



American
Floral
Endowment

Research
Internships
Scholarships
Education

Funding the Future of Floriculture

AFE Bulletin

ISSUE ONE | 2023

QUARTERLY NEWS FOR ENDOWMENT SUPPORTERS



Your Perspective on Sustainability

Challenges, Successes, and Resources

Through a special project led and funded by the Endowment, we've set out to discover, compile, and provide comprehensive resources and best practices for sustainability in floriculture. As a next step in this process, we are seeking industry participation and input through a quick survey. Share your perspectives with us!



continued on page 2

Inspiring and Empowering the Next Generation

Alejandra Ruelas' Life-Changing Internship Experience at Altman Plants

Internships and scholarships encourage and support the next generation of our industry. The Endowment aims to inspire the future leaders of our industry and give them hands-on experience in the field to ensure the continued growth of floriculture.

One of the many opportunities provided through AFE is the Vic & Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program. Hear directly from one of our interns what her experience was like and how it impacted her future career goals!



continued on page 6

About AFE

AFE's Mission Statement

To be the trusted source and catalyst for floriculture advancement through funding of innovative research, scholarships, internships, and educational grants that best serve the dynamic needs and demographics of all industry sectors.



The AFE Bulletin is proudly sponsored by the Todd Bachman Memorial Fund.

Todd Bachman served as Chairman and CEO of Bachman's before his untimely death in 2008. Todd was a past chairman of the American Floral Endowment and was very active in many state and national industry organizations. Those who knew him will always remember what a great communicator he was and his outstanding leadership and devotion to work and family. His wife and daughters are honored to carry on his legacy.

Your Perspective on Sustainability

Challenges, Successes, and Resources

continued from page 1

We need your help!

Share with us your challenges, successes, and thoughts regarding sustainability. Participate in our short 5-minute survey to help provide important feedback and resources.

SCAN ME!



We are asking for industry members to share their experiences and perspectives on sustainability. Through this feedback, we will be able to better identify and understand the big picture of what's already out there, what's working, and what's not.

This project will compile new resources and bring together experts in both academia and industry to provide action plans for businesses large and small, allowing the industry to learn from each other and create a path forward with a library of information.

The industry leaders listed below have partnered with the Endowment in this forward-thinking initiative. Each of these major sponsors will join in the discussion at roundtable meetings throughout the project.



Interested in joining in this impactful initiative? You can join this growing list of industry partners to be a part of the upcoming planning, discussions, and work. All sponsors of the Sustainability Project will have a seat on the Sustainability Task Force for the roundtable meetings and will review and receive data prior to it being published.

Visit endowment.org/sustainability for more information and to become a sponsor.

Introducing Friends of Floral

AFE's Recurring Gift Program

Hello Floral Industry Friends,

2023 is already in full swing and AFE's Board of Trustees & staff are excitingly gearing up for a wonderful year of supporting floriculture.

This year we are funding many vital floriculture resources, such as hosting a new Personal Leadership Course for the Young Professionals Council, continuing our widely popular monthly Grow Pro webinars, sharing the results from our Thrips & Botrytis Research Fund, and awarding over 30 scholarships – just to name a few!

All of this is possible because of the loyal support of our philanthropic donors that share AFE's passion for the floral industry. Philanthropy is about truly caring for a specific industry and wanting to give back to ensure its future success. To better support all of floriculture by providing an ongoing and dependable funding source for vital programs, AFE established the *Friends of Floral* donor program.

Friends of Floral is a prestigious group of our most dedicated donors that give monthly recurring contributions to assist AFE in funding programs and research that strengthen all aspects of our industry.



By choosing to give a recurring monthly contribution and becoming a *Friend of Floral*, you will truly make a huge impact by supporting:

- Programs to educate, empower, and train the next generation
- Cutting-edge, research-driven advancements resulting in flower longevity & sustainability
- Grants for continued education
- Career resources for employers and job-seekers

We proudly honor *Friends of Floral* members on our website, in our November print bulletin and annual reports, and during our annual reception.

