



FAVOURITE RESOURCES

FOR SPECIALTY CUT
FLOWER FARMERS



OPEN FOOD
NETWORK CANADA

ORGANIZATIONS

These organizations have excellent resources and organize member events.

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCFG) – ascfg.org

Primary organization for cut flower farmers. US based with a Canadian chapter. Loads of resources for members, quarterly newsletter, annual conference, networking, farm tours and more. Essential.

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) – efao.ca

For Ontario growers this is another recommended membership. They offer an annual assembly, kitchen table groups, listservs on various topics, videos and networking. Focus is not on flowers per se, but it's a great place for info on horticultural growing generally (building soil, fertility management, weed management and more). By the way, there is a great, free, set of videos on cover cropping – look under 'Resources' on their website. Is there a provincial group you find helpful in your area? Let us know we'll add it.

Canadian Organic Growers – cog.ca

National network for farmers, backyard growers and consumers. Focus is on resources to support regenerative growing and on influencing national policy. Have some great books on managing small or large land holdings following regenerative and organic practices. There is also a comprehensive list of provincial organic organizations.

BOOKS

There are LOTS of books that can help new and experienced flower farmers. These are some of the most popular ones. Most can be purchased online via Amazon or through the ASCFG, but many are in local libraries too!

Field Guide to Specialty Cut Flowers

Allan Armitage, 2024

New in 2024! A must for growers of all scales. If you are starting out, this could be a strong starter resource for you. Not a coffee table/picture book; this is a 'guide' that goes through flower-by-flower and gives you need-to-know information on spacing, pinching, netting, soil needs, and so on. If you buy just one book about growing different cut flowers, this is it. Available through the ASCFG or Amazon.

Specialty Cut Flowers: The Production of Annuals, Perennials, Bulbs, and Woody Plants for Fresh and Dried Cut Flowers, 2nd edition

Allan Armitage & Judy Laushman, 2008

Detailed textbook for those of you who want to dig even deeper as you gain more experience. Experienced growers will turn to this multiple times a season to look things up. (It's on my bedside table all year!) Available through ASCFG or Amazon.

Postharvest Handling of Cut Flowers and Greens

Judy Lasushman (ed), 2008

Essential resource to guide your post-harvest handling. Covers most cut flowers you will grow, from amaranthus to zinnias, and tells about their harvest stage, storage requirements, and how long you can hold them for maximum vase life. Essential if you sell wholesale and need to hold flowers in a cooler. Available through ASCFG.

Herbaceous Perennial Plants: A Treatise on their Identification, Culture and Garden Attributes, 4th Edition

Allan Armitage, 2020

Not specific to cut flower varieties, but a very useful book if you are planting lots of perennials (for cutting, landscape or as under story plants for woodies). Very detailed text. Available through ASCFG or Amazon.

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

Lane Greer and John Dole, 2008

Detailed information for professional growers. Includes detailed information on 100 woody genera, including production guidelines, pruning techniques, forcing and storage. Available through ASCFG or Amazon.

The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide to Raising and Selling Cut Flowers, 2nd edition

Lynn Byczynski, 2008

One of the resources that started our movement! Talk to any cut flower farmer with years of experience and they'll tell you they started here! Good info to get you started (but established growers usually return to it too). Not a 'coffee table book' of nice pictures (many cut flower books are like this). Loaded with content. Available through ASCFG or Amazon.

Flower Farming for Profit: The Complete Guide to Growing a Successful Cut Flower Business

Lennie Larkin, 2024

Great resource if you are on the 'business path' and pursuing cut flower farming as a significant source of income. If you are a very small grower just getting started, you might not use this as much just yet. Also note, because it is written for a US market, you need to 'do the math' on the exchange rates, and consider the difference in our market sizes. (The US population is roughly 10x the Canadian population!). Available on Amazon.

