

# Cultivating Excellence

Here's how the American Floral Endowment plays a key role in floriculture advancements.

By Laura Barth

As you know, floriculture is a vibrant and ever-evolving industry that thrives on innovation, education, and advancement. As growers and floriculture professionals, you are at the heart of this progress. The American Floral Endowment (AFE) recognizes this, and for more than six decades, we have been right there with you, actively engaging with you to help solve problems in your businesses, as well as supporting the next generation of floriculture professionals.

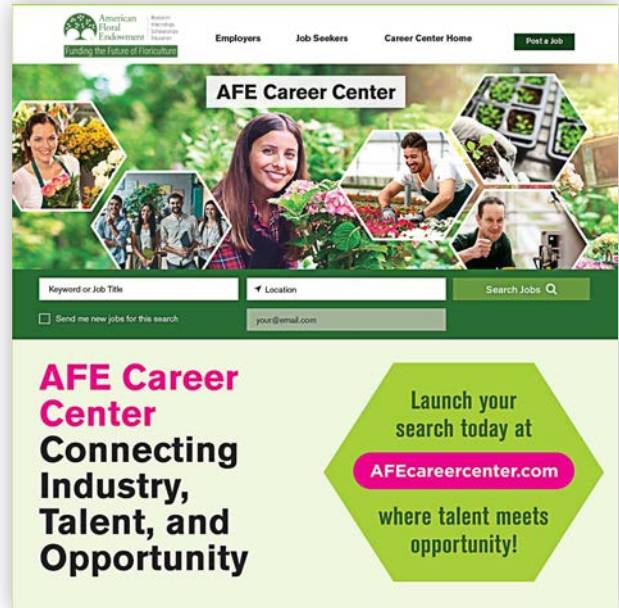
## Research Results That Work

We understand the daily challenges you face. Through active engagement and dialogue, AFE identifies and prioritizes the pain points within your operations. Our goal from these discussions is clear: to fund innovative research that revolutionizes industry practices, resulting in tangible benefits for your businesses. Our research initiatives have consistently yielded substantial cost savings, improved labor efficiency, and heightened profitability, directly aligning with your needs. Many of the current production practices used today are the direct results of AFE-funded research.

Why is that? Because the most important part of our research program is sharing the results with the industry through research reports, webinars, newsletters, and more. Our Grow Pro webinars are tailored to your needs, giving you practical takeaways that you can implement immediately. These sessions are led by industry experts and provide practical insights without any overwhelming technical jargon. The topics are carefully curated to address your pressing concerns, providing information that directly impacts your profit margins and operational efficiency. To register for our 2024 webinars, you may visit [endowment.org/growpro](http://endowment.org/growpro). Registration is free, as is access to the recordings of all our previous Grow Pro Webinars, which are available on our website and YouTube channel.

Complementing the webinars is the quarterly "Growing Further" newsletter, a comprehensive resource containing updates from AFE-funded research projects, industry publications, and insights from expert researchers. To receive the Growing Further newsletter, visit [endowment.org](http://endowment.org) and click the "Subscribe to AFE Communications" section on the home page.

AFE recognizes that challenges extend beyond the present. The Thrips and Botrytis Research Campaign is a testament to our proactive stance. Beginning in 2017 through the generous contributions of 25 industry leaders, this campaign has



Employers in the floriculture industry may post job openings on the AFE Career Center website. Graphics: The American Floral Endowment



The American Floral Endowment supports research, offers professional development, and partners with other organizations to advance the floriculture industry.

culminated in a comprehensive Online Research Library that is now available to the industry. Here you can find the latest key takeaways, webinars, and research results in both English and Spanish to help you manage thrips and botrytis. Visit [endowment.org/tb](http://endowment.org/tb) to take advantage of these free resources.

Educational grants are another key part of ensuring that you and your employees have important practical information at your fingertips. Our educational grants have helped fund programs like the University of Florida Greenhouse Training online course series (offered in both English and Spanish); e-Gro alerts; the Fert, Dirt & Squirt website, and more.

## Sowing Seeds for Future Success

AFE is also dedicated to nurturing the future leaders of the industry. One of the most important ways we do this is by supporting students and young industry professionals through scholarships, internships, and our Young Professionals Council.

Students are feeling financial pressures more than ever in the current economy. AFE offers more than 30 scholarships each year, for both undergraduate and graduate students, ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. We highly encourage any student that is currently pursuing a career in or related to floriculture or horticulture to apply. Learn more about AFE's scholarships at [endowment.org/scholarships](http://endowment.org/scholarships).

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Internships are one of the best ways young people are introduced to the industry. Our Vic and Margaret Ball Intern Scholarship Program allows students to gain floriculture experience by working at a commercial production greenhouse or nursery. Our Mosmiller Scholarship Intern Program interns train at a leading retail, wholesale, or allied trade business. Both of these programs include a paid internship along with a scholarship upon successful completion of the internship. You can learn more about our internship programs, including how to host an intern, at [endowment.org/internships](http://endowment.org/internships).

In addition to the people, the future success of our industry is deeply dependent upon our production practices, and AFE has some exciting developments on this front. Looking toward a sustainable future, AFE is launching Sustainbloom, which endeavors to help growers and business owners adopt eco-conscious practices across the industry. By partnering with like-minded organizations, we have begun to create sustainability resources and reports to help you foster a culture of sustainability within your business. Stay tuned for the launch of this project this year, including industry guides, checklists, and more.

### Let Us Help You Find New Talent

We know that finding and retaining labor continues to be an issue in all sectors. We also know that creating and posting help wanted ads and job descriptions can often be a tedious and time-consuming task. At AFE, we've taken the initial

steps for you and curated an array of customizable recruitment resources and templates, catering to all segments of the floriculture industry. Discover these resources at [endowment.org/recruitment-resources](http://endowment.org/recruitment-resources). Additionally, extend the scope of your search by sharing your job opportunities on the AFE Career Center ([AFECareerCenter.com](http://AFECareerCenter.com)).

### Join AFE to Create a Brighter Future

As growers and industry members, your involvement in AFE programs is critical in ensuring we can provide you with the best support. We invite you to engage with AFE's programs in the following ways:

- Sign up to be a host for interns
- Post your job openings on our comprehensive Career Center
- Follow us on social media and share our posts
- Check out our Sustainbloom resources later this year
- Consider supporting AFE by making a tax-deductible donation to help us continue to fund educational and research programs
- Let us know how we can help you!


Together, we can shape a robust and innovative industry that meets your (and your customers') evolving needs. Let's sow the seeds of progress, nurture growth, and create a thriving tomorrow for the floriculture community. GG



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