high bloom count, large head size and thick stems. Paola Aranguren of Flores Funza noted its "large buds will show the soft color of the flowers at the early stages of flowering," and designers can count on a vase life of about two weeks. Adding to its charm (and perhaps making it a bit harder to source in some areas), 'Jewel' is very new to the market, according to Aranguren. Flores Funza tested the variety for two years before starting commercial production just six months ago.

"'Ingrid' combines two things we love: Good looks and serious vase life. You'll be loving on this African violet for at least three months."

"Who are you calling delicate? 'Alcazar' is in store now — and this little powerhouse will bloom and bloom for up to 15 days."

"Want a wedding that feels warm and romantic? Have we got a garden rose for you. Say hello to 'Juliet.'"

"Silver bells? How about blue and green leaves with silvery-white tones for your Christmas wreath this year? Come in and check out one of our new favorites: Eucalyptus 'Tetragona!'"

"Calling all Lilly Pulitzer fans. Check out 'Jewel': lavender bloom, bright green stems. It's your official winter blues pick-me-up flower."

"Love the crimson color of this sophisticated 'Black Pearl'? You'll love it even more as the flower blooms over the course of almost two weeks!"

"Bubblegum pink + serious performance chops? Meet 'Glamour,' the Taylor Swift of gerberas, ready and waiting for your homecoming order."

## BEST IN CLASS



**Potted Flowering Plant**  
**'Ingrid' African Violet**  
 Optimara Group

Chinery adored the “perfect pink, semi-double flowers” abundant on ‘Ingrid,’ particularly in contrast to its “full, lush leaves.” Noting that consumers can expect a three- to six-month vase life, Optimara, the world’s largest grower of African violets, has called ‘Ingrid’ the “start of a new generation of African violets,” one that will be centered on combining consumer appeal with shelf-life performance. For judge Leo Roozen, AAF, of Washington Bulb Company in Mount Vernon, Washington, seeing ‘Ingrid’ shine was especially sweet. “I have always loved African Violets. I don’t get to see these on a regular basis,” he said, adding that, along with some of the chrysanthemum and gerbera selections, ‘Ingrid’ was a highlight of the competition for him.



**Decorative Foliage**  
**Eucalyptus Tetragona**  
 Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers

Looking to shake up Christmas? Look to ‘Tetragona.’ The variety’s stems have broad, aromatic, gray-blue green leaves with a very prominent central vein. Judges loved the silvery-white tones along the length of the stems and leaves and said the foliage would be ideal in formal bridal bouquets, especially those with a silver color theme. Flowers are grouped in threes and have masses of white stamens grouped together in the four corners of each flower head. “‘Tetragona’ nuts are a naturally chic addition to floral arrangements, and look stylish in Christmas flower wreaths,” said Diana Roy of Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers. They’ll also last the holiday season, with an expected vase life of four weeks.



**Other Cut Flower**  
**'Blushing' Serruria**  
 Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers

Attendees and judges alike had one thing — weddings — on the brain when discussing the prize-winning protea. “I love this one for its texture, white and pale pink color and vase life,” which can extend up to four weeks, said James McArdle of McArdle’s Florist and Garden Center in Greenwich, Connecticut. “I see it being a great filler in a low and lush arrangement.” Mitchell said ‘Blushing’ would be the ideal flower to show a bride who wants to blend an “edgy and cool” aesthetic with soft, feminine colors. The unique beauty also delivers in cost per stem, said Chinery, noting “the stems were laden with flowers.” Serruria, one of the most delicate flowers in the Proteaceae family, was technically extinct in the wild for almost a century until an accidental fire germinated seeds in South Africa’s Franschhoek Mountains, according to Roy. “Conservation efforts in the 1960s and ‘70s saved it,” she said.

## HONOR ROLL

The following companies earned either blue or red ribbons in the Society of American Florists’ 2016 Outstanding Varieties Competition. See the full list of winning varieties at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).

**Alexandra Farms**  
[AlexandraFarms.com](http://AlexandraFarms.com)

**Ball**  
[BallHort.com](http://BallHort.com)

**Connectaflor**  
[ConnectaFlor.com](http://ConnectaFlor.com)

**Deliflor LatinAmerica**  
[Deliflor.nl](http://Deliflor.nl)

**Dummen Orange**  
[DummenOrange.com](http://DummenOrange.com)

**Equiflor/Rio Roses**  
[RioRoses.com](http://RioRoses.com)

**Flores El Capiro S.A.**  
[capiro.co](http://capiro.co)

**Flores Funza**  
[Floresfunza.com](http://Floresfunza.com)

**Green Point Nurseries, Inc.**  
[GreenpointNursery.com](http://GreenpointNursery.com)

**Green Valley Floral**  
[GreenValleyFloral.com](http://GreenValleyFloral.com)

**Jet Fresh Flower Distributors, Inc**  
[JetFreshFlowers.com](http://JetFreshFlowers.com)

**Liberty Blooms**  
[LibertyBlooms.com](http://LibertyBlooms.com)

**Mellano & Company**  
[Mellano.com](http://Mellano.com)

**Optimara Group**  
[Optimara.com](http://Optimara.com)

**Oregon Flowers, Inc.**  
[Oregonflowers.com](http://Oregonflowers.com)

**Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers**  
[ResendizBrothers.com](http://ResendizBrothers.com)

**Rosaprima International, LLC**  
[RosaPrima.com](http://RosaPrima.com)

**Royal Flowers, Inc.**  
[RoyalFlowersEcuador.com](http://RoyalFlowersEcuador.com)





**Dianthus**  
**'Alcazar'**  
Dümmen Orange

Other varieties might have a bolder hue, but the delicate 'Alcazar' had something that many designers (and customers) will swoon over: a dreamy pink color with lots of practical application (think: weddings, parties, dances and spring holidays). The large flower and long, rigid stems make it a variety that will hold its form well for its 15-day vase life, and with high production numbers, it's a variety that many florists can get their hands on quickly. Another standout quality, according to judges: 'Alcazar' is an excellent shipper, which means less waste and more value all along the supply chain.

**PEOPLE'S CHOICE**



**'MAGNUM' CHRYSANTHEMUM**  
Deliflor Latin America

The same qualities that nabbed 'Magnum' best in class helped it capture this year's People's Choice honors; David Mitchell, AAF, of Mitchell's Flowers in Orland Park, Illinois, was among the people who voted for it. "It drew my eye," he said, calling it a "beautiful, large-headed mum."

Outstanding Varieties judge Joost Bongaerts of Florabundance in Carpinteria, California, noted the pristine quality of the competition entry — a telltale sign that the variety is not only a beauty, but also a sturdy shipper.

"It's different with nice foliage, and you can tell it travels well," he said, noting that when he posted a photo of the variety to Florabundance's Instagram page, the likes came pouring in. "This one really holds up."

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## BLUE RIBBON WINNERS



### Lilies 'Eyeliner'

#### Oregon Flowers

According to Tyler Meskers of Oregon Flowers, 'Eyeliner' is "a rare white Longiflorum Asiatic hybrid cross known for its pure white flower and dark edge around its petals." Judges noted that the flower's "white color makes for a strong wedding season item, and its stem strength allows for large arrangement potential." Vase life is up to 18 days.



