

floralbusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

LOCAL
FLORAL
pg. 4

RETAIL
PROFILE
pg. 14

BUYING TIPS
pg. 19

VOICE OF
INDUSTRY
pg. 20

Winter 2016



THE LURE OF LOCAL: Merchandising American Grown Flowers



Worth A Dime?



Babe Ruth is quoted as saying: “The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don’t play

together, the club won’t be worth a dime.” As the movement to join together in genuine teamwork occurs in 2017, think about your floral team and evaluate how your attention to their efforts can make a difference.

January 10th is Houseplant Appreciation Day – perfect timing for retailers to promote floral department treasures. To discover beautiful foliage plants and tropicals, travel to Fort Lauderdale, FL for one of my favorite trade shows – TPIE. The Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition, hosted by the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association, will be held January 18-20, at the Broward County Convention Center.

In produce, “local” remains a viable buzzword. What about in floral? See the cover story to learn how some retailers are implementing domestic and American Grown floral programs to differentiate their floral offerings and communicate brand values.

El Bodegon Supermercados, a six-store chain serving South Florida’s Latin community, satisfies floral customers with the basics. Read how the Keep It Simple strategy works for this family-owned chain.

Our Buying Tips series continues with suggestions from Patricia Clark of Sunshine Bouquet Company, Miami. Industry friend Joe Farrell of BloomQuest LLC, Englewood, NJ, shares his comments and concerns in the Voice of the Industry article. Floral Findings applauds Michael Schrader of Schnuck Markets, St. Louis, for his recent industry recognition.

To make sure your organization is worth a dime,

remember teamwork is the theme for the New Year.

Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2017!

fb

E. Shaunn Alderman
Associate Publisher
FLORAL BUSINESS

FLORAL BUSINESS, a quarterly magazine, is a supplement in the March, June, September and December issues of PRODUCE BUSINESS. PRODUCE BUSINESS — the largest circulation publication in the industry — is mailed to more than 25,000 produce and floral executives every month.

floralbusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

President/Editor-in-Chief: James E. Prevor
jprevor@phoenixmedianet.com

Publisher/Editorial Director: Ken Whitacre
kwhitacre@phoenixmedianet.com

Associate Publisher: E. Shaunn Alderman
salderman@phoenixmedianet.com
Phone: 561-703-4010

Production Director: Diana Levine
dlevine@phoenixmedianet.com

Production Leader: Jackie Tucker
jtucker@phoenixmedianet.com

Production Department
Sunshine Gorman
Freddy Pulido

Send insertion orders, payments, press releases, photos, letters to the editor, etc., to:
Floral Business, PO Box 810425
Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425
Ph: 561-994-1118
Fax: 561-994-1610

Floral Business is published by
Phoenix Media Network, Inc.
James E. Prevor, Chairman of the Board
PO Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425
floralbusiness.com

Entire Contents © Copyright 2016
Printed in the USA
Publication Agreement No. 40047928

THE
USA BOUQUET
COMPANY



Happy Holidays



from The USA Bouquet Family

1500 NW 95th Ave. Doral, FL 33172 | 800.306.1071 | www.usabq.com



The Lure of Local: How Retailers Are Merchandising American Grown

Domestic and American grown floral programs help retailers differentiate and communicate brand values.

by Debra Prinzing

American grown flowers have long been part of grocery store product mixes, but only recently have we witnessed new levels of engagement among buyers and merchandisers who value the potential of offering local, seasonal, regional and Certified American Grown blooms from farms across the United States.

Slowflowers.com, a free, nationwide online resource for consumers in search of homegrown flowers from farms and florists, was launched in May 2014. The goal in creating the site was to

give floral consumers the information they need to make informed choices at the cash register. According to metrics, the project has struck a chord with consumers, with more than 4,000 unique visitors in search of domestic flowers viewing the site each month.

