



ISSUE No. 23

Slow Flowers  
JOURNAL

# RED, WHITE & BLOOM

Introducing the fifth annual American Flowers Week  
botanical couture collection.

Produced and written by **Debra Prinzing**

Photos by **Tiffany Marie Buckley, Philip Casey, Jenny M. Diaz,  
Kristen Earley, Roxy Marcy, Joelle Martin, Missy Palacol,  
Chris Pinchbeck, Haley Swinth and Danielle Werner**

**F**ield fresh and runway ready, the American Flowers Week botanical couture collection features nine fashionable floral looks produced by Slow Flowers teams across the U.S. Together, these wearable floral garments represent a diverse story of originality and inventiveness. Each melds talents of growers and florists, elevating local and seasonal flowers in unexpected and beautiful ways.

In its fifth year, this year's American Flowers Week (June 28-July 4) promotes domestic flowers and foliage in the marketplace, inspiring professionals and consumers alike. When flowers are seen as fashion, they ignite the imagination and stimulate new awareness of domestic floral agriculture and the art of floral design.

This year's participants have transformed familiar and uncommon annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, grasses and herbs into everything from mod minis to luxurious gowns, continuing the American Flowers Week series that began with **Susan McLeary's** iconic red-white-and-blue floral 'fro in 2016. Including the looks you see in these pages, the collection has grown to 20 pieces, each of which combines the art of floral design and couture.

The Slow Flowers application process invited designer-farmer teams around the country to submit their best ideas for showcasing regional traditions, seasonal crops, and distinct cultural and historic influences through the floral medium. The alluring results are found here in the pages of "Slow Flowers Journal." When a model dons a garment fashioned from petals, fronds, buds and blades, we, as viewers, experience wonder and curiosity. These designs shine a light on the passionate individuals who have turned ideas into reality. From gardens to gowns. From cut flowers to couture. From seedlings to style.

Appreciate these artisans, and learn from their creative process while transforming fields of blooms into a collection of American floral fashion ingenuity.

*EXTRA:* See more photos and learn more about each look in the *Florists' Review* digital edition, or at [americanflowersweek.com](http://americanflowersweek.com).



# ALASKA

“The inspiration for our garment came from the floral looks of past seasons,” says **Kim Herning** of **Northern Lights Peonies**, based in Fairbanks, Alaska. “And since we are peony farmers, we knew we would be working with peony blooms in all colors and sizes. The style of the peony dress harkens back to women’s fashion in the 1700s and is also reminiscent of the ‘Barbie cakes’ my mother would make in the 1960s. We hope that by combining our beautiful peonies with a lovely model in a fantasy setting we have created magic.”

## CREATIVE CREDITS

**Design Team:** Kim Herning, Roxy Marcy and Tirzah Friesen

**Lead Designer:** Kim Herning, Northern Lights Peonies,  
Arctic Alaska Peonies @arcticalaskapeonies

**Venue and Flowers:** Northern Lights Peonies, Fairbanks, Alaska,  
@northernlightspeonies

**Model; Hair and Makeup:** Tirzah Friesen

**Photography:** Roxy Marcy, with Alaska Alchemy @alaskaalchemy



“Peony farming is not all weeding and cutting! I loved showcasing a beautiful young woman in this peony dress on my land at Northern Lights Peonies in Fairbanks.”

-- Kim Herning, Northern Lights Peonies



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# WASHINGTON



“My hope is that others will be inspired to take lessons from their past, apply those lessons to their present challenges and work to create a better future. Working in the floral industry is a lot like making a quilt. Quilt-making takes proper planning, specialized skills, a lot of time, and a fair amount of trial and error before one gets it right. A quilt can be a valued piece of art or seen as just a blanket. Nevertheless, both flowers and quilts have a valuable purpose in life. We must never forget that and discover ways to preserve our craft for future generations.”

-- Tammy Myers, First and Bloom



“I’ve always been inspired by the American West,” explains floral designer **Tammy Myers**, of **First & Bloom**, based in the Seattle area. “My mother is a quilter. My father loves American history. My grandfather was a descendant of the Karuk Tribe in Northern California. To me, a quilt is a beautiful symbol of true American history. Upon conducting research, I discovered these iconic patchwork designs originate from women during the Colonial period of the 1700s. Later, Native women, known for making beautiful blankets, also started using these same quilting techniques. Quilts are truly a labor of love that bring warmth and comfort to whomever they surround. I find flowers have a similar nature. They, too, bring joy and comfort to whomever they are near.

