

# Q & A

## Keeping it Local in Montana

**Who:** Cindy Hanson

**What:** The Herb & Garden: Nature Inspired Floral Design

<http://theherbandgarden.com/>

**Where:** Helena, Montana

**About:** Opened in 2014, The Herb & Garden is a floral shop and more. Inside you might find just the right potted plant to add to your succulent collection. Or perhaps in the summer months you'll find garden flowers that have been cut that morning and loosely arranged in a recycled container. Springtime offers potted bulbs, tulips, or violets. Montana's fall and winter is time to gather summertime's dried flowers into arrangements for hearth or holiday table decor.

**Square Footage:** 425 square feet

**Specialties:** Local deliveries, wedding florals

**Sourcing Practices:** The Herb & Garden's cut flowers are sourced locally, regionally or domestically.

**Seasonal sourcing:** Our season runs from early June through October 1st when Helena typically has its first frost. We buy from local flower farms including my own, **Buffalo Horn Gardens**, and **Glory Farm**, **Cottonwood Farm**, **Mo's Flowers** and **Flynn Peonies**.

**Seasonal varieties:** June – delphinium, painted daisy, lady's mantle, yellow allium, foxgloves, dianthus and peonies; late June/July – yarrow, sweet peas, zinnias, statice, sunflowers and heliopsis; late Summer-Fall – dahlias, sunflowers, amaranth, broom corn, as well as locally-harvested grasses, lavender and flowering branches brought in by friends.

**Off-season sourcing:** **Washington Bulb**, **Mayesh Wholesale Florist**, **Florabundance** and **Westmont Floral**. From about February through May, my tulips come from Washington Bulb and I order once per week. I like Mayesh for their weekly pulls and custom wedding orders. The Mayesh pull is their choice from the Los Angeles branch. I specify how much I want to spend (usually \$300-\$400 at a time). I also specify that I want all domestic flowers. My representative sends me a photo of what is in the pull and I can add or subtract product if need be. I order from Florabundance for some of the everyday needs and longer-lasting stems. I do have a local wholesaler who carries American-grown product and I typically buy all my greens, some roses and lilies from them. I always check to see if the products are U.S. grown. When I order product being shipped, I always write a note in the comment section that I order domestic only.

**Best flowers to ship:** Through a lot of trial and error, I've learned about flowers that ship well (and those that do not). Washington Bulb tulips are well packed and I think the best quality. They also have French tulips, which several of my customers wait for every week. Mayesh's pulls force me to be creative because I receive items that I have never used



Above & below, (right) Photos by Thom Bridge, (Below, left) Photo by Cindy Hansen.



before – so I have to look for design inspiration from fellow creatives. I have found that dahlias do not ship well so I'm always excited when the local ones are in season. I also love when local friends call and ask, 'Would you like some meadow rue, Chinese lanterns, pussy willows or lilac branches? That's just the best.'

**Advice for others:** "I supplement my brick-and-mortar floral business with houseplants and specialty orchids that customers have come to love."

**Sources for new customers:** Word of mouth (I can't stress that enough), my web site, Facebook and making floral donations to local nonprofits.

**Social Media:** Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheHerbAndGarden/>  
Instagram: @theherbandgarden  
Google Business listing ■