In July 2014, a coalition of flower farmers across the U.S. announced the launch of Certified American Grown, a flower certification program that provides consumers, retailers and wholesalers with a third-party guarantee on the domestic source of their flowers. Together,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TEXAS SPECIALTY CUT FLOWERS

Frank and Pamela Arnosky of Texas Specialty Cut Flowers used farm branding early on to educate supermarket shoppers.



these two complementary projects signaled new proactive efforts to inform consumers about the origin of their floral purchases.

SUPERMARKETS GET INVOLVED

Not surprisingly, I found it challenging to persuade major grocery chains to comment on record about domestic floral-sourcing programs. One industry veteran floral director for a major supermarket chain agreed to speak off-the-record to share his perspective. I asked: *What are the barriers that are preventing more grocery chains from sourcing domestic flowers?* His response: "I think the largest challenge to having a consistent (American grown) program for many is the fact that it takes more work. For the most part, floral teams tend to be very lean. And so the easy way out is to give your items to one or two — typically South American — growers who can handle the vast majority of items you sell." So the argument was not about price, but about simplifying the buying process. He explained, "If you have items with somewhat equal quality, many buyers will go where it's easier to cut one PO for everything."

My source acknowledges consumer demand is rapidly changing the status quo. "The strength of what American flower farmers have to offer

is focusing on their niche. When they focus on varieties unique to their growing climate, and also to their regional customers' tastes — then those combinations are powerful. And as you focus on what differentiates you, having locally grown flowers that are different from that supermarket floral line is powerful."

His bottom line is, offering American-grown choices may be more challenging to administer, but your brand will be rewarded when you do so. "Break through the clutter of all the products you carry to stand for local and American-grown flowers in ways that your customers see it. Today's consumer demands that back story about the farmer; they want to connect."

ROOTED IN LOCAL

"Going as close as we can to the source and supporting local growers and farmers is one of our values — it falls under environmental stewardship," says Melanie Cherry, Town & Country Markets' floral category manager. Cherry, a 17-year veteran of the six-store independent chain based in Poulsbo, WA, has managed the corporate floral program for five years. She

makes it a priority to source from Pacific Northwest flower farms.

“Flowers grown locally are different than ones we bring in from South America. Sometimes those (imported stems) will last a lot longer than local flowers, but it’s not really about them lasting a long time. The local product is just fresher; definitely fresher,” Cherry acknowledges. Town & Country has been able to refine its flower-farm-to-checkout-lane program because of a partnership with Seattle Wholesale Growers Market (SWGMC).

Founded in 2011, the farmer-owned cooperative represents 13 flower producers across the Pacific Northwest. By purchasing the vast majority of its local flowers through SWGMC, T&C has been able to reduce the number of individual vendors in its mix. SWGMC serves as a year-round purchasing hub that includes cut flowers, mixed bouquets, potted orchids and winter greens. During the peak summer months, the majority of T&C’s Top 25 floral items are flowers and plants grown in Washington, Cherry says. The corporate ethos of stocking local flowers is deeply rooted in T&C’s company heritage, which includes Middlefield Farm, located a few miles from the chain’s original store (opened in 1957 on Bainbridge Island, WA). “Several years ago, we asked them to start growing our sunflowers,” Cherry says. “Our customers know the story of our farm and they recognize and value those sunflowers because of the connection to community.”

FINDING FLOWERS

Based in Fletcher, NC, Earth Fare is a 39-store regional chain that stretches from Michigan to Florida. “We have a long history and have built our core business on working with local farmers. It lessens the carbon footprint, gives our guests fresher options and puts dollars back into the community,” says Derek Campbell, produce category manager, who handles all floral buying. Earth Fare imports some of its floral inventory from South America, choosing Rain Forest Alli-

ance, Veriflora and Florverde sustainable-labeled products to support its desire to “not have flowers treated with certain chemicals.”

Local flowers are sourced on a store-by-store basis, often identified through the chain’s local vendor fairs, which allow growers and suppliers to have face-to-face meetings with corporate buyers. “Some stores are able to procure local assortments at certain times of the year; some stores have local flowers all year long,” says

American Flowers Week

Launched in 2015, the *American Flowers Week* campaign is an advocacy and promotion campaign presented by Slowflowers.com that takes place during the week leading up to July 4th. The campaign was inspired by the success of *British Flowers Week* created in 2013 by New Covent Garden Flower Market, a major London wholesaler. New Covent utilizes visually-driven social media to raise awareness of iconic British-grown flowers.