“Authenticity was very important to me for this project. Our model, **Anne Davidson**, is of Native Athabaskan descent, and the area in which this scene was photographed, at **Laughing Goat Flower Farm** in Enumclaw, Wash., is an area rich in Native American history.”





CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Tammy Myers, First & Bloom, [firstandbloom.com](http://firstandbloom.com), @firstandbloom

**Design Assistants:** Amy Brown and Leila Jorden

**Flowers:** Laughing Goat Flower Farm, Enumclaw, Wash., [laughinggoatfarm.com](http://laughinggoatfarm.com), @laughinggoatflowerfarm

**Additional Flowers:** Seattle Wholesale Growers Market, @seattlewholesalegrowersmarket

**Venue:** Laughing Goat Flower Farm

**Model:** Anne Davidson, @amd98065

**Hair and Makeup:** Elizabeth White Artistry @elizabethwhiteartistry

**Photography:** Missy Palacol Photography @missy.palacol





# CALIFORNIA

“Our brave boundary-pushing young woman is wearing 1960s *Vogue* attire created from *Gerbera* daisies,” says artist and photographer **Jenny M. Diaz**. “The ’60s were such a pivotal decade for women. Women were demanding more inclusion in the work force, equal pay and control of their personal rights.

“I chose the city of Fresno as my backdrop because many of the structures date back to the ’60s. The *Gerbera* daisies are strong not only in their appearance but also in how they create a pattern on the dress. Our gray background contrasting with a beautiful model in my bright *Gerbera* dress made for a perfect combination. We wanted to show how strong women can be – on the rooftop, gazing out into the world, hanging over the edge, riding a skateboard – all while looking stunning. My hope is that when people see this, they will be inspired to push themselves further. I am a graphic designer, and I wanted to push myself to create this look from start to finish. Yes, I was absolutely terrified, but I stepped out of my comfort zones and jumped in headfirst!”

## CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Jenny M. Diaz, [jennymdiaz.com](http://jennymdiaz.com), @jennymdiaz

**Flowers:** Dramm + Echter, Encinitas, Calif., [drammechter.com](http://drammechter.com), @dramm\_and\_echter

**Venue:** Fresno, Calif.

**Model:** Kara Trukki @luckytrukki

**Hair and Makeup:** Sixx Valenzuela, @sixxvalenzuela

**Photography:** Jenny M. Diaz





## CALIFORNIA



“My other hope is that people realize that flowers can live many different lives, just like us. They are sold as seeds, planted in containers, they are found in the wild, they are used to celebrate and mourn, to brighten a space and a face, and of course, they can become art.”

-- Jenny M. Diaz, designer and artist



## MISSOURI

Andrea K. Grist conjures a playful mini-dress infused with the personality of woodland, meadow and prairie, featuring botanicals sourced from **Little Green Garden**. “I was inspired by the native plants and grasses that grow in and around the flower farms of Missouri and Kansas,” she says. “I wanted a very organic look that’s youthful for our model’s age and size. I call the look ‘Cowgirl Meets Yule Sprite’ for its sense of both innocence and powerful confidence. **Beth and Joel Fortin**, of Little Green Garden, harvested all the ingredients from their farm, including flowers, grasses, pods and evergreens. The extensive grounds of our location include tallgrass prairies and tree-lined horse trails, reflecting the flora of this region. On location, our photographer, **Tiffany Marie Buckley**, played with lighting to create a moody, mystical background, merging the initial concept with more fairy-tale qualities.”

### CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Andrea K. Grist, Andrea K. Grist Floral Art, [andreakgristfloralart.com](http://andreakgristfloralart.com), @andreakgristfloralart

**Flowers:** Little Green Garden LLC, Richmond, Mo., [littlegreengardenllc.com](http://littlegreengardenllc.com), @littlegreengardenkc

**Venue:** Sunset Trails Stables, Lee’s Summit, Mo., [sunsettrailsstables.com](http://sunsettrailsstables.com), @sunsettrailsstables

**Model:** Samantha Grist

**Hair and Makeup:** Andrea K. Grist

**Photography:** Tiffany Marie Buckley, Tiffany Marie Photography, [tiffanybuckley.com](http://tiffanybuckley.com), @tiffanymariephoto

“I wanted to design a look that complements the Midwest and brings in the colors, style and flowers of the Midwest.”

-- Andrea K. Grist, Andrea K. Grist Floral Art



# MICHIGAN

Heather Grit, of Caledonia, Mich.-based **Glamour and Grit Floral**, highlights the winter beauty of Michigan, saying, “As a designer, I have to be creative in the colder months and think outside the box to create a dress that doesn’t scream ‘Christmas.’”