### Lilies 'Elena'

#### Oregon Flowers

'Elena,' a double pink lily, was introduced in the spring of 2015, according to Meskers. 'Elena' won praise for its strong stem, pretty pink blooms and dark green foliage color. Farrell called the flower "spectacular," comparing the color to the popular 'Sorbonne' Oriental hybrid, but with even more "layers of gorgeous petals."



### Gerberas 'Terra Icy'

#### Green Valley Floral

'Terra Icy' is a perfectly shaped gerbera with a sparkling white color and a bright green center. "This is one of the largest white gerberas we grow and has a double flower form, which adds depth and texture to design work," Louie said. "The flower head is supported by a thick strong stem with plenty of length."



### Lilies 'Palazzo'

#### Green Valley Floral

Many attendees were intrigued by 'Palazzo,' one of the darkest purple-red Oriental trumpets on the market. Louie said the variety "opens fully and produces large blooms." Stems are strong and woody, and 'Palazzo' has dark green leaves that provide "a nice contrast between the blooms and foliage," Louie said. "It's large and glamorous and will be the hit of any special occasion." Also hits? Its pleasant but not overpowering scent and 14-day vase life.



### Orchids 'James Storie'

#### Green Point Nurseries

Farrell loved the "rich red" color, long laterals and many blooms on this 'James Storie' orchid. According to Green Point Nurseries, "the spray of this Red Aranthera has approximately 30 to 40 blooms and is [up to] three feet long. The blooms, in a starfish shape, have a deep red color." That combination lends itself well to design room creations, allowing the variety to be the center of attention or a memorable accent.



### Gerberas 'Alma'

#### Green Valley Floral

Farrell was still thinking about 'Alma' days after the competition ended. "It has a beautiful coral color with a dark center," he said. "It's a great flower size on a long, sturdy stem." The dark center Farrell mentioned is surrounded by contrasting deep coral "petalettes" that help bring out the pink subdued tones within its elongated and multi-layered petals. Louie noted it's the "perfect match for customers looking for salmon-colored flowers." Plus, it has an impressive 12-day vase life.



### Standard Roses 'Art Deco'

#### Rosaprima International

Gorgeous. Refined. Evocative. That's how some attendees described 'Art Deco,' a rose with a gentle, light pink hue; the color intensifies toward the stem's outer petals. That surrealistic color play helps explain its art-inspired name. Look for consistent green foliage to complement the soft bloom color.



### Lilies 'Severn'

#### Oregon Flowers

'Severn,' an Oriental lily, has a diamond-shaped bud and a strong stem that supports its unusually large flower blooms. "This white Oriental has proven itself as a leader in the lily industry," Meskers said, meaning florists in most areas should be able to work with wholesalers to bring it in store quickly. 'Severn' will keep turning heads for up to 18 days.



### Chrysanthemums 'Quartz'

#### Deliflor

Judges and attendees were drawn to the electric green of 'Quartz.' The color makes it an attractive option for daily work and big events. Deliflor reps said florists can expect a "big disbud," from the variety and "many petals," along with a 10-day vase life.





**Lilies**  
**'Kaveri'**

**Oregon Flowers**

Two-tone lilies in fall colors can be tough to come by, and that may be why the yellow and orange 'Kaveri' turned out to be a showstopper. "The two-tone is so nice," said Bongaerts. Chad Freytag of Freytag's Florist in Austin, Texas, agreed, but he said he saw more potential for the flower beyond autumn. "I think this color will work great in spring and fall bouquets," he said. 'Kaveri' also garnered praise for its strong stems, dark green foliage and high bud count, along with its two-week vase life.



**Anthuriums**  
**'Sundance'**

**Green Point Nurseries**

Judges feeling the tropical love in Hawaii found a kindred spirit in 'Sundance.' The spathe on 'Sundance' is a light jasmine green with pink veins. (The spadix is white with a reddish pink.) The variety is both beautiful and practical: It measures 8 inches long and 6 inches wide with slightly overlapping lobes. Flower yield over a three-year period is approximately seven blooms per plant per year, according to Green Point Nurseries, which is much higher than similar varieties. Expect a three-week vase life. 🌿

**Mary Westbrook** is the senior contributing editor for the Society of American Florists. [mwestbrook@safnow.org](mailto:mwestbrook@safnow.org)

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# CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF SUNSHINE

In his biennial State of the Industry Address, SAF's CEO makes the case for cautious optimism

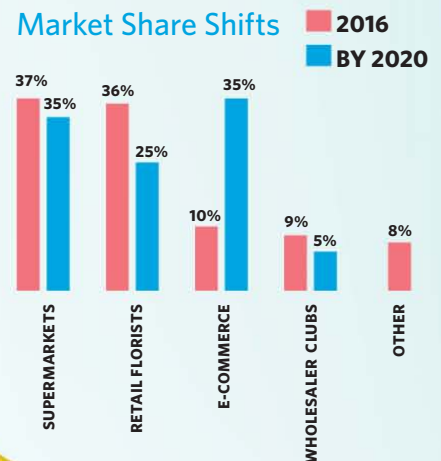
BY MARY WESTBROOK

## The Future by the Numbers

By the year 2020, SAF CEO Peter Moran projects there will be:

- **10,000 to 12,000** retail florists in the U.S. (compared to about 13,700 today),
- **300** wholesale florist doors (compared to about 550-570 today), and
- **36** large domestic cut flower producers, "plus a good supply of small specialty cut flower producers supporting the local markets." (There are currently 225 flower growers in California, 60 of whom have annual revenues over \$500,000, along with eight to 10 large growers in Oregon and Washington and many smaller specialty growers in those states.)

## Market Share Shifts



**SOURCE:** Society of American Florists estimates, based on available industry and anecdotal data.

### DIG IN DEEPER

Missed the address? Check out Peter Moran's presentation at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline). -M.W.



Floral industry business owners who are responding to new trends in customer service and demand, and paying attention to economic shifts at the macro level, have good reason for tempered optimism.

That was a message Society of American Florists' Executive Vice President and CEO Peter Moran delivered in September when he presented his biennial State of the Industry Address at SAF Maui 2016, the association's 132nd annual convention.

"There is general consensus among economists that the consumer goods sector is a healthy force in the economy today, and that bodes well for the floral industry, which is so dependent on consumer spending," Moran said. "The economy has certainly come further than most people realize."

Moran noted that the private sector has added jobs for 74 consecutive months, which is the longest period of sustained growth on record.

"Unemployment, which peaked at 10 percent in 2009, the highest it has been since 1983, is now at 5 percent," he said. "The budget deficit has fallen by roughly one trillion dollars. And overall U.S. economic growth, while still anemic, has significantly outpaced that of every other advanced nation."

The private sector has added jobs for **74 consecutive months**, the longest period of sustained growth on record.



"Overall U.S. economic growth, while still anemic, has significantly outpaced that of every other advanced nation."

Peter Moran, CEO, Society of American Florists

Still, Moran noted, many variables, and significant challenges, remain for business owners trying to forecast the future — not least among them the looming presidential election.