Cool Flowers: How to Grow and Enjoy Long-Blooming Hardy Annual Flowers Using Cool Weather Techniques

Lisa Mason Zeigler, 2014

Introduces the concept of fall planting hardy annuals for spring blooms. Planting dates need to be adjusted for Canadian growing zones. (It would be SO fantastic for Canadian growers to develop a crowd-sourced guide to cool flower growing.) Available on Amazon.

Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden

Erin Benzakein, 2017

This is a lovely 'coffee table book' and a great source of inspiration. Some say it's the book that helped our movement 'go viral'. Makes a nice gift, but flower farms in Canada wanting to scale will need to dive into additional books with more in depth content. Available on Amazon.

The Ecological Farm: A Minimalist No-Till, No-Spray, Selective-Weeding, Grow Your Own Fertilizer System for Organic Agriculture

Helen Atthowe, 2023

Part 1 of this book focuses on how to develop a systems approach to your farm or garden, by focusing on the soil and above ground ecological relationships. Part 2 moves on to look at individual crops. Flower crops are not included, however. We recommend checking out the content preview on Amazon to see if it meets your needs.

Practical No-Till Farming: A Quick and Dirty Guide to Organic Vegetable and Flower Growing

Andrew Mefferd, 2022

Andrew Mefferd is the editor of Growing for Market Magazine, and he brings all his experience to the table in this book. He presents a succinct and practical overview of no-till approaches and highlights practices for new fields, existing fields and sod. He goes through occultation (tarping), solarization, mulching, cover crops, composting in place, etc. He also includes a discussion of flowers in no-till systems. Available on Amazon.

The Living Soil Handbook: The No-Till Grower's Guide to Ecological Market Gardening

Jesse Frost, 2021

This book focuses on the basic principles of no-till for a market-garden. Flowers are not discussed specifically, but it's a great guide to the no-till approach: turning beds, using composts and mulch, and cover cropping. Available on Amazon.

PODCASTS, VIDEOS & YOUTUBE

CANADIAN FLOWER FARMERS

My Flower Farm – youtube.com/@myflowerfarm

Jen has been growing flowers in Ontario for 20 years. This YouTube channel shows seeding, transplanting, irrigating, weeding, harvesting and selling flowers week by week. Great Canadian podcast for farmers to watch - and maybe it will inspire more of us to share our work in such a practical way.

Florists on Farms – youtube.com/@floristonfarms

A Canadian (BC) focused podcast. Nice focus on using local flowers in various designs over the season. Great for farmers learning basic floral design too. So wonderful to see Canadian content!

You Can't Eat the Grass – youtube.com/@YouCantEatTheGrass

Serena, from Kelowna BC, shares her experience growing vegetables and flowers on 2.4 acres.

Sustainable Flowers Podcast – patreon.com/SustainableFlowersPodcast

A great Canadian flower farming podcast by Heather Henson and Clara Qualizza, available as a subscription through Patreon. Focus is on all aspects of sustainable flower growing. One of the few podcasts for zones 2 and 3 flower farmers.

The Dirt on Flowers – thedirtonflowers.com

Practical business, growing and marketing advice from flower farmers. From Shannon Allen and Lyndsay Biehl.

US FLOWER FARMERS

The Flower Podcast – theflowerpodcast.com & youtube.com/@theflowerpodcast

Scott Shepherd enthusiastically shares the stories of flower farmers, florists and others. His podcast spans growing, design, business and more. Loads of viewing and listening!

Ellen Frost Flowers – youtube.com/@ellenfrostflowers

Great podcast for building basic floral design skills, and increasingly Ellen is expanding to focus on specific flowers and farms.

The No-Till Flowers Podcast – notillflowers.libsyn.com & Flower Guild Radio – floralguildradio.libsyn.com

Two great podcasts, both from Jenny Love. Special note: Jenny Love and Ellen Frost recently collaborated on a 5 part series called “Floral Math”. It's an excellent series on pricing and quality for selling to florists and designers. You can access it on either of their channels.