In 2016, New Seasons Market in the Portland, OR area and Town & Country Markets around Seattle embraced American Flowers Week in their floral departments. From bouquet labeling to unique in-store signage, the chains used various point-of-purchase tools to engage customers and stimulate purchases of American-grown flowers. Red-white-and-blue bouquets were the bestselling items.

According to Melanie Cherry of Town & Country Markets, a boost in floral sales during *American Flowers Week* was significant. She engaged her department managers and their teams in a chain-wide contest to create Americana-themed displays in each branch. “Sales for our floral program as a whole were up 24 percent for the week (June 28 to July 4) over last year. All of our stores showed growth.” **fb**

Campbell.

When Earth Fare recently renovated its flagship store in Asheville, NC, Campbell met Nicolette Irving of Flourish Flower Farm at the vendor fair and was impressed with her products. Since May 2016, Irving has delivered her mixed bouquets to two Asheville area Earth Fare outlets. The designs are priced at \$11.99 or \$7.99, packed in five-bunch cases. “We started off with one delivery per week so they could get to know my product and to see how it sold,” Irving says. “That gave me time to get my systems down, and after three or four weeks, we started delivering twice weekly.”

For Campbell, the community connection is beneficial: “We call out everything that is local, so whether we bring in local flowers or local peppers it’s noted on the customer’s receipt. Our farmers are more than welcome to also label their product. Niki’s flowers outsell our standard imported selection and I know her labeling is a big part of it. She has awesome product and our consumers appreciate that her flowers are grown in Asheville.”

WHAT’S IN IT FOR THE FARMER?

Frank and Pamela Arnosky of Texas Specialty Cut Flowers, a Certified American Grown farm in Blanco, TX, are considered pioneers who early on used farm branding to educate super-market shoppers about the value of local flowers. In 1994, the couple sold their first bouquet to the new Central Market flagship in Austin. According to Frank Arnosky, “The first week we sold them 35 bouquets and we thought that was a big deal; by the end of the summer, we were selling 350 bouquets a week.” From the beginning the Arnoskys branded each bouquet and bunch, with *Fresh from the Texas Hill Country* on the sleeves. The farm’s iconic label — a blue barn surrounded by a field of flowers — is now recognizable and consumers ask for it.

Texas Specialty Cut Flowers now supplies

4TH
Generation
Farmers

We are
YOUR
.....
FARMER'S
MARKET
.....
for Farm Fresh
FLOWERS

Wild
Flower
BOUQUETS

Flower
Patch

SunValley
800.747.0396 TSVG.COM



In-store signage is vital in alerting and educating customers about locally grown flowers.

40 grocery locations across the state. The label stimulates “pull-through marketing,” according to Arnosky. “It’s consumer-driven. People are coming into the stores and asking for our flowers.”

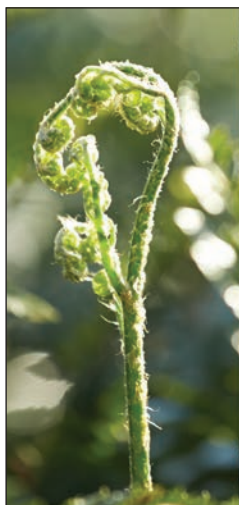
He credits a number of factors for maintaining a successful relationship with Central Market and the HEB chain, including a willingness to adapt his farm’s business practices to the needs of grocery floral departments. “Some people think working with a grocery store is big and faceless, but we have a close relationship and we’ve listened and learned. We are

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOWN AND COUNTRY MARKETS



consistent in quality and delivery every single week of the year. Our product is sleeved and bar-coded. We have product liability insurance and insurance for our delivery vehicles. We are in contact with the stores every week. They know our product mix will change with each season — that’s part of the appeal of buying from a local flower farm,” says Arnosky.