"There is a growing body of research that shows during presidential election years, particularly like this, when there is such uncertainty about the nation's future, industry becomes almost paralyzed," Moran said, pointing to national corporations such as DuPont and McDonald's, which have cut spending in recent months. "A look at the last dozen election cycles shows that during the final year of a presidential term, big corporate investments are routinely postponed and big deals are put on the back burner."

In his wide-ranging talk, Moran talked about geopolitical, social and technological issues affecting consumer buying decisions, along with specific changes to the national and international industry supply chain and new research on how each generation of flower purchasers makes decisions (and can be persuaded to buy flowers).

During the highly anticipated address, Moran also laid out some of the specific challenges for the industry and each segment. Chief among those challenges: labor issues, including minimum wage debates and new laws, and the need to

stay ahead of technological innovations that relate to all aspects of consumer experience, including ordering and delivery.

"For retailers, it is now all about the omni-channel, an industry term that means consumers can transition seamlessly between both physical and digital stores," Moran said.

Looking specifically at the overall industry, Moran projected that in 2020 there will be:

- 10,000 to 12,000 retail florists in the U.S. (compared to about 13,700 today),
- 300 wholesale florist doors (compared to about 550-570 today), and
- 36 large domestic cut flower producers, "plus a good supply of small specialty cut flower producers supporting the local markets."

Moran estimated there are currently 225 flower growers in California, 60 of whom have annual revenues over \$500,000, along with eight to 10 large growers in Oregon and Washington and many smaller specialty growers in those states. These projections are largely unchanged from Moran's 2012 projections.

Mary Westbrook is the senior contributing editor for the Society of American Florists. [mwestbrook@safnow.org](mailto:mwestbrook@safnow.org).

### How They Buy

SAF members have access to full results of the 2016 Generations of Flowers Study at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline). -M.W.

**SOURCE:** 2016 SAF Generations of Flowers Study



#### GENERATION Y AGES 22 - 39

Gen Y values accessibility when shopping for flowers (using multiple channels - including social media for info), and is the segment most likely to buy on impulse.



#### GENERATION X AGES 40 - 51

Gen X is the most likely to require convenience (e.g. delivery options), use a florist, and purchase flowers for anniversaries.



#### BABY BOOMERS AGES 52 - 70

Baby Boomers believe they have the highest appreciation for flowers and are more likely to purchase them for birthdays and funerals.



**FAMILY FIRST** Even with his many responsibilities and accolades, friends say family remains Floriculture Hall of Fame inductee Dwight Larimer's No. 1 priority. Larimer and his wife, Dawn, and their two sons, Garrett and Nick have been on countless trips together. Despite Larimer's globetrotting travel schedule, he was home for baseball and lacrosse games as his sons grew up. The four remain a very close-knit family today.

THE

# PEOPLE PLEASER

The newest member of SAF's Hall of Fame has built his career around helping others.

BY MARY WESTBROOK

➤ Jerome Raska, AIFD, AAF, PFCI, CF, has been to many industry events — workshops, programs, conventions. Sometimes, the gatherings are intimidating, particularly for newcomers. It can be tempting for a shy person to retreat to a corner ... but if Dwight Larimer, AAF, PFCI, happens to be at the same event, that person won't be alone long.

"Dwight is the most inclusive person I know," said Raska, of Blumz...by JRDesigns, which has three locations in Michigan. "He draws people out. He wants everyone to have a voice."

Over and again, industry members describe Larimer in these terms: inclusive, optimistic, compassionate — along with whip smart and very funny.

In a career that has spanned more than 40 years, Larimer, the president of Design Master color tool, inc., has created tremendous success for his company and served in leadership capacities for some of the industry's largest organizations; yet when people talk about Larimer, they talk about his kindness and ability to build consensus.

"He really cares about people," Raska said. "You get to know Dwight as an industry associate, but he becomes your friend really fast."

"I've always admired how Dwight can present a challenge in an optimistic way," agreed former SAF President Shirley Lyons, AAF, of Dandelions Flowers & Gifts in Eugene, Oregon. "He's

a person you're always happy to see and work alongside."

For his leadership and dedication to the betterment of the entire industry, Larimer was inducted in September into the Society of American Florists' Floriculture Hall of Fame, the industry's highest honor, during SAF Maui 2016, the association's 132nd annual convention.

## Born to Be a Seeker

Larimer was born in Rochester, New York. He was one of four children and from an early age, he displayed many of the characteristics that would serve him well in his career, including curiosity and a desire to try new things.



After high school, for instance, Larimer and a friend planned a trek through Europe. Armed with a map, the pair made it as far as ... Cape Cod. Instead of heading to Europe, Larimer decided to stay in the States, working as a house painter, a commercial fisherman and a bouncer, jobs that, friends say, gave him a better understanding of the value of hard work.

Larimer later earned a degree in business administration from the State University of New York at Albany and then began consulting work for W.J. Cowee, an industry firm making wooden floral picks and plant stakes.

It didn't take long for Larimer to rise up the ladder at W.J. Cowee. He became vice president of sales and marketing in 1979, a position that combined his marketing talents with his new love of the industry.

In 1983, Larimer left W.J. Cowee and joined Colorado Dye and Chemical — the forerunner of Design Master — and moved to Boulder, Colorado. In his new position, Larimer became immersed in the psychology of color, color trends and unique ways color can be used by creative professionals in the floral craft. By 1990, he was president.

### First Responder

Under Larimer's direction, Design Master transformed the industry's thinking about color. The company's "Just for Flowers" line of aerosols allowed retailers to achieve nearly any look they wanted through paint, even if a specific color of flower was not available. The advance helped florists meet customers' needs in a cost-effective way.

Larimer was also instrumental in developing the Color Concepts program, partnering with other suppliers to market complementary products in similar colors, a merchandising breakthrough that was ultimately profitable for both wholesaler and supplier. Larimer's initiative helped Design Master change retail florists' thinking about the use of color with a variety of breakthroughs, according to florists.

"Dwight has been in touch with floral designers for decades, constantly developing or improving the color enhancement tools that we need to



**EVERYONE'S FRIEND** Dwight Larimer, AAF, PFCI, was inducted into SAF's Floriculture Hall of Fame in September. He has been a volunteer leader with SAF for more than 30 years.

customize our designs to the consumer needs," said Tim Farrell, AIFD, AAF, PFCI, of Farrell's Florist in Drexel Hall, Pennsylvania.

Design Master sprays, for instance, were formulated to dry quickly and be applied on virtually any surface.

The Design Master tagline, "unleash your inner artist," is no simple advertising slogan: Under Larimer's leadership, Design Master has helped many retail florists do just that, Raska said.

"I think of Dwight as an educator, first," said Raska, who encouraged Larimer to apply for Professional Communicators-International designation in 2011. "He is very serious about educating florists. If I send an email to him with a question [about a product], he responds immediately."

While growing his company, Larimer also took steps to produce aerosols without CFC propellants, package sprays in recycled cans, abide by stringent air quality production standards and follow all environmental regulations in the manufacturing, packaging and distribution of Design Master products.

### Industry Leader

Larimer has spent untold hours in volunteer work for industry associations, including 30-plus years as an SAF leader on committees, councils and the board. Most recently, he was SAF's treasurer for six years.