In everything we do, AFE is supporting innovation, opportunities, and growth for all segments of the floral industry – growers to retailers. We need your help to continue this great work!

I encourage you to give back to the industry we all love so much and become a Friends of Floral member in 2023! Together, we are ensuring the floral industry is sustainable and prosperous for many generations to come. Thank you for supporting our industry!

Debi Chedester

Debi Chedester, CAE, IOM, AAF
Executive Director, American Floral Endowment



Become a Friend of Floral by making a monthly gift of \$25 or more!

Visit

[Endowment.org/donate](https://endowment.org/donate)



SCAN HERE!

For less than the cost of one small floral arrangement, you can invest in the future of floriculture by giving a monthly recurring donation of just \$25 or more if you choose!

Recurring gifts of all sizes are welcome and impactful!

All webinars are **FREE** and open to anyone in the industry – thanks to our generous sponsors!

Our nationally recognized researchers, hosts, and speakers offer ‘how-to’ advice based on AFE-funded and other research projects to help the industry navigate through ever-changing growing challenges.

**FEB
28**

1:00 PM

Success with Vegetative Unrooted Cuttings

Speaker: Dr. Jim Faust, Clemson University

Sponsor: Oasis Grower Solutions & Syngenta Flowers

**AUG
29**

1:00 PM

Controlling Whitefly on Poinsettia

Speaker: Dr. JC Chong, Clemson University

Sponsor: Sanmite SC, SePRO & Syngenta

**MAR
21**

1:00 PM

Current State of Growing Media

Speaker: Dr. Brian Jackson, North Carolina State University

Sponsor: Pindstrup

**SEPT
19**

1:00 PM

Hydroponics for Floriculture Production

Speaker: Dr. Chris Currey, Iowa State University

**APR
18**

1:00 PM

Fertilizer Options for Greenhouse Growers

Speaker: Dr. Josh Henry, Helena Agri-Enterprises

Sponsor: Helena Agri-Enterprises

**OCT
24**

1:00 PM

Sustainable Disease Management Solutions for Specialty Cut Flower Growers

Speaker: Dr. Francesca Hand, Ohio State University

**MAY
16**

1:00 PM

Recent Advances in LED Lighting and Controls

Speaker: Dr. Erik Runkle, Michigan State University

Sponsor: Ball Seed Company

**NOV
21**

1:00 PM

Cut Flower Production in the Northern US

Speaker: Dr. Roberto Lopez, Michigan State University

Sponsor: Ball Seed Company

**JUNE
20**

1:00 PM

Current Postharvest Handling Recommendations for Cut Flowers

Speaker: Dr. John Dole, North Carolina State University

Sponsor: Floralife

**DEC
19**

1:00 PM

Technologies and Strategies for Sustainable Substrates in Containerized Crop Production

Speaker: Dr. James Altland, USDA ARS

**JULY
25**

1:00 PM

Creating a Culture of Sanitation

Speaker: Dr. Rosa Raudales, University of Connecticut

Sponsor: Syngenta Flowers



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*Sponsors noted as of 2/16/23

New Year's Resolution: Make More Money with Quality Flowers

Originally Published in Florists' Review

By Terri A. Nell, Ph.D., AAF, AFE's Research Director

Reduce shrinkage and increase profits by making a New Year's resolution to follow strict care and handling practices each day. Every florist operation can achieve improved profits with quality flowers. And, with regular attention to these handling practices, every employee will understand his or her role in delivering quality products to happy customers, contributing to a healthy bottom line.

The Postharvest Pledge

Achieving long-lasting, high-quality flowers does not just happen. Providing quality flowers requires a commitment from owners, managers and all employees every day. The postharvest pledge means that proper postharvest procedures are practiced consistently. Outstanding designs, good financial practices and employee management are vital parts of your business; give postharvest care the same priority. Train your employees in best-management practices, then expect them to “take the pledge.”