She harvested trimmings from 17 types of evergreens growing at a Michigan tree farm, including spruces and firs. “I wanted to give our dress dimension and texture, and show how pretty Michigan can be when there is snow on the ground and the flowers are dormant.”

### CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Heather Grit, Glamour and Grit Floral, [glamourandgritfloral.com](http://glamourandgritfloral.com), @glamourandgrit  
**Plants and Greenery:** Speyer Greenhouse, Byron Center, Mich., @speyergreenhouse; and Hart Tree Farm, Rockford, Mich., [harttreefarm.net](http://harttreefarm.net)  
**Venue:** Private location, Caledonia, Mich.  
**Model:** Kailee Naber, @kaileenaber  
**Hair and Makeup:** Tawwney Sayre, Makeup by Tawwney, @tawwneyjua  
**Photography:** Joelle Martin, Lavender & Lace Photography LLC, [lavenderandlacephotos.com](http://lavenderandlacephotos.com), @lavenderandlacephotos



“I was inspired by ‘foraged greenery style’ as a way to showcase the ferns and evergreens of Michigan.”

-- Heather Grit, Glamour and Grit Floral





## MAINE

Rayne Grace Hoke's inspiration for the late-summer dress was twofold. She envisioned a floral version of her family's collection of heirloom crazy quilts and drew from the extensive flowers, greenery and herbs at Johnny's Selected Seeds' research farm in Albion, Maine.

When Rayne arrived at the 40-acre certified organic farm, she was mesmerized by the varieties available at the peak of the season.

"I let the palette of organic botanicals 'speak' to me, as their twists and swirls, colors, and shapes influenced this dress design," she says. "The setting and flowers lent themselves to the natural progression that allowed me to turn our model into a flower harvest goddess. I created a pattern with flowers to mimic fabric for the dress's bodice. Grasses of all types created the garment's skirt. The key to constructing this look was to make sure the undergarment we used was fitted and could support the weight of the flowers. This is when my skills in fashion design and sewing came in handy!"

She continues: "I hope my love for the stunning beauty of Maine comes through as well as love for what I do as an artist."



### CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Rayne Grace Hoke, Flora's Muse, Biddeford, Maine, [florasmuse.com](http://florasmuse.com), @florasmuse

**Design Assistant:** Hillary Alger, product manager for Herbs and Flowers at Johnny's Selected Seeds

**Flowers and Foliage:** Johnny's Selected Seeds, Winslow, Maine, [johnnyseeds.com](http://johnnyseeds.com), @johnnys\_seeds

**Venue:** Johnny's Trial Gardens, Albion, Maine

**Model:** Mary Yarumian, @marybebythesea

**Hair and Makeup:** Mary Yarumian

**Photography:** Kristen Earley, Johnny's Selected Seeds; Chris Pinchbeck, [pinchbeckphoto.com](http://pinchbeckphoto.com)





**“The trial gardens at Johnny’s Seeds were pure inspiration. Fields and fields of flowers and luscious greens, and a cutting garden in which to gather and play with more flowers! The whole experience was just overwhelming, but in a good way.”**

-- Rayne Grace Hoke, Flora's Muse





## SOUTH CAROLINA



Toni Reale, of Roadside Blooms, and Laura Mewbourn, of Feast & Flora Farm, viewed their botanical couture collaboration as an opportunity to highlight the unique heritage and culture of coastal South Carolina's Gullah Geechee, a community descended from West African and Central African enslaved people. The women explain, "We were also inspired by the work of noted Southern painter Jonathan Green and spent a lot of time pouring over photos of his work, as well as photos of women in traditional Gullah dress.

"We wanted to focus on primary colors for the flowers – the reds, blues, yellows that so frequently appear in Mr. Green's paintings – and we selected a location that reflects the culture and story of the Gullah Geechee people. This palette pops brilliantly against the greenery of the marsh location as well as the Seashore Farmers' Lodge No. 767, a fraternal common house built in 1915 by black farmers for their community."

Flowers grown in local soil at Feast & Flora Farm and foraged on location compose a brilliant floral garment for their model, Giovanni Richardson, "Queen Gigi Ma'at Ogechi," Sea Island Gullah Chieftess and founding member of A Taste of Gullah. "As we created Queen Gigi's dress, we listened to her stories, bearing witness to a beautiful, strong woman, living her life and honoring her heritage as a descendant of slaves. Through listening, understanding and facing the dark reality that is our history and our present, we believe we can create a different future," Reale and Mewbourn say.