For two years, Larimer led a task force charged with evaluating SAF's headquarters. The result was the sale of SAF's building and the purchase of smaller, more efficient space.

"In our SAF meetings, I always appreciated Dwight's honesty and candor," Lyons said. "He finds a way to bring everybody into the decision-making process, often with a twinkle in his eye."

Larimer has never been one to phone in a role either, said Steve Frye, vice president of Baisch and Skinner in St. Louis, Missouri, who replaced Larimer as the head of SAF's Consumer Marketing Committee.

"He left behind big shoes to fill," Frye admitted. "Dwight has such a passion for marketing and really understands the benefit it brings to our industry."

Indeed, his passion for marketing and dedication to SAF also led to one of the most notable collaborations between Design Master and the association. The company has sponsored Floral Management's Marketer of the Year Award since its inception 23 years ago, contributing \$115,000 in prize money to winning florists.

Larimer also helped grow SAF's annual Congressional Acton Days to an event that draws scores of industry members each year to Washington, D.C., to lobby for the industry.

In addition to his SAF roles, Larimer was president of the Wholesale Florist & Floral Supplier Association from 2002 to 2003 — and that organization honored Larimer with its highest honor, the Leland T. Kintzele Award, in 2007. He is the current chairman-elect of the American Floral Endowment and has been involved in AIFD and local and state organizations, where he has again built lasting relationships.

And those relationships will likely be his true professional legacy, said Bradley Beck, AAF, PFCI, national sales manager at Design Master.

"Dwight's a people person," he said. "He's always cared most about relationships." 🌿

**Mary Westbrook** is the senior contributing editor for the Society of American Florists. [mwestbrook@safnow.org](mailto:mwestbrook@safnow.org)

# COLLEGE OF COOL

Get ready for a crash course in the art of “show and sell” during the collegiate-themed Premier Products Showcase at SAF Maui 2016 BY JENNY SCALA



**SCHOOL SPIRIT** Professional Floral Communicators-International Trustees donned collegiate attire for their “crash course” in the latest products on the floral market. From left: Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA, Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF, J. Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF, and Julie Poeltler, AIFD, CAFA, PFCI.

The University of PPS hosted hundreds of students, attendees, in September during SAF Maui 2016, SAF’s 132nd Annual Convention. Shelley Pease, AAF, owner of Shelley’s Flowers & Gifts in Waldoboro, Maine, was one of them.

“Each year, we get to see, touch and handle all the products in a fun, relaxing, entertaining atmosphere. I have a chance to talk to the vendors and my peers about products that I may not know exist,” said Pease, who celebrated her eighth SAF convention in Maui. “The thing I look forward to the most at

the Premier Products Showcase is how the speakers showcase the new products in innovative ways.”

SAF’s Professional Floral Communicators - International (PFCI) presents the annual Premier Products Showcase (PPS). The PFCI Board clowned around with a circus theme in 2015, and discoed through a groovy ‘70s flashback in 2014.

This year, the PFCI Board took the program to higher education. Highlighting new products and services were “Student Body Representative” **Jenny Behlings, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, SDCF**, of Jenny’s Floral in Custer, South Dakota; “Magna Cum Laude Grad Student” **Julie Poeltler, AIFD, CAFA, PFCI**, of Fountain of Flowers & Gifts in Lone Tree, Iowa; “Athletic Supporter and Referee” **Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA**, and “Professor” **J. Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, PFCI**, both of Blumz by...JRDesigns in metro Detroit; “School Spirit Leader” **D Damon Samuel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NAFD, NMF**, of the Bill Doran Company in Omaha, Nebraska; “School Spirit Leader” **Lisa Weddel, AAF, AIFD, PFCI**, of L. Weddel Design in Highlands Ranch.

These campus characters called attention to countless cool tech tools, impressive hard goods, fabulous fresh products and upcoming events, and postulated on their practical possibilities.

Here are the crib notes from this wild and crazy class on some of the featured products and services that can help boost your profitability grade. 🌸

**Jenny Scala** is SAF’s director of marketing and communications and staff liaison to the Professional Floral Communicators - International. [jscala@safnow.org](mailto:jscala@safnow.org)

## Pretty Petals



The Garden Rose ‘**Juliet (Ausjameson)**’ by **Green Valley Floral** won Best in Class honors at the 2016 Outstanding Varieties Competition. “Perfect for weddings and events,” Samuel said. “Beautiful color. The soft peachy shades of Juliet combine well with other colors, creating a feeling of warmth and romance.” > [greenvalleyfloral.com](http://greenvalleyfloral.com)



“Now available from **Equiflor/Rio Roses** is a brand new year-round production of ranunculus,” Yelverton said. “‘**Rio Ranunculus**’ are extremely beautiful and delicate flowers with ruffles of paper-thin petals and an outstanding vase life of up to 10 days.” > [rioroses.com](http://rioroses.com)



“Fragrance is the next big thing,” Behlings said as she held up ‘**Lavender**’ by **Royal Flowers**. “Beautiful lavender. Beautiful fragrance. Beautiful blue.” > [royalflowersecuador.com](http://royalflowersecuador.com)



## Robust Websites



"Start your engines," Raska said. "Get your website accelerated. **TeamFloral** comes in and posts pictures on your website, and consumers buy them over and over again." The **Web Acceleration Program** includes monthly website updates, a wedding gallery link, two weekly Facebook posts, and a monthly web coach meeting. > [teamfloral.com](http://teamfloral.com)

**UFN** builds user-friendly, highly efficient **Online Stores**. "Its whole premise is pushing you the local florist," Behlings said. "Smart Sales Funnel. Smartphone-ready. One-page checkout. State of the art. Get empowered." > [ufn.com](http://ufn.com)

## Online Opportunities



"**Floristopia** makes it easy for consumers to find a local florist," Samuel said. "Right now florists can claim their listing or add their shop and become a verified local florist for free by using code 'HAPPY.'" Created by Cheryl and Brad Denham of Arizona Family Florist in Phoenix, Floristopia is searchable by city, state or zip code and includes social integration and ratings and reviews. > [floristopia.com](http://floristopia.com)

"How many of you have a phone?" Weddel asked to illustrate the importance of reaching consumers on the go. **Strider Online Marketing** offers a **Mobile Marketing Suite** that includes a mobile coupon system, a client loyalty system, text and email marketing options, user-friendly dashboard and a way to track promotion performance. > [striderseo.com](http://striderseo.com)

## FOR EXTRA CREDIT

Check out all the premier products at [safnow.org/pps](http://safnow.org/pps).

Get your products and services in the next Premier Products Showcase. Contact SAF's Jenny Scala, [jscalas@safnow.org](mailto:jscalas@safnow.org)

Learn more about getting certified by PFCI, the floral industry's speakers bureau. Applications are due Jan. 27, 2017, for membership induction at SAF Palm Beach 2017. [safnow.org/pfci](http://safnow.org/pfci)

## Hip Happenings



"It's like 'Schoolhouse Rock,'" Behlings said about SAF's Congressional Action Days, March 13-14, 2017, when floral industry members visit lawmakers on Capitol Hill. "You get to talk to important people. Speak up and let your voice be heard." > [safnow.org/congressional-action-days](http://safnow.org/congressional-action-days).