Steve Dodge, president of Bandy Ranch Floral Corp. in San Pasquale Valley, CA, runs a second-generation farm that traditionally



-Thank You!-

**As we journey back
to productivity after
Hurricane Matthew, we are
humbled by industry support.**

FernTrust
INCORPORATED



Seville, Florida • 800.338.3376 • www.ferntrust.com



ARIZONA EAST LLC

BRING DECOR TO LIFE



SEE OUR 2017 COLLECTION
◆ WWW.ARIZONAEAST.COM ◆

marketed cut greens and flowers to bouquet-makers. Dodge credits economics and changing consumer preferences for his farm's leap to grocery, specifically Trader Joe's in California. Bandy Ranch currently sells consumer bunches of eucalyptus, wax flower and other varieties to the chain. "We began about a year ago and we've been welcomed with local arms," says Dodge.

With price pressure from bouquet-makers whose budgets continue to shrink, Dodge says the prospect of partnering with a major grocery chain was an appealing way to diversify his distribution channels. "Bouquet makers are not going to pay us more. Trader Joe's is the dream account and it has been easy to sell to them because they are excited about a farm of my size delivering the local story." Bandy Ranch participates in the Certified American Grown program and uses its distinctive red-white-and-blue labeling on its sleeves. [See sidebar for details on Certified American Grown.]



The Mason jar bouquets included descriptive tags promoting American Flowers Week.

Results of focus groups with Millennial consumers have underscored the benefits of the local message at grocery stores. "Without exception, younger consumers say they value and would pay more for local product because it meant keeping jobs here. These kids are extremely responsible. They care about their planet and they'll make sacrifices to save it," says Dodge.

CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS

Katie McConahay, floral program and category manager at Portland, OR-based New Season Market, began her grocery career as a teenage floral clerk in Milwaukee. Early on she decided to make unique and beautiful flowers available to everyone, especially grocery shoppers. Years later, McConahay found her happy medium in New Seasons Market's floral program where in 2010 she began as a floral manager, eventually assuming management responsibilities in 2012. Since that time she has

Slow Flowers
the conscious choice for buying and sending flowers

Join the **SLOW FLOWERS** Movement

A free, nationwide, online directory to 700+ florists, shops, studios and farms that supply American Grown Flowers. We attract 4k unique users and 21k unique page views per month.

www.slowflowers.com



PROCACCI
BROTHERS SINCE 1948

A full service provider
for **all floral and
produce categories**



PROCACCI
BROTHERS SINCE 1948
The leader in the field.™

Contact our sales team today

800.523.4616

www.procaccibrothers.com

nurtured the floral program to unprecedented growth levels adding to the vendor list dozens of Oregon, Washington and California flower farms that supply 19 New Seasons locations across the Pacific Northwest.

“We probably buy from a minimum of 100 different vendors during the course of the year and of those, 90 percent are domestic or local vendors,” she says. Other than its Fair Trade rose program that imports Ecuador-grown stems, most of the New Season floral product comes from West Coast farms and supports Certified American Grown branding. “Even when we are technically out-of-season, we forge local farm partnerships for our wreaths, garlands, paper whites and amaryllis,” says McConahay.

She adds, “Beyond the quality of the product that sourcing locally provides, these partnerships are an integral part of our business. It is important to our consumers to understand where their flowers come from. This transparency not only creates trust and a promise of quality, it provides a sense of community and camaraderie. Sourcing locally allows us to create an environment in our stores where buying fresh, seasonal flowers can be an everyday occasion.”

McConahay declined to share specific sales information, but was emphatic about the success of sourcing local flowers. “It has allowed our floral program to continue to differentiate us from our competitors as we evolve and grow.”

Industry leaders predict successful grocery players will continue to explore ways to communicate sustainability and community engagement through local- and American-grown floral programs. “We are at the very beginning of the opportunities for Certified American Grown flowers and foliages to be recognized and sought after by the industry and consumers,” says Kasey Cronquist, program administrator. “Over the next five years, we will see increasing penetration at the mass market level with more and more farms partnering with retailers to promote their flowers with this program.”