Develop and Implement Postharvest Standards and Practices

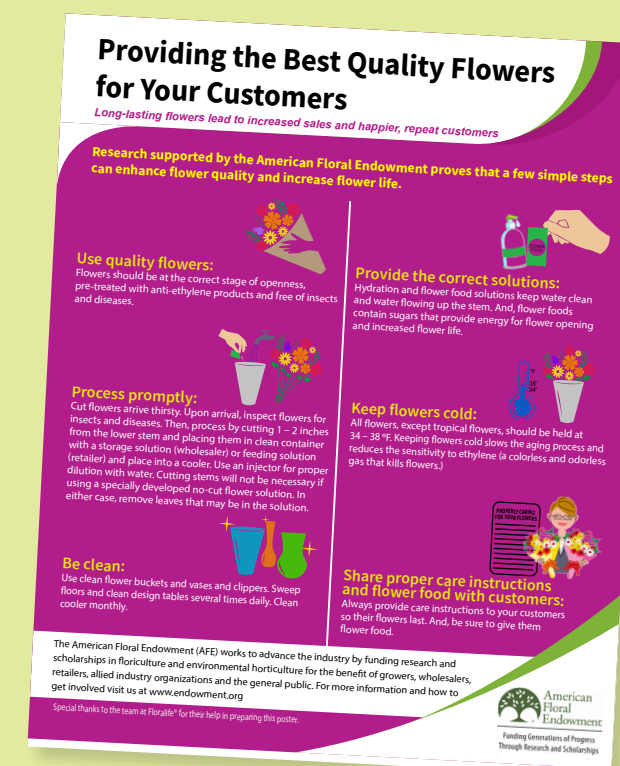
The components of postharvest handling practices are readily available in trade magazines, and companies selling care and handling products provide general and crop-specific handling guidelines and requirements.

Implement the “3 Cs” for Postharvest Handling

AFE has identified the “3 Cs”—Cooling, Care and Cleanliness—as the critical elements of successful care and handling programs. Cooling represents an easily measured component to ensure long-lasting flowers. Most flowers (except tropical flowers) should be stored and shipped at 34 F to 38 F. These temperatures reduce the respiration of the flowers and help to preserve the natural sugars in the flowers, so energy is available for flower opening and maintenance of cellular function. The second ‘C’ refers to proper Care of the flowers, including the use of accurately mixed flower foods and clean water. The flower food provides sugar supplements and lowers the pH of the solution. Low pH (3.5 to 5) enhances water uptake in the stems and reduces bacteria growth in the vase solution. The third critical element—Cleanliness—emphasizes the need to regularly sanitize buckets, floors, design tables, cutting tools and coolers, to reduce fungal and bacterial contamination of the flowers and the vase solutions.

These helpful care and handling tips are incorporated into a poster provided to the industry FREE of charge by AFE. This poster can be placed above store coolers as a reminder of the best practices for care and handling to employees.

Businesses can request a copy of the poster, read about new research findings, and view “Care and Handling” webinars at endowment.org.



Purchase the Best Flowers

The vase life of flowers is largely determined before wholesale and retail florists receive flowers. Growers must harvest flowers at the correct stages and then treat them with hydration solutions, special solutions to maintain leaf color (prevent leaf yellowing), and anti-ethylene products to prevent damage during storage and shipping. Growers and shippers must maintain cold (34 F to 38 F) temperatures at every step, from the time flowers are boxed at the farms until they reach the wholesale florists—a process referred to as “the cold chain.” Growers and shippers begin the cold chain, and it is the responsibility of wholesale and retail florists to maintain cold conditions until flowers reach consumers.

Make 2023 a Profitable New Year

Add a “postharvest pledge” to your 2023 New Year’s resolutions. You will enjoy the benefits of reduced waste, increased sales, and even happier customers.