**CALFlowers**, the California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers, presents its next **Fun 'N Sun Convention** Aug. 9-12, 2017, at the Park Hyatt Aviara Resort in Carlsbad, California. "Everyone is excited about its grower tours," Weddel said. > [cafgs.org](http://cafgs.org)



"Did you know that FTD and Hallmark were both founded in 1910?" asked Behlings. "They're BFFs." FTD and Hallmark come together to offer the **FTD Hallmark Flowers Everyday Combo Pack** to celebrate birthdays, love, just because, and peace and comfort. > [ftdi.com](http://ftdi.com)

## Everyday Essentials



"Same great product in a slimmer can," Raska said about the ergonomically designed **Leafshine Slim Can** by **Chrysal**. "It's easy to hang onto and easy to stock on your shelves." > [chrysalusa.com](http://chrysalusa.com)

The handcrafted **Weeping Angel** by **BloomNet** is an add-on for a sympathy floral arrangement, plant or dish garden, Behlings said. "It's a keepsake angel for the yard." > [bloomnet.net](http://bloomnet.net)

## Design Enhancements

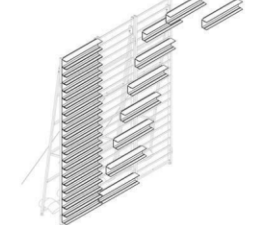


"Don't let the party start without it," Raska said about **Carnival** by **Berwick Offray LLC**, **Lion Ribbon Company, LLC**. Available in 13 colors, use the ribbon for small favors and gift packaging, floral and bridal bouquets and larger bows and home décor. > [berwickoffraywholesale.com](http://berwickoffraywholesale.com), [lionribbon.com](http://lionribbon.com)

**Design Master color tool, inc.**, added Blush, Maroon and Pacific Blue to its **Colortool Spray** lineup, new trend colors for fresh flowers, Styrofoam brand foam and hard surfaces. "We're going to cheer for Design Master," Weddel said. "Always a leader." > [dmcolor.com](http://dmcolor.com)

"**Smithers-Oasis** has what it takes to make your table great," Samuel said. The **Oasis Destinations Collection Fabric Wraps** include Sequin, Raw Jute, Natural Bark and Cotton Lace. > [oasisfloral.com](http://oasisfloral.com)

## Showstoppers



"There's no need to extend an olive branch when you have a **Wildwood Branch**," Raska said. Available in silver and gold, Wildwood measures 40.5 inches by 14.5 inches by 13.5 inches, and includes seven votives. **Accent Decor, Inc.**, has a smaller version coming this winter. > [accentdecor.com](http://accentdecor.com)

"This is a cutting-edge product," Weddel said about the **Flower Wall** by **Floral Mechanics**. "Ever since the Kardashian wedding, brides want a flower wall. They're labor-intensive. This product features plastic slides, so you can build it at your studio." > [floralmechanics.com](http://floralmechanics.com)



*EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the eleventh in an 18-month series that tackles essential flower shop accounting, financial management and benchmarking best practices. See previous columns in the digital archives, [safnow.org/floralmanagement](http://safnow.org/floralmanagement).*

# STOP THE SHRINK

BY DERRICK MYERS, CPA, CFP



## What Is Shrink?

"If you want to be profitable, watch your cost of goods sold (COGS)."

That sentence is a constant refrain for retail florists, right? But how many florists understand what keeping COGS in check entails? To really monitor your COGS, you must understand the difference between COGS and purchases.

In a nutshell, COGS is the cost of the items that you have sold; purchases are the cost of the items you have bought that have not been or will never be sold. Notice that subtle difference? Purchases include perishable products and durable goods that are now in inventory, as well as items that have been broken, damaged, stolen or given away. It also includes product that has died or disappeared by some other means. Collectively, this category of goods is called "shrink."

Most florists actually do a pretty good job of pricing the product so they make a profit. So why do so many flower shops have COGS that are higher than they should be? The answer is "shrink." Unless you have shrink under control, your COGS will never be.

An acceptable shrink percentage for fresh product is 5 percent or less, which is calculated by writing down everything you throw away and then relating that back to purchases. Alternatively, you can look at the total cost of flowers and greens compared to total fresh sales. As long as it's 25 percent or lower, you've hit your target and shrink on fresh product is not a problem.

## What Makes Shrink Tricky?

Florists are in the business of feelings and artistry; designers want their work to be beautiful. They want it to be admired, talked about, photographed, pinned and ultimately requested again or duplicated by someone else. Sometimes, they can get so caught up in the creation that they don't pay attention to the actual cost of the products they've used, or they just estimate.

In my experience, most florists also want to exceed people's expectations and be as generous as possible.

Unfortunately, many of these well-intentioned impulses are ultimately bad for business.

## Best Practices:

Here are some strategies to help florists get a handle on the most common shrink areas:

**Broken, damaged:** Thanks to changes along the supply chain and, frankly, increased competition among retail florists and their competitors, broken and damaged flowers are less of a problem today than they were in the 1990s. Nonetheless, flowers are often fragile and accidents happen. To minimize damage in your shop, promote proper care and handling of fresh flowers. Also make sure breakables are stored properly and safely to reduce careless accidents. If you receive damaged goods from suppliers be sure to immediately contact them to arrange for credit.

**Dead:** Again, thanks to advances in flower processing and cold chain management, dead flowers are less of a problem today compared to 15 years ago. Still, challenges remain. For instance, poor planning can result in over-purchasing, particularly for events. Florists are left with more flowers than they need and not enough time to sell them. One solution is to create and use a proper budget, a topic which will be addressed in a future article.

**Stolen:** Florists tend to be kind and look for the good in everyone, but there are some people who will take advantage of your trust. Have cameras throughout your stores and stockrooms to watch over your goods. You never know whether employees are removing something without your permission. Employees have been known to walk out of shops with just about anything, from a few flowers to office supplies. I once heard about a staff member who was putting cases of sellable product out with the trash, then picking it up and taking it home when they left for the day. So put systems in place to keep "the honest people honest," including periodically checking the trash to ensure that only dead and damaged product is being disposed.

**Given away:** Florists are constantly giving away flowers for legitimate business reasons, such as promotions, donations and customer acquisition. Always evaluate the giveaway, ensuring that you are receiving the recognition from it that you deserve. Another concept is to give a gift card instead of product (be sure the card has an expiration date on it). Many gift cards are never used, and when they are redeemed you have the opportunity to upsell the customer beyond the value of the card.

**Stuffing:** The biggest problem florists face when it comes to shrink is stuffing. It falls on owners and managers to gently rein in designers and keep them on budget. The only way I know to do that is to have them count the flowers and greens that they use in the arrangements. All of the flowers should be priced in the design room so that the designer knows the retail cost. They must also know the formula that you are using to price the arrangements, including the percentage of labor, amount of hard goods and supplies, and finally how much they can use in greens and flowers. Each arrangement needs to have an inventory sheet of its content and someone needs to count it and price it to make sure the amounts are appropriate for the sale price.