Indeed, for mass market suppliers wanting to provide year-round flowers grown in the United States, the Certified American Grown brand ensures continuity of domestic supply when local farms are out of season. Conscious consumers will notice — and respond favorably. **fb**



Debra Prinzing is an award-winning author and leading advocate for American grown flowers. She is the founder and creative director of Slowflowers.com and serves as the Public Advisory Member of the Certified American Grown Council.

Certified American Grown

Thanks to involvement from more than 50 participating flower farms in 16 states, and to support retailers and wholesalers throughout the country, “today we have millions of stems of flowers being marketed as Certified American Grown,” says Kasey Cronquist, the program’s administrator.

In 2014 a coalition of floral organizations from throughout the United States helped launch the Certified American Grown program. Seed funding for the program’s launch was provided by the California Cut Flower Commission, the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers, the Alaska Beauty Peonies Cooperative, the Seattle Wholesale Growers Market and the Florida Fern Growers Association.

“Consumers are increasingly asking questions about the origin of food and other products they purchase. The Certified American Grown Flowers program provides retailers with the only third-party guarantee that assures customers their flowers are grown in the U.S.,” says Cronquist. **fb**



COFFEE • JAZZ • CLASSICS

PENANG NURSERY

YOUR SOURCE FOR

COFFEE MUG COFFEE PLANTS



JAZZ SUCCULENTS



CLASSICA BAMBOO



**Penang
Nursery, Inc.**

4720 PLYMOUTH SORRENTO ROAD • APOPKA, FL 32712 • P.O. BOX 1658, APOPKA, FL 32704

WWW.PENANGNURSERY.COM • PHONE: 407-886-2322 | FAX 407-880-2572



Keeping It Simple At El Bodegon

This six-store chain serving South Florida's Latin community, satisfies floral customers by following a "keep it simple" strategy.

by E. Shaunn Alderman



It's a coffee shop. No, it's a restaurant. It's a deluxe produce stand. No, it's a fresh seafood market. El Bodegon Supermercados, considered the largest family-owned supermarket chain in South Florida's Palm Beach County, offers a taste of home for many full-time Latin residents as well as winter-time residents from around the world. Founded in 1998, the company with Colombian roots has expanded store count with passion and care. The full-service stores may first appear complicated because several of the stores offer outside services, such as insurance, real estate, money transfers and cargo shipping. But when it comes to floral, the strategy is pure simplicity.

Carlos Ortiz, president of El Bodegon Grocery Inc., based in West Palm Beach, believes there is

no reason to make floral complicated. The company identifies what works for its customers; there is no agonizing about reinventing a program that consistently shows success.

Five of the stores are located in Palm Beach County in southeast Florida, and the sixth store is located further south in Broward County. These locations are ideal for having access to fresh-off-the-plane flowers flown in from Colombia to Miami International Airport. The produce departments deservingly take the spotlight with



El Bodegon's makes buying roses convenient.



This popular rose arrangement sells quickly for \$21.99.

the vast displays of fresh fruits and vegetables, but shoppers appreciate the consistent offerings of floral bouquets and pre-made arrangements displayed in the coolers.

The inviting South Florida landscape encourages customers to entertain year-round. Colorful piñatas — a favorite among the children — help create the stores' festive atmosphere. El Bodegon's full catering menu is promoted for family gatherings, business meetings or grand scale events. It's not uncommon for customers to place floral orders when decorating for religious commemorations or for family celebrations such as Quinceañeras.

Customers rarely leave the store without at least viewing the enticing bakery cases filled with popular pastries and breads. Custom orders for party

cakes are written here, which is another point of sale where floral offerings can be mentioned. The flavor is definitely Latin in these stores and an invitation to return wafts in the air right along with the rich aroma of comforting coffee.

Ortiz shares the floral strategy that has proven to be successful for El Bodegon Supermercados:

FLORAL BUSINESS: South Florida is a melting pot of cultures. I heard five different languages from shoppers when I was in your stores. Could you describe your customer base?