Inspiring and Empowering the Next Generation

Alejandra Ruelas' Life Changing Internship Experience at Altman Plants

First, let's share a bit about the Vic & Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program – this program gives students the opportunity to gain practical floriculture/horticulture experience while training at a commercial production greenhouse or nursery. Students intern away from home for three–six month periods, and upon completion of their paid internship, they receive a scholarship to continue their degree.

Alejandra Ruelas is one of our 2022 interns. She is a student at Arizona State University and was placed in an internship with Altman Plants in Lake Mathews, CA. This internship reawakened her passion for horticulture and floriculture, inspiring another future leader to stay in our industry.



“Before I entered this internship, I was really questioning my degree and if I should change it to something else because I wasn't feeling the love of horticulture like I did back in high school. But this summer internship confirmed my love and passion for horticulture and that I actually want to stick with it and be a grower,” reflected Ruelas.

She learned a wide variety of skills, from propagating all the way through to delivery, gaining exposure to all of the different departments and roles.

“My favorite parts of the day were in the mornings when I got to walk with the growers and learn how to examine a bed of crops. They taught me how to propagate and examine the moisture in the soil. I got to identify actual plant diseases

and pests personally and learn which types of chemicals effectively treat them. I also learned about growing weeks and how fast-paced plant production is. I could see how growers really loved their plants and how worried they were when they would see a bed with pests,” noted Ruelas. Seeing the passion of experienced growers directly, Ruelas was able to better understand the investment that companies like Altman Plants make into their product and experience the challenges that come with production.



In addition to learning about growing, Ruelas was also exposed to big-picture thinking and industry advancements. “I loved learning about sustainable practices with Altman. 70% of their water is recycled, which at first introduced many issues. They solved their problem by adding Cannas to filter out chemicals. Owls on the property keep rodent populations in check instead of poisons which keeps plants and employees safe. One way we recycle soil at Altman is we heat it up to clean it from pests and harmful bacteria before reintroducing it to the workspace.”

She was also able to learn about Altman's multiple locations, “I learned is every location owned by Altman Plants is important and unique. For

example, Edgehill has all of the succulents, Lake Mathews has most of the drought-tolerant plants, and other colored plants are found at Fallbrook due to a cooler climate.”

The pandemic impacted Ruelas and her education like so many other students over the past few years. This internship provided a much-needed break from the virtual and a step back into in-person experiences. “Altman plants really cared



get certified in Integrated Pest Management (I.P.M.). I can't wait to go back and apply this knowledge on a greater scale and hope to become a head grower.”

Altman Plants and Ruelas mutually impacted each other; When asked about Ruelas' work during her internship, her supervisors, Jim Hessler and Elias Estrada, noted, “Alejandra was an outstanding intern and was a real asset to our operation. In addition to working in all the different areas of the nursery, she had a specific project to complete, which was to execute and document several soil trials for our drought-tolerant line of plants. She really took the project to heart and did a thorough and outstanding job. Her work on this project was very beneficial to us.”

In closing, Ruelas adds, “Thank you to the Vic and Margaret Ball Internship Program for giving me a wonderful opportunity that has changed my life.”

To learn more about the program and AFE's other internship opportunities, visit endowment.org/internships. And, if you are interested in becoming an internship host to meet future industry leaders like Ruelas, please let us know by emailing afe@endowment.org. You can also see videos from our interns at their internships across our social media platforms.



that I learned everything hands-on.” From testing soil mixtures on different plant species to recording the height of mums, Ruelas was able to gain direct exposure.