## Don't Do This:

Because stuffing is the biggest shrink challenge florists face, I can't emphasize this final point enough: Don't allow designers, even those who are very experienced, to estimate or "eyeball" an arrangement. The strategy doesn't work. Designers who guess routinely underestimate a purchase price for the arrangement they have created, or they use too much product for the price point that was already set. Either way, your store loses.

**Derrick P. Myers, CPA, CFP, PFCI**, is vice president of Crockett, Myers & Associates, a financial management and accounting firm that has been working with florists for more than 30 years.  
[derrick@crockettmyers.com](mailto:derrick@crockettmyers.com) 

## Industry News

### AFE HONORS INDIVIDUALS BEHIND NEW NAMED FUNDS

> Nearly 300 industry members attended the American Floral Endowment's 2016 Annual Fundraising Dinner, held Sept. 22 in conjunction with SAF Maui 2016, the Society of American Florists' annual convention.

The evening recognized five families/organizations that have created new named funds. Over the past five years, 19 named funds have been created, totaling more than \$3.5 million. This year's new named funds are:

- BioWorks Fund - \$50,000
- Blackmore Family Fund - \$100,000
- Carlstedt's LLC Fund - \$27,000
- Tagawa Family Fund - \$105,000
- Yoshimi and Grace Shibata Family Fund - \$200,000

The Endowment also recognized the following donors for reaching new giving levels:

#### **Builders Club** (more than \$25,000)

- Accent Décor
- Gardens America
- Mayesh Wholesale Florist Inc.

#### **Benefactors Club** (more than \$20,000)

- Golden Flowers

#### **Patrons Club** (more than \$15,000)

- Billy Heroman's
- The Queen's Flowers

Read more at [endowment.org](http://endowment.org).



### ESMERALDA FARMS BV IN HOLLAND CLOSES



**EVERYTHING IS GONE** At Esmeralda Farms' farm in Ethiopia, protestors destroyed tractors, trucks, containers and the packaging hall, along with irrigation pumps and the company's greenhouses. "Everything is gone," according to Director Loui Hooijman.

> Esmeralda Farms BV in Holland has closed its doors and laid off its employees as of Sept. 6. The news came after a devastating attack by anti-government protestors on the company's farm in Ethiopia.

According to Bloomberg News, a large group "invaded Esmeralda Farms Inc.'s farm 13 kilometers (8 miles) south of Bahir Dar city in the Amhara region on Aug. 29, causing about 7 million euros (\$7.8 million) of damage. Flower farms in the area owned by Israeli, Italian, Indian and Belgian companies were among nine commercial properties damaged in the protests."

Only one person was injured in the attack, according to a statement by Director Loui Hooijman, who put the

damage estimate at 10 million euros. Hooijman writes that Esmeralda started activity in Ethiopia in 2014, with the first 25 hectares coming into production in 2015. The farm grew mainly spray roses and gypsophila. About 30 to 40 percent of Esmeralda Farms' flowers came from Ethiopia. There were three shipments of flowers from Ethiopia to Aalsmeer, Holland, per week.

At press time, Maja Buljovic, marketing coordinator of Connectaflor, which distributes the Esmeralda brand in North America, said she didn't have much information beyond the company's initial statement.

"We don't have any further information other than what is released and the fact that due to the problem, Esmeralda has closed the Holland operation and those customers who were purchasing product through Esmeralda Holland are now purchasing from the farm in Ecuador directly," Buljovic said.

The company has a long, rich history in the floral industry. Peter Ullrich, former CEO and president of Esmeralda Farms Inc., passed away on June 29 surrounded by loved ones after a difficult battle with cancer. In 1972, Ullrich was one of the first growers to establish a presence in Latin America, opening Flores Esmeralda in Medellin, Colombia. 🌿

### CONGRESSMAN VISITS OREGON FLOWER FARM

> Rep. Kurt Schrader, a Democrat representing the state's fifth district, toured Oregon Flowers in Aurora on Sept. 16. During his visit he talked to owner Martin Meskers, AAF, president of the Society of American Florists, and Meskers' family.

It was the first time Schrader had visited the operation, but it wasn't the first time the lawmaker has heard about Oregon Flowers. Each year during the Society of American Florists' Congressional Action Days, Meskers makes a point to visit Schrader's office.

"I think lawmakers like to come visit their constituents," Meskers said. "What I asked for him to do for us was simple — just, any time a vote comes up in Washington, think of us. Remember the small businesses you're representing."

SAF can help you connect with lawmakers. Find out more by emailing [smcburney@safnow.org](mailto:smcburney@safnow.org).



**VIP VISIT** Rep. Kurt Schrader, a Democrat representing the Oregon's fifth district, toured Oregon Flowers in Aurora in late summer. "It was a good visit," said owner Martin Meskers, AAF, president of the Society of American Florists (also shown, Helene Meskers).



## Industry News

GOVERNOR SIGNS  
CALIFORNIA  
OVERTIME BILL

> The governor of California signed a bill in September that grants agriculture workers the same right to overtime pay as other Californians.

Assembly Bill 1066 will roll out new rules for overtime in 2019, lowering the current 10-hour-day threshold for overtime by half an hour each year until it reaches the standard eight-hour day by 2022. It also will phase in a 40-hour standard workweek for the first time.

A number of major agricultural producers, led by the California Farm Bureau Federation and including the California Cut Flower Commission, opposed the legislation.

A video created by that coalition accuses lawmakers of singling out agriculture and saddling farmers with higher costs that, coupled with increases to the minimum wage, could be “devastating” to companies and communities.

Ben Dobbe, COO and senior sales executive of Holland America Flowers in Nipomo, California, said the bill could ultimately hurt employees “big time.”

Dobbe explained that if the bill passes, employees “will not be allowed to work more than 55 hours per week in 2017, not more than 50 hours in 2018, not more than 45 hours in 2019, and not more than 40 hours in 2020,” he explained. “We cannot afford to pay any overtime, so we cannot allow any of our employees to work any overtime hours.”

Coupled with the effects of the minimum wage increase, he added, “the bottom line for our employees, and likely for employees on most other farms, is that they will lose working hours gradually over the next four years to a 40-hour workweek in 2020.”

COSENTINO'S FLORIST NAMED TELEFLORA'S  
FLORAL RETAILER OF THE YEAR

> Carmen Cosentino, AAF, PFCI, of Cosentino's Florist, a third-generation floral shop in Auburn, New York, has won the second annual Tom Butler “Floral Retailer of the Year.” The honor was presented in September during SAF Maui 2016, the Society of American Florists' annual convention.

Teleflora established the award in honor of Teleflora's past chairman, Tom Butler, AAF, PFCI, who led Teleflora in its mission to serve as a trusted business partner, friend and innovator to independent retail florists across the U.S. and Canada since 1995.

“Carmen's proven dedication, leadership and expertise within the floral industry, as well as within his local community has held the standard for over three generations, and is a testament to why he deserves our recognition,” said Jack Howard, executive vice president of national accounts at Teleflora.

Cosentino was named to the SAF Hall of Fame in 1998. In 2008, he received the Professional Floral Communicators-International Tommy Bright Award, among many other honors.