CARLOS ORTIZ: We have a lot of different types of customers, but we specialize in Latin products and fresh foods. Our customers are Asian, Canadian and European; and really, the customer base goes beyond that.



Bright colors are best sellers.



It's typical for El Bodegon customers to include floral purchases when shopping for produce and Latin products.

FB: With six stores located within one hour proximity, El Bodegon does not have to contend with perishable products being delivered from a distribution center. What is your floral buying strategy?

CO: We have one floral service company in Miami that services all of our stores. That company visits each store at least two times per week to fill the bouquet stands. They clean the buckets and remove any products that do not sell.

FB: Are your store level people responsible for tracking floral numbers?

CO: Really, the floral products are sold on consignment. If something doesn't sell we do not pay for it. If there is a sell-through on bouquets, for example, the store can call and place orders for additional product.

FB: Does the floral service company make all of the product decisions?



CO: They know our customers very well and have an admirable record anticipating what floral products will sell throughout the year. But each store can place orders for specific products. For

Color Splash

Explosions of color are a treat for the eye.



SUNSHINE
BOUQUET
COMPANY

info@sunshinebouquet.com

www.sunshinebouquet.com

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/sunshinebouquet

Pantone 234 C

Pantone 7737 C

Pantone 394 C

Pantone 7425 C

Pantone 675 C

Pantone 673 C



All six El Bodegon stores are serviced by one floral company in Miami.

example, since El Bodegon offers catering, some customers ordering food for a special occasion know they can also order flowers for the event. It all works as long as we give the floral vendor enough notice so they can buy accordingly. Being located so close to Miami helps as far as having easy access to fresh flowers coming in to the country.

FB: With this business arrangement, maybe floral presents very few challenges during the holidays. What holidays are most popular with your customers for cut flower sales?

CO: During Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, the cut flowers of course sell very well. All six stores are usually visited three or four times per week during those holidays to keep the stands filled with flowers.

FB: The glass vase arrangements featuring one dozen roses combined with greens displayed in the coolers seem especially popular. Are those

your top sellers in all six stores?

CO: Yes, they are very popular. They are well-priced at \$21.99 and very fresh. The customers know they are buying fresh roses from Colombia. These are the reasons that make it typical for El Bodegon shoppers to be repeat floral customers.

FB: Given your demographics, are there flower colors that sell better than others – or flower varieties that sell better than others?

CO: We sell a lot of roses, carnations and mixed bouquets. The bold, bright colors sell best. Orange, yellow, pink, red, and blue/ yellow combinations are most enjoyed by our customers. White flowers are not a big seller for us.

FB: What do you believe is the recipe for success with the El Bodegon floral program?

CO: Our strategy to keep things uncomplicated is what works for us and keeps El Bodegon customers satisfied.

ADVICE FOR SUCCESSFUL FLORAL BUYING

Is Your Floral Buying Team On Course?

Buying Tips

Patricia Clark, sales associate
Sunshine Bouquet Company, Miami, FL
2013 – Present
Shaw's Supermarkets 1990 - 2013



Working in the floral industry on both the retail side and the vendor side, these are the buying tips I recommend:

Loyalty Counts – Don't Become Dazzled By The Stars!

Keeping loyal to your everyday vendors goes a long way when you need emergency product during busy seasons.

Negotiate year-long programs that include the holidays. This will secure pricing that you can depend on. Make sure your pricing and minimum/maximum quantities are clearly noted and agreed upon with all.

Playing the "pricing" game is a dangerous one to play – at some time, everyone loses.

Take Advantage Of The "Other 47 Weeks."

Flowers are still growing the 47 weeks during non-holiday time. Plan your ads and events around the time of flushes and heavy crops. This will get you the best pricing and best value for your money. Your vendors can tell you when these time frames are. Commit to them for specific products and quantities. Your margin dollars will thank you.

It's OK To Say No. When meeting with a vendor or attending a trade show – it's ok to say no.