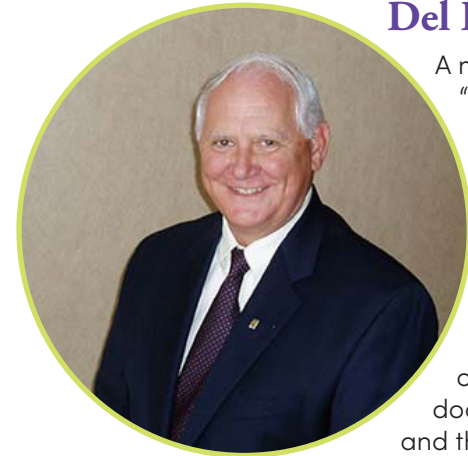
However, the internship's impact is not limited to professional training. These experiences also give students the opportunity to network and create lasting connections for future professional and personal development. “I loved my fellow coworkers at Altman plants! I could honestly say that I found long-lasting friendships during my stay who taught me so much about agriculture! They all made me feel like I had a place in the company.”

So, what is the next step for students after their internships? In addition to the scholarship provided by the Vic & Margaret Ball Fund, these placements can also lead to future employment opportunities. Ruelas shared how excited she is about the prospect noting, “I love the company and the direction they are heading. I told them that I am going back with more experience and knowledge that I will gain from ASU, and I am going to

Three New Memorial Tributes Established to Honor Industry Leaders

Del Demaree, Nicholas I. Paul, and Edward Seagroatt

We are sad to announce the passing of three major industry leaders, Del Demaree Jr., AAF, Nicholas Ignatius Paul, and Edward A. Seagroatt. Memorial Tributes have been established by family and friends of each through AFE to forever remember and honor them.



Del Demaree of Syndicate Sales

A memorial tribute has been established through the Endowment honoring Delmar “Del” Earl Demaree Jr., AAF. Del Demaree Jr. passed away on January 2nd, 2023, at the age of 85. Del was a longtime industry member, a business expert, and a devoted family man.

Del was a second-generation owner who took his family business, Syndicate Sales, to new heights. In 1967 he became president of the company, which took off due to his vision and entrepreneurial drive. He continued to expand product lines and influence all parts of the industry.

Raised on farms in Michigan and then outside of Kokomo, Indiana, Del’s first taste of being an entrepreneur was when he sold chickens from the family farm door to door. During that time in the mid-’40s, Del’s father spent four days a week farming and three days on the road selling giftware to florists. It was around this time that the family business was born. During his early years with the company, Del learned the values

of stewardship, hard work as well as honoring customers, creditors, and employees. He also understood and modeled the importance of volunteerism and community service.

Throughout his career, Del had an unsurpassed commitment to giving back to the industry by holding leadership positions with AFE, SAF, WF&FSA, and more. He received countless awards and accolades for his service.



Nicholas I. Paul of Paul’s Wholesale Florist Company

The Nicholas I. Paul Memorial Tribute was established by Georgianna and Dennis Paul.

Nicholas Ignatius Paul “Nick” (affectionately known as “Chief” by his colleagues) of Paul’s Wholesale Florist Company passed away on January 14, 2023, at the age of 82. He was a devoted member of the floral industry for over 60 years. His last days were spent with family and friends by his side as he had his entire life.

Upon their father’s death in 1961, Nick and his brother Dennis became the owners of Paul’s Wholesale Florist Company. They devoted their lives to the company. The Paul brothers decided if they were to spend their lives in the business they had inherited, they wanted to establish a more congenial working relationship among their competitors.

In 1986, Nick was instrumental in developing a trusting relationship with the company’s wholesaler partners resulting in a joint move of McCallum Sauber Florist Inc., A. Gude Sons, the Washington Florists’ Exchange, and Paul’s Wholesale Florist. Through keeping this collective together for the move, Nick was a part of preserving a 70-year tradition of doing business side-by-side.

The brothers, Nick and Dennis, were joint partners throughout the project, which ultimately aided in launching the build-up of commercial and residential development known as North of Massachusetts Avenue (NOMA) today.



Edward Seagroatt of Seagroatt Riccardi

The Edward Seagroatt Memorial Tribute was established by longtime friends Red & Katie Kennicott of Kennicott Brothers Co.