**AWARDS GLOW** Teleflora presented its second Tom Butler “Floral Retailer of the Year” award during SAF Maui 2016. Pictured left to right. Back row: Michael Martin, Kelly McKeone, Rick Davis, Darrell Housden, David Dancer. Front row: Jessica Cosentino, AAF; award winner Carmen Cosentino, AAF, PFCI; Becky Butler; Guy Cosentino; Cassie Walker; and Jack Howard.)

## SAF HIRES DIGITAL STRATEGY MANAGER



**SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY** Max Duchaine brings a wealth of experience in new media and digital marketing practices to the new position of digital strategy manager at SAF.

> Max Duchaine joined the Society of American Florists on Sept. 7 after working in both the nonprofit and business worlds. A 2011 graduate of Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia, Duchaine brings experience in new media and digital marketing practices to the new position.

“I consider myself to be a creative problem solver with an analytics-first mentality,” Duchaine said.

Duchaine has developed successful digital marketing strategies - including social media, search engine and email marketing - for his two previous employers, a B2B business and a national association.

That experience helped set Duchaine apart from a competitive field of applicants, according to SAF CEO Peter Moran. In addition, Duchaine's “great people skills” make him uniquely qualified for the position, Moran added, which SAF created after the departure of its longtime CIO Renato Sogueco, who joined BloomNet this summer.

“Not only is Max completely up on all of the most progressive digital marketing and branding strategies — he's also a great communicator, very comfortable talking tech with veterans and rookies alike,” Moran said. Those skills will come in handy when Duchaine presents technology programs at SAF events and helps SAF members troubleshoot their technology challenges one-on-one throughout the year.

## Plugged In BY CRYSTAL VILKAITIS

### APPS TO FALL FOR THIS SEASON

> There's a reason "there's an app for that" became a catchphrase. It seems like there is an app for everything these days. And while you might use the apps on your mobile device for many personal tasks, such as sharing pictures, they can also be a great tool for small-business owners who want to streamline operations, improve their online presence, get organized and much more.

Here are the apps — some new and some classics — that my team and I can't stop talking about this fall!

#### Classics

##### Dropbox

When it comes to cloud-based storage, Dropbox is one of the top competitors, along with another favorite, **Google Drive**. What I love about Dropbox is that it helps me get the information I need whether I am on my phone, on my tablet or on my computer. I can easily save a photo to Dropbox on my computer, open the file on my phone and post to Instagram. In a world where florists wear dozens of hats, this app will help you seamlessly switch from one activity (hat!) to another. *(Free with paid options; Android/iOS/Desktop)*

##### Facebook Ads Manager

If you're looking for an app that works as hard as you do, even when you're on the go, then look no further than the Facebook Ads Manager app. We recommend Facebook ads to nearly all retailers. We know there are customers to greet, shelves to stock, and stock room organizing to be done, making it difficult for store owners to find time to sit down at their computer during the day. Luckily, the Facebook Ads Manager app allows you to manage and change your ads from wherever you are, so you can test what works for your business and never overspend! *(Free; Android/iOS/Desktop)*

#### Newbies

##### LetsTag

This has been a popular app to share with our retailers and florists who struggle with hashtags. Simply type in the hashtag you would like to use, and LetsTag finds hashtags that are related

to it. You can add all of the hashtags you like to a list, search different hashtags to add to your list, then copy all of the hashtags and paste them into your Instagram post. Voila! #savingsime. iPhone users can download a similar app called Tagomatic. *(Free; Android)*

##### Canva

Canva is a tool we use daily here at Crystal Media. It's a design tool that helps you create beautiful presentations, social media graphics and more. No graphic design experience required. Canva launched its app for iPhone users a couple months ago, but it has yet to come out with an app for Android users. An alternative is the app **Desygner**, which has many of the features of Canva and is available on iOS, Android and desktop. *(Free with paid options; iOS/Desktop)*

##### Fontee

Layering text over photos can be a great way to get your message across, but it can be hard to find the right app to use to make it happen. I love this app because it allows you to add text to a photo or to a plain, colored or stock background. iPhone users can download the app **A Beautiful Mess** for their text-over-graphic needs. *(Free; Android)*

##### GIFYme

GIFs are an interesting mix of photo and video, and they perform great on social media. Make your own GIFs with this app by uploading your media and letting GIFYme take it from there. Android users can download the **Gif Me!** Camera. *(Free; iOS)*

##### Quik

A GoPro product, Quik does exactly what its name suggests: helps you quickly create a video, complete with music, filters and more. You can edit the videos to make them unique, or you can simply sift through a selection of pre-paired effects for a fun video in minutes. *(Free; Android/iOS)*

##### Todoist

If you've got a to-do list, you need Todoist. Todoist helps you manage your to-do list with labels, the ability to create projects, the ability to assign tasks to others, and even an analytics feature that allows you to see just how productive you are. Todoist helps my team and me stay organized, on schedule and feeling productive. *(Free with paid options; Android/iOS/Desktop)*

**Crystal Vilkaitis is the owner of Crystal Media, a company that helps independent retailers enhance their local brand and increase foot traffic and sales through social media. [heycrystalmedia.com](http://heycrystalmedia.com).**



**SOCIAL STATS** Crystal Vilkaitis' "ABCs of Social Media Advertising" proved to be one of the most popular programs at the Society of American Florists' 132nd annual convention (see p. 10). Vilkaitis spends much of her time figuring out what really works online: One of her initiatives, Social Edge ([socialedge.co](http://socialedge.co)) is an online membership group exclusive to retailers looking to gain an edge over competition using social media.



# What Sets Us Apart...



All products tightly integrated. Same consistent data across all products



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New feature requests implemented in days!  
Not months or years



Most personal and responsive support in the industry



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## gotFlowers?

*The Most Powerful Florist Platform*

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GotFlowers is NOT a Wire Service company.  
Our products help retail florists become independent and most profitable.

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<http://www.gotflowers.com>  
[info@gotflowers.com](mailto:info@gotflowers.com)

gotFlowers?

## Business of Design

### SUCCULENT STUNNERS

> Over the past five years, succulents have become increasingly popular, according to Jo Buttram, AAF, owner of Shirley's Flowers in Rogers, Arkansas. "They're definitely crowd pleasers," she said. "All ages and genders are Buttram, too, is a fan. "A big thing, for me, is that I can stock up on them without worry because they can last indefinitely with proper care," she said. Many varieties come in greenish-gray tones that mix seamlessly with a range of color schemes. Furthermore, they add instant texture, raising a design's perceived value. "Succulents are great staples to have in the shop," she said. "They're easy to work with and easy to sell."

Here are three of Shirley's top sellers. 🌿

Find complete recipes at [safnow.org/moreonline](http://safnow.org/moreonline).

Katie Hendrick [khendrick@safnow.org](mailto:khendrick@safnow.org)



**MODERN MARVEL** Buttram's husband, Randy, filled a 42-inch by 7-inch metal container with soil, moss and 10 large succulents for the couple's dining room table. "This design is very low maintenance — we just spritz it with water and go about our business," she said. It's also popular with the shop's corporate clients. Design time: 10 to 15 minutes. Wholesale cost: \$80. Suggested retail price: \$250.