Shows and meetings can be overwhelming and inspiring; like being a kid in a candy store. But you need to focus and see through the glitz and dazzle. Always remember what you have every day. If you are new to your company don't try to change the world all at once. Get your core bouquet program in place – let that segment do its job, good sales at good margins. That strategy will leave you time to focus on potted and your seasonal commodity items such as poinsettias, mums, Easter lilies, etc.

Less Is More In Your Departments. Use your core program to its advantage during the holidays – change to holiday colors. There will be no extra display space needed.

Carry holiday items that are in between your core price points. Line up the holiday items and your core items when planning to make sure they don't compete or cannibalize each other.

When merchandising, remember that larger displays of like items are more impactful than many different items clustered together.

Farm And Grower Visits – Look Beyond. When growers extend invitations, make the most of farm visits. How are the employees treated? How are the working conditions? How well maintained is the facility? A grower proud of the workers and facility is also proud of their product. This reflects on you!

Have We Backed Ourselves Into An Impossible Corner?

by Joe Farrell

I began my career in the floral industry back in the day when consumers purchased flowers and plants only from their local retail flower shop. Those flowers and plants were most likely grown in nearby greenhouses and fields. Floriculturists, horticulturists, botanists, and agronomists all worked together to bring high quality carnations, roses, chrysanthemums, seasonal cut flowers such as snapdragons and gladiolus, as well as flowering and green plants to their customers. Everything was grown with care and precision.

Then the market opened up to Holland. Wholesale florists began importing incredible volumes of what were then unusual varieties of flowers – sourced through the Flower Auction in Aalsmeer. Flowers of such high quality and unique variety that had never been seen before in the United States became nearly commonplace.

Then in 1973, the United States was hit hard by the oil embargo, which in turn adversely affected many of the growers who had to pay to heat their greenhouses. Rose and carnation crops were no longer profitable. The industry looked to the warmer climates, and many growers moved their expertise to establish farms in Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, and Ecuador. Because of the perfect climates and lower labor costs, the crops again became profitable.

Then South America became a huge source for floral crops, especially roses and carnations.



.....

Joe Farrell is a 40-year floral industry veteran based in New Jersey. He is president of BloomQuest LLC. A dedicated supporter of the floral industry, Farrell would like to see bolder industry efforts toward educating consumers about flowers and plants.

.....

The entire industry needs to come together with a clear message for the consumer about the true value of a flower.

The change in the markets then occurred – the major grocery chains expanded to include floral in their stores, modeling their departments after the European markets. Then came the supply of a new rose variety from Africa.

All of these changes and levels of progression have created wonderful opportunities for the consumer!

Now customers can purchase flowers almost anywhere and from everywhere around the world: USA, Europe, Asia, Africa, Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America. How do all these changes affect the industry as we move forward?

At what costs, though, have we brought all these “cheap” flowers to the consumer? With the constant search for the lowest price, the demand for mass volumes of particular varieties, and the lack of education about the product, the consumer has been led to believe that flowers are a cheap commodity that provide little value and are always an “if my budget allows” product.

Have we backed ourselves into an impossible corner? In the constant quest for new products, new designs, increased competition and no standards in place, the industry has been sullied by many. The true cost to grow a flower – from first planting, to cutting, to packing and shipping, to customs inspections and delivery to the stores, to displaying and marketing to the consumer – have for the most part been ignored. We are continuously looking at the end total sale price and working backward, forcing profits at all levels to be less and less. This positions the growers in the greatest squeeze to find cheaper ways to produce their flowers – cheaper labor, cheaper seed, cheaper pest control methods and cheaper fertilizer. As we know, cheaper does not translate to better.

The entire industry needs to come together with a clear message for the consumer about the true value of a flower. The message should come

from seed suppliers, growers, shipping companies, wholesalers, distributors, vendors, and buyers.

In almost every other product the actual price has risen in the past 20 years. But the price of flowers has gone down in the last 20 years. Strange, don't you think?

fb

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

PerishableNews.com

Floral Channel

Your online source bringing you fresh news and ideas for success in the Floral Department and beyond.