Edward A. Seagroatt, 81, of Troy, passed away on December 28th, 2022. He was the President of Seagroatt Floral in Berlin and Albany and later founded Seagroatt Riccardi in Latham, NY.

Ed was a leader in the floral industry and, early on, recognized and leveraged the power of information technology to improve efficiency and support growth.

Born in Troy, Ed was the son of the late Albert Seagroatt and Helen Brown Seagroatt. Ed was raised in Berlin, NY, and resided in the Capital District area all his life. He attended Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut and was a graduate of La Salle Institute in Troy, NY. Ed earned a degree in Ornamental Horticulture from the State University of New York at Farmingdale and later served in the Coast Guard.

A natural optimist, Ed faced any challenge with steadfastness and courage. He was blessed with many talents, but perhaps his greatest gift was for friendship. He served the community in ways large and small and was a faithful member of the Brunswick Church for more than fifty years.

We, at the Endowment, are grateful to be able to honor the memories of these industry champions. To read the full tributes for each of these industry leaders and make a contribution in their honor, please visit endowment.org/memorial-tributes/.



Join AFE’s Legacy Circle

*Giving is not just about making a contribution,
it’s about making a difference.*



The Endowment’s Legacy Circle is an honorary organization composed of persons who have made provision for a planned gift to AFE through a bequest, life insurance policy, trust, or otherwise, such as a retirement plan beneficiary designation.

The Legacy Circle affords us an opportunity to extend our warm appreciation to individuals who notify us of their thoughtful gift intentions supporting the future of floral.

To learn more, make a contribution, and see a complete list of our Legacy Circle members, visit endowment.org/legacy-circle/

How to Get Involved and Volunteer with AFE

Did you know there's a multitude of ways you can get involved with AFE? Volunteering not only supports vital floral industry programs – but also inspires networking, community collaboration, and leadership opportunities to help provide for the future.

Why Volunteer With AFE

AFE is the trusted source and catalyst for floriculture advancement through funding innovative research, scholarships, internships, and educational grants that best serve the dynamic needs and demographics of all industry sectors.

Through volunteer opportunities, you will get an inside look at how AFE makes an impact on our industry and a chance to provide input and shape the future of our initiatives. Working together, we can continue to make the biggest impact on the industry's future growth!

What will YOU gain? Through volunteering with AFE, you'll have professional leadership, personal development, networking, and collaboration opportunities. AFE brings together all segments and levels of industry members, from longtime leaders, including multi-generational family businesses, to up-and-coming new businesses and even students just starting their journey in floral. There is no shortage of diverse perspectives.

Ways to Get Involved

1. **Serve as a Scholarship Reviewer**

AFE's Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarship programs are the cornerstone of uplifting the next generation of industry leaders. By joining the Scholarship Review Team, you will give your input and thorough consideration to processing applications and awarding scholarships. Scholarship reviews are normally conducted after Mother's Day and require 2-5 hours of your time.
2. **Serve as a Research Reviewer**

Reduced labor, production efficiency, improved pest management practices, and improved postharvest quality and efficiency lead to increased profits. These challenges face the floral industry every day. The Endowment supports industry-driven and industry-focused research. If you have an interest in reviewing research proposals for their impact on the industry, this opportunity is for you. You will review research proposals in late August/early September to provide feedback on the potential impact on the industry as it relates to current challenges. Time involvement is between 2-5 hours.
3. **Become a Presenter for AFE's Industry Webinars**

Multiple opportunities exist for industry experts wishing to share their knowledge with our community. Currently, AFE runs monthly research webinars through our Grow Pro Webinar Series and regular professional leadership and development webinars for our Young Professionals Council. Additional opportunities can include best practices, current trends, consumer research for the Floral Marketing Fund, and more. Have a topic that you are interested in sharing? Let us know! We'd love to have you present for us!
4. **Provide Editorial Content- Specialty or Industry Event Follow-Up**