**LOVELY LINES** Buttram called this design by Aaron LeMaster "a home run." The pavé style puts broken heads and short stems to good use (minimizing dump), and because flowers are so close to the water source, the arrangement has exceptional longevity. "Customers love the contemporary look and how long it lasts," Buttram said. Design time: 15 minutes. Wholesale cost: \$28. Suggested retail price: \$90.



**WHIMSICAL WHEELS** Amanda Shugart, a millennial designer, created this "super simple" arrangement that really resonates with young clients, Buttram said. Design time: 5 minutes or less. Wholesale cost: \$19. Suggested retail price: \$50.





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15. 1-Day Profit Blast
16. Annual Convention

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17. Contact SAF staff for advice on technology, marketing and more
18. Free 15-minute legal consultation with attorney Paula A. Calimafde with law firm Paley Rothman, and a free test call and analysis with sales trainer Tim Huckabee of FloralStrategies

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19. Negative floral publicity response
20. Government advocacy

**This is just scratching the surface!**



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# SAF MAUI 2016

SEPTEMBER 21-24 | 132<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION

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to the individuals and organizations who helped make SAF Maui 16 a success!



### 2016 Convention Task Force

Robert Aykens, AAF, Memorial Florists & Greenhouses, Inc.

Kyle Brown, Lone Star Bloom

Doug Cole, D.S. Cole Growers, Inc.

Kate Delaney, AAF, Matlack Florist, Inc.

Cheryl Denham, Arizona Family Florist

Paul Fowle, Transflora/DV Flora

Michael Mooney, Dramm & Echter, Inc.

Skip Paal, AAF, Rutland Beard Floral Group

Michael Pugh, AAF, Pugh's Flowers

Kaitlin Radebaugh, AAF, Radebaugh Florist & Greenhouses

Heather Waits, Bloomtastic Florist

### Design Team

Lorraine Cooper, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NDSF, *Chair*

Brian Vetter, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, AzMF *Vice Chair*

Sylvia Bird, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NDSF

Corey Harbour, AIFD, NAFD, PFCI

Alex Jackson, AAF, AIFD, PFCI

Ian Prosser, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NDSF

Mark Vaughan

**Thank you to the 2016 Floral Design Team for volunteering their time and talents**

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

*Convention Design Chairman*

Lorraine Cooper, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, NDSF

*Outstanding Varieties Competition Coordinators*

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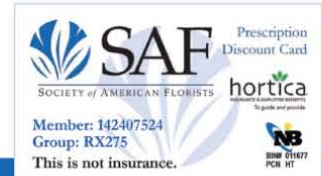
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#### What kinds of questions? Here's a sample of what floral business owners want to know:

- "Do I have to pay my salespeople overtime?"
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- "We did our job, but the bride wants half her money back... can you look at the contract?"
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- "Is it possible to copyright a floral design?"
- "Do we have the right retirement plan?"
- "We want to sell the business to the kids but I'm worried about taxes. Where do we start?"

Through the partnership, SAF members can contact attorney Paula A. Calimafde (Kal-i-MAF-da) for a free 15-minute legal consultation at 301-951-9325. Be sure to mention your SAF membership.

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## Care and Handling

### A BETTER WAY TO SHIP HYDRANGEAS?

➤ Here's a problem that's long frustrated hydrangea growers as well as wholesalers and retailers who buy the increasingly popular cut flower: botrytis. Namely, how to stop the fungus from ruining flowers.

In the past year, one floral company, Chrysal Inc., has been leveraging best practices from the food industry to reimagine how hydrangeas and, eventually, other flowers could be shipped. Growers involved in the test say the new solution just might work.

#### The Problem of Botrytis

To keep hydrangeas hydrated on the journey from farms (many of them in South America) to wholesale houses or retail florists, growers in recent years have attached a small bag filled with water to the end of each stem.

This approach solves the problem of hydration, but it creates other headaches. The bags, filled with about 1 ounce of water each, create humidity in the shipment box; open a box of hydrangeas shipped in this manner and you are likely to see condensation along the silicon packing sleeves.



**A HOLE LOT BETTER** A year in development, a system for wrapping hydrangea in plastic with strategically sized and placed holes is showing promise as a cost effective way to keep the blooms hydrated during shipping and reduce botrytis.

Humidity and condensation create ideal conditions for botrytis. What's more, the bags can rupture en route to their final destination, creating a mess and potentially ruining shipments.

From a cost perspective, the bags have also been an imperfect solution. They are tied on manually at the grower level — sometimes by dozens working solely on this task — and they add weight (about 1 kilo per shipment, typically) and, therefore, increase costs along the supply chain.

#### A Modified Solution

Noting these problems, Chrysal began working on a new solution about a year ago. For inspiration, the company turned to modified atmosphere/modified humidity packaging, a process the food industry has been using for years.

The Chrysal FreshLiner "is a modified humidity packaging that can be used for long-distance transport by growers or international transport companies," explained Jim Kaplan, president of Chrysal USA.

Using a specialized micro-perforated poly bag that has holes throughout to encourage the mixing of oxygen and carbon dioxide, "we're really drilling down to control for humidity," Kaplan said.

With the Chrysal approach, growers situate the poly bag in the transport box before placing fully hydrated flowers inside. (The hydrated part is important — because they won't have a bag of water to drink from, flowers need to start off in good, hydrated condition.)

"Close the lid of the box, and the hydrangeas are ready for transport," said Kaplan.

#### Head of the Class

So far, growers involved with tests have seen good results.

Hydrangea grower and exporter Mike Henriquez of Valley Springs in Miami received a test shipment this fall. The flowers shipped with FreshLiner left the farm on Oct. 8 and arrived in Miami on Oct. 9. Henriquez opened the box 10 days later and compared the test hydrangeas to flowers sent at the same time with a water bag attached to each stem.

"Overall, the test flowers looked better, with less spotting," Henriquez said, adding that the new packaging also extended vase life by about five days. "I was impressed."

Chrysal also has started testing the packaging on other flowers, including stock. This fall Ocean View Flowers in Lompoc, California, reported a three-day vase life increase in its test stock.

The new approach has also helped cut costs by eliminating the need for the bags and the labor required to attach them and by reducing shipping costs (by as much as 80 or 90 cents per kilo, according to Kaplan). Another benefit? Because the water bags usually extend about 4 inches up the stem, florists could potentially have longer stems to work with (and no messy bag to cut off).

#### Future Applications?

Chrysal started with hydrangeas, knowing botrytis was a problem in those shipments and because the cut flower has become increasingly popular, with more growers producing hydrangeas and more consumers clamoring for them.

The hardest part in that process, according to Kaplan, was perfecting that micro-perforated poly bag, making sure the holes throughout were of the right diameter and spacing to facilitate the proper exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

"That's been the biggest challenge, by far, and it's what we spent most of the last year working on," he admitted.

He said the company would like to develop a similar product for roses, but to do that, it will have to again create a bag with the exact right holes.

Kaplan, however, said he's excited to be moving forward.

"We're hoping to get more growers and wholesalers around the U.S. to help us test it," he said, "because the results have been really good." 🌿

**Mary Westbrook is the senior contributing editor for the Society of American Florists. [mwestbrook@safnow.org](mailto:mwestbrook@safnow.org).**



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