SLOW FLOWERS

BY JESSIE RIZZI

IN THE COMMERCIAL CUT-FLOWER INDUSTRY, it's not easy being green. Most cut flowers are airlifted with pesticides, legally brought in from central and southern America. The industry demands fertilized production, and some of its products (like roses) are especially susceptible to pests and fungus.

To counteract mass production, many commercial flowers need hundreds and thou-
sands at “flower seasons” from field to international flower market to wholesaler to retailer. Today, however, natural barriers are gaining attention and, chal-
ing the status quo. An influx of eco-conscious growers and designers are rethinking the world Slow Flowers Movement—a suite of savvy sellers and other advocates furthering their cause.

It’s safe to say that Amy Stover brings the concept of the “sustainably-
ably cut flower” to public awareness through her ringing New York Times column, “Flower Gardening” (American Books, 2007). And her magnum of consummate growers even more at the Slow Flower Movement gains ground. “There are a lot of nuances to help local when it comes to flowers,” Stover tells. “You can minimize really think, composed, and deliberate. A further point explored is Debra Prinzing’s beautifully pho-
ogaphed, insightful book ”The 50 Mile Bouquet: Our Lynn’s Pins, 2012.” When
asked why she wrote the book, Debra said, “It’s about the emotional elements of flower farmers and eco-conscious floral designers. I discovered the beginnings of a social shift in local, seasonal, and sustainable flowers. This book allows to put a face on the flower farmer and help conscious make a connection between growers and the flowers they bring into their homes.”

And connecting the public with local farmers is entirely done through the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCF) as an organization founded in 1998 to help conscious Rural local growers. Polly Hookham, Flower

sustainable growers are making headlines here, too. “A handful of beauti-
now grown around the country produce beautiful American roses and strive to be sustainable” says Debra. “It’s common to think of flowers in fresh from the farm, and then to envision a packaged flower that doesn’t last. This isn’t a problem for the Slow Flower Movement.”

So in that market, there’s a way. Ultimately, public demand driven by grow-
er awareness, will prove the Slow Flower Movement to keep naturally beautiful flow-
ers doing our flower event and making it happen. As Polly Hookham puts it, “Sustainable flowers are growing and better for us all.”

RESOURCES

- Love N Fresh Flowers
lovensfreshflowers.com

- Lulea’s Lavender
theslowflower.com

- Red Earth Farm
redearthfarm.com

- Greenaminer
greenaminer.com

By Jessie Rizzi

In the Commercial Cut-Flower Industry, it’s not easy being green. Most cut flowers are airlifted with pesticides, legally brought in from central and southern America. The industry demands fertilized production, and some of its products (like roses) are especially susceptible to pests and fungus.

To counter mass production, many commercial flowers need hundreds and thousands at “flower seasons” from field to international flower market to wholesaler to retailer. Today, however, natural barriers are gaining attention and challenging the status quo. An influx of eco-conscious growers and designers are rethinking the world Slow Flowers Movement—a suite of savvy sellers and other advocates furthering their cause.

It’s safe to say that Amy Stover brings the concept of the “sustainably cultivated flower” to public awareness through her ringing New York Times column, “Flower Gardening” (American Books, 2007). And her magnum opus of consummate growers even more at the Slow Flower Movement gains ground. “There are a lot of nuances to help local when it comes to flowers,” Stover tells. “You can minimize really think, composed, and deliberate. A further point explored is Debra Prinzing’s beautifully photographed, insightful book “The 50 Mile Bouquet: Our Lynn’s Pins, 2012.” When asked why she wrote the book, Debra said, “It’s about the emotional elements of flower farmers and eco-conscious floral designers. I discovered the beginnings of a social shift in local, seasonal, and sustainable flowers. This book allows to put a face on the flower farmer and help conscious make a connection between growers and the flowers they bring into their homes.”

And connecting the public with local farmers is entirely done through the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCF) as an organization founded in 1998 to help conscious Rural local growers. Polly Hookham, Flower farmer and current president of the ASCFG, says “as an organization we don’t do the organic stuff, but we encourage good land stewardship, sustainable practices, and connec-
ting the public with local growers is part of our year-round goal, and this relationship is a big for our local flowers.”

Pennsylvania has a good state of pioneering local flower production—inc in central and southern metropolitan areas where demand is greatest. Successful small scale growers are rare and they supply fewer markets and shops statewide, but of these, a few have taken the cut-flower business that are truly extraordinary.

Jessica Levy, of Love N’ Fresh Flowers, is one of the most sustainable FL growers. She has the use of pruning of a three-
square flower farm in Upper Rossborough, just outside Philadelphia city limits. It only five years has manages to 1,900 different species with a work schedule that keeps growing. This is due to her beautiful flowers from the retail and wholesale, which are arranged amongst trees and shrubs that are well-known and sustainable growth. She offers a complex “tree and cem-
terpieces” package, and despite being a gifted floral designer, she considers herself a flower farmer at heart. “I grew up on a central Pennsylvania farm, so my flowers,” she says.

The signs of other flowers featuring love in their designs are hard to find. “Growing local, organic flowers is hard work,” she says. This is something Kate Spade, of the Philadelphia-based grower flower Farm Ilan and Ladona are equally some. “We’ve had four ares in production for the past 15 years—the whole farm is a high effort but work. It’s mostly more scenic—it’s easier to control pests and problems when you’re small. Still, it’s a challenge.”

Both Jessica and Kate use a lot of public awareness regarding the role of local flow-
ers as a problem. “That’s a common mis-
taken concept about our flowers. Most think they simply don’t have a choice, they’re actually more com-
cely,” Jessica says. “With the Slow Flower Movement nothing is simple, but everyone perception will change.” It’s hard competing with low-
priced imports that are loaded with pestic-
ides and herbicides.

As public awareness increases, they add, the beauty, diversity, and longevity of “green” or flowers should make themselves. In addition to being chemically-
freely, they last longer, and small growers can take more creative license with flowers, more exciting floral choices. This discovery without the baggage of imperial flowers.

According to Kay Sermon, flowers coming from a long way may require more energy to grow fresh. That is a very high energy cost. And, Kay Spade says, “Local growers are not organic. Imperial organic flowers are bedrooms before coming the country to keep pests door, out making them environmentally friendly.”

Producers are the greatest problem with this, which makes up 90 per-
cent of all flower sales (Ecology/US International Trade Commission), and the most expensive—nitrogen-based pesticides demise of the clients. Thankfully, Debra

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