The Endowment provides several newsletters in addition to other one-off communications and social media content. Have a story that you'd like to share? We are interested in promoting new and exciting initiatives, research, industry events, and more that impact the floriculture community.
5. **Partnerships, Sponsorships, & Specific Funds**

Partnerships and sponsorships are available for our annual fundraising campaigns, events, webinars, research initiatives, and more. If you have a specific focus that you'd like to support, please let us know. Currently, we are seeking major sponsors for our Sustainability Initiative. Additionally, if you would like to establish a specific or designated fund, whether that be for a scholarship, research, or memorial tribute, we'd welcome the opportunity to discuss how to develop a fund that honors your specific focus.
6. **Committee Work**

We have opportunities to work hand-in-hand with AFE's Board of Trustees and Staff on important initiatives through our committees and subcommittees. Currently, the committees include Vic & Margaret Ball Committee, Public Relations/Development Committee, Education/Scholarships & Internships Committee, Research Committee, and Floral Marketing Fund Committee. What part of AFE are you most passionate about?



Interested? Reach Out to AFE

Do any of these volunteering opportunities interest you? We'd love to get to know you and help you get involved with our programs. Reach out to us at afe@endowment.org or (703) 838-5211, and let us know how you'd like to get involved!

Education in Bloom at Mississippi State University

If there's one thing we love to see, it's our educational grants in action, educating and inspiring students.

In 2022, the Endowment provided researchers at Mississippi State University with educational grant funding to help them create a learning garden.

MSU began work on the garden last Spring. Since then, they have installed 24 raised flower beds, established a drip irrigation system, placed weed barriers, and set up compost bins. In addition, they grew and evaluated 23 varieties of specialty-cut annual flowers as part of an experiment through the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers.

As the flowers grow, the MSU faculty have grown their educational curriculum to match. In the upcoming semesters, two upper-level floral design courses, Wedding Floral Design and Floral Design II, will complete hands-on projects that directly utilize the cut flower garden.



“The cut flower garden will allow students a more hands-on approach to learning best practices for growing and collecting cut floral material from nature and fill an educational gap currently lacking in the degree curriculum,” Dr. Cole Etheredge, Assistant Professor of Floral Management at MSU, said.

The faculty plans to incorporate the garden into even more courses over time. Currently, they are planning a 10-week Floral Management course that students can take over the Summer that teaches everything from how to establish a cut flower garden, growing and maintaining it from seed to harvest, post-harvest care and handling for flowers, and even designing with the flowers.

In the future, the faculty hopes to use more funding to expand the garden by planting more perennial shrub varieties, incorporating additional raised flower beds, participating in testing for new specialty cut flower varieties, and installing a rainwater collection system.

This is exactly the kind of work we at the Endowment strive to empower and encourage. If you would like to help us as we continue funding educational programs like this one, please consider a contribution to AFE at endowment.org/donate.

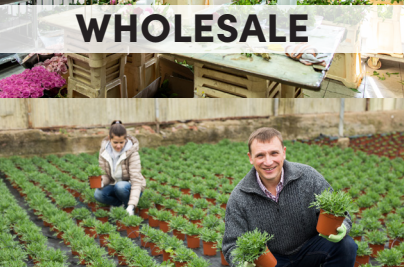
In everything we do, we aim to inspire and educate the next generation about the vast opportunities in the floral industry—and, hopefully, spark a passion for flowers.



RETAIL



WHOLESALE



GROWER



ALLIED

NEW RECRUITMENT RESOURCES

For All Segments of the Industry

Free customizable templates to accelerate your employee search.

As an added resource to the **AFE Career Center**, we've made finding your next team member easy - just download, personalize, and share!

JOB DESCRIPTIONS, JOB ADVERTISEMENTS, CHECKLISTS, GUIDES FOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS, CAREER FAIR MATERIALS, AND MORE!

To access these resources, visit:

endowment.org/recruitment-resources
AFECareerCenter.com



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