This project was personal and meaningful to the creators, and they credit their model for her guidance and collaboration. "We saw this as an opportunity to highlight the Gullah Geechee community, with the hope of challenging people to think of Charleston not just as a place of iconic landmarks frequented by tourists but also as a place whose farms, homes and plantations were born on the backs of enslaved people – people whose descendants live here and to whom we owe a debt we will never be able to repay."

### CREATIVE CREDITS

**Floral Designer:** Toni Reale, Roadside Blooms, North Charleston, S.C., [roadsideblooms.com](http://roadsideblooms.com), [@roadsideblooms\\_shop](https://www.instagram.com/roadsideblooms_shop)

**Farmer/Florist:** Laura Mewbourn, Feast & Flora Farm, Meggett, S.C., [feastandflorafarm.com](http://feastandflorafarm.com), [@feastandflora](https://www.instagram.com/feastandflora)

**Venue:** Seashore Farmers' Lodge No. 767, James Island, S.C., National Registry of Historic Places

**Model:** Giovanni Richardson, "Queen Gigi Ma'at Ogechi," Sea Island Gullah Chieftess and founding member of A Taste of Gullah, [tasteofgullah.com](http://tasteofgullah.com)

**Design Assistants:** Kelsey Bacon, Joy Colby and Scott Woytowick

**Photography:** Philip Casey, [philipcaseyphoto.com](http://philipcaseyphoto.com), [@philipcaseyphoto](https://www.instagram.com/philipcaseyphoto)

"We wanted to design a dress inspired by the artwork of Jonathan Green and the Gullah community. Green's female figures are most notable for their voluminous cotton dresses in bright, usually primary, colors. They are often depicted with wide-brimmed floppy hats or head wraps. We are grateful for the chance to bring this idea to life and we are particularly grateful to Giovanni for her dedication to this project as both model and historian."

-- Laura Mewbourn, Feast & Flora Farm and Toni Reale, Roadside Blooms





# SOUTH CAROLINA





# OREGON

Beth Syphers wanted to tell a story of a sassy, confident, modern-day young woman, and she framed her narrative around the late 1950s and early 1960s. “I also wanted this design to embrace women in all shapes and sizes and to reflect their power,” she says. “Bethany Little, of Charles Little & Co., a farm known for fabulous dried flowers, assisted me with this project. We decided to highlight the 1960s dried-flower vibe. We loved showcasing a combination of dried and fresh flowers as a way to extend the ‘local’ season in our floral designs. To me, flowers in all stages of their life cycle have beauty. I would love folks to look at this design and be confident about stepping away from following the crowd – to not be afraid of what people think of their art but to be bold and unique.”

## CREATIVE CREDITS

**Designer:** Beth Syphers, Crowley House Flower Farm, Rickreall, Ore., [chflowers.com](http://chflowers.com), [@crowleyhouse](https://www.instagram.com/crowleyhouse)

**Fresh and Dried Florals:** Crowley House Flower Farm and Beth and Charles Little, Charles Little & Co., Eugene, Ore., [charleslittleandcompany.com](http://charleslittleandcompany.com), [@charleslittleandco](https://www.instagram.com/charleslittleandco)

**Venue:** McMinnville, Ore.

**Model:** Rilley Syphers and Remington Kuenzi

**Hair and Makeup:** Rilley Syphers, [@rilley.h.s](https://www.instagram.com/rilley.h.s)

**Photography:** Haley Swinth, [haleyswinthphoto.com](http://haleyswinthphoto.com), [@haleyswinth](https://www.instagram.com/haleyswinth)





## OREGON

“The combination of dried and fresh flowers used together symbolized to me that flowers in their life cycles have a beauty in each state of life, as we do. All different. All beautiful.”

-- Beth Syphers, Crowley House Flower Farm





## FLORIDA

Eileen Tongson is a farmer-florist in the Orlando area who partnered with FernTrust, one of the nation's largest sources of Florida-grown ferns and foliage. "My starting point for the design was a visit to FernTrust, where I was able to see up close all the foliage they grow," she says. "All of the shades of green, not to mention the textures and shapes of foliage, were so inspiring! Many people still do not know that Central Florida is the cut foliage capital of the world. I wanted to create a design that highlights this amazing botanical product and encourage other designers to use it as more than just foliage in their floral arrangements."

Eileen's botanical gown and the fern-farm location are thoroughly integrated. "We want you to look at our story and immediately know its setting: the real, natural Florida. We were so fortunate that the most perfect oranges were still on the trees at FernTrust. Spanish moss was moving in the breeze. There were also majestic oak trees overhead and countless varieties of ferns below. What a dreamy, magical place!"