Slow Flowers Podcast – slowflowerspodcast.com & youtube.com/@slowflowerssociety

Debra Prinzing is a long time supporter of the local flowers movement. Episodes focus a bit more on designing with local flowers versus growing, but fun to listen to if you are working in the greenhouse. There is also the membership based Slow Flowers Society.

Coram Deo Flower Farm – youtube.com/@CoramDeoFarm

2.5-acre flower farm in Oklahoma share their 3 years of experience.

b.a.r.e flower farm – youtube.com/@bareflowerfarm

Jessie farms in zone 7A New Jersey and sells mostly wholesale. She shares primarily the 'business side' of flower farming on a smaller scaled farm

UK FLOWER FARMERS

Common Farm Flowers – youtube.com/@theflowerfarmer

From SW England, this channel covers lots of flower farming and design ground.

Bloom and Grey – youtube.com/@bloomandgray

From Sarah, a flower farmer in East Yorkshire who farms on a smaller scale (1/2 acre).

MARKET GARDENERS

Market Gardener Institute – youtube.com/@TheMarketGardeners & themarketgardener.com

This Canadian institute is primarily focused on vegetable growing, but remember that it's all horticulture! Everything about mulches, compost, soil building, weed management, cover cropping is as useful to cut flower farmers as vegetable growers.

No-Till Growers – youtube.com/@notillgrowers

Videos and podcasts focused on regenerative growing techniques for small scale farms: soil biology, composting, fencerows, mulching.

WEBSITES, MAGAZINES & COURSES

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food – ontario.ca/page/agriculture-and-food

Be sure to check out your provincial agriculture ministry for resources too!! Sometimes we can overlook the obvious.

Small Farm Canada – smallfarmcanada.ca

A magazine and more. Even if you don't purchase a subscription (and you should) their website reviews tools and other resources and has a lot of very useful information for small scale growers.

Agsol Organic Solutions – agsolcanada.com

Located in Shakespeare, Ontario, but will ship across Canada. Wide range of quality organic fertilizers and soil amendments for foliar or soil application, as well as biostimulants and microbials. They also offer courses, and will consult with you to help you understand your soil samples.

Growing for Market – growingformarket.com

10 issues/year with 15 years of back issues available. They also offer a digital copy (save the trees!). Check out some of their free articles online—like farming and pregnancy, breaking up clay, and flower farming without plastic—to see if you think this is useful to you. They also offer a podcast.

The Gardener's Workshop – thegardenersworkshop.com

Offers many affordable online courses such as:

- Seed Starting – Lisa Mason Ziegler
- Profitable Flower Farming – Lennie Larkin
- Preparing to Sell to Florists – Ellen Frost
- The Wedding Process – Jenny Love

In addition, there are loads of free 'how to' guides available, as well as a podcast.

Johnny's Selected Seeds – johnnyseeds.com

Johnny's maintains a growers' library with a dedicated section to growing specialty cut flowers. It's always worth checking for the answer to your question here. In particular they have done some amazing trials on winter growing.

OTHER TOOLS

A few people have recommended specific tools to us, which we're including here. We are just scratching the surface, but it makes us think we likely need to make a whole new list just for tools!

Indoor Farmer – indoorfarmer.ca

This store stocks a wide range of products for small scale gardeners/growers, including many from US suppliers. Products include soil amendments, compost, soil blockers, seeding resources, trays, inserts, integrated pest management products, irrigation supplies and more. Of note, they stock Bootstrap Farmer reusable pots and trays. Their store is located in Waterloo, Ontario, with shipping across Canada.

Lucko Wire Weeder

This hoe is perfect for weeding in tight spaces (like landscape fabric holes). Available from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

UBIBOT compact sensor

A Wi-Fi enabled sensor to monitor temperature and humidity remotely using your smartphone. Put a sensor in your greenhouse, or wherever you store your dahlia tubers. Available from ubibotcanada.ca.