PerishableNews.com is an outlet for news about all the perishable categories typically featured in a retail store: Produce, Dairy, Deli, Bakery, Meat & Poultry, Seafood, Floral



FREE
subscription!

www.perishablenews.com

FLORAL FINDINGS

Whether attending industry trade shows around the country or conducting local store checks, products, announcements and displays capture our attention.

Applause! Applause!

Congratulations to Michael Schrader, director of floral at Schnuck Markets in St. Louis, MO, for being named PMA's 2016 Floral Marketer of the Year. The presentation was made at the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit event in Orlando, October 15 at the annual floral reception. Schrader, a talented, vivacious industry member known for his creativity, dedication and leadership, has been involved in the floral industry for more than 30 years. He is a former PMA floral council chairman. Schrader said, "The award validates how I feel about the power of flowers and the impact it has had on my life's direction. I have been digging in the dirt and growing flowers since I was a child. It reinforces my belief that I made the correct career choice. It is definitely my passion and others recognize it too."

TAKE-AWAYS: A worthy lesson to remember might be to recognize the value of nurturing floral team members showing talent and leadership skills. An employee's passion for floral is often not enough to sustain that person as an employee, but by offering guidance and a bit of freedom,



Bonnie Armellini, owner of Gems Group, Miami, and 2015 award winner, presented the award to Michael Schrader to of Schnuck Markets, St. Louis.

retailers can grow their own high-performance floral teams.



Seek Unexpected Opportunities

In the fast food arena Chick-fil-A of Atlanta, GA, is known for offering a tasty chicken option in a hamburger-obsessed world. The company is also known for its attention to detail and extreme measures toward customer service in its 2,000-plus locations. Guests dining inside the quick service restaurants often find fresh cut flowers in small vases on the dining tables. Fresh flowers! We asked Chick-fil-A about how fresh flowers on the table fit into the corporate philosophy. Here is the response from Chick-fil-A: “Most of our individually owned and operated restaurants place fresh flowers on tables each day. This is a way to not only create a warm and welcoming environment, but it’s also an extension of the customer service, quality and attention to detail our restaurants strive to deliver to every customer. Our guests seem to enjoy these little touches and give us great feedback.”

TAKE-AWAYS: S. Truett Cathy, late founder of Chick-fil-A, said, “We change the world, and ourselves, by our response to unexpected opportunities.” Does your floral team have eyes looking for unexpected opportunities in your community? Could the coffee shop across the street benefit from purchasing flowers from your store to decorate its shop? What about a weekly delivery to the nearby car dealership? Encourage floral teams to build the in-store business by looking for or creating out-of-store sales.



Picky, Picky, Picky

Seen in The USA Bouquet booth at PMA Fresh Summit in Orlando, these bouquet picks and others in the company’s #celebratelife bouquet line were daring us to take a closer look. Masquerade masks for the New Year’s Eve Gala and miniature Champagne bottles for a festive New Year toast are picks that help the bouquets tell a story.

TAKE-AWAYS: Story-telling and customization are buzzwords retailers are hearing as suggested marketing actions. The popularity of bouquet and potted plant picks often seems a little iffy. Maybe the picks of yesteryear are too cheesy for today’s shoppers who expect more from every item they purchase. Some retailers refuse products with picks, but clever picks can attract shoppers and turn the purchase into a customized bouquet.

THE NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW AND CONFERENCE

Presented by: EASTERN PRODUCE COUNCIL AND PRODUCE BUSINESS

DEC 5-8, 2016



UNIVERSITY OUTREACH



GLOBAL TRADE SYMPOSIUM



TRADE SHOW



FOODSERVICE FORUM



SPOUSE PROGRAM



FLORAL



CULINARY STUDENT PROGRAM



MEDIA OUTREACH



INDUSTRY TOURS



NETWORKING



CELEBRITY CHEF DEMOS



EDUCATION



FOUNDATIONAL EXCELLENCE

For Floral Booth Sales Contact

Shaunn Alderman

561-703-4010

SAlderman@phoenixmedianet.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

PH: 212-426-2218

www.nyproduceshow.com



CELEBRATING
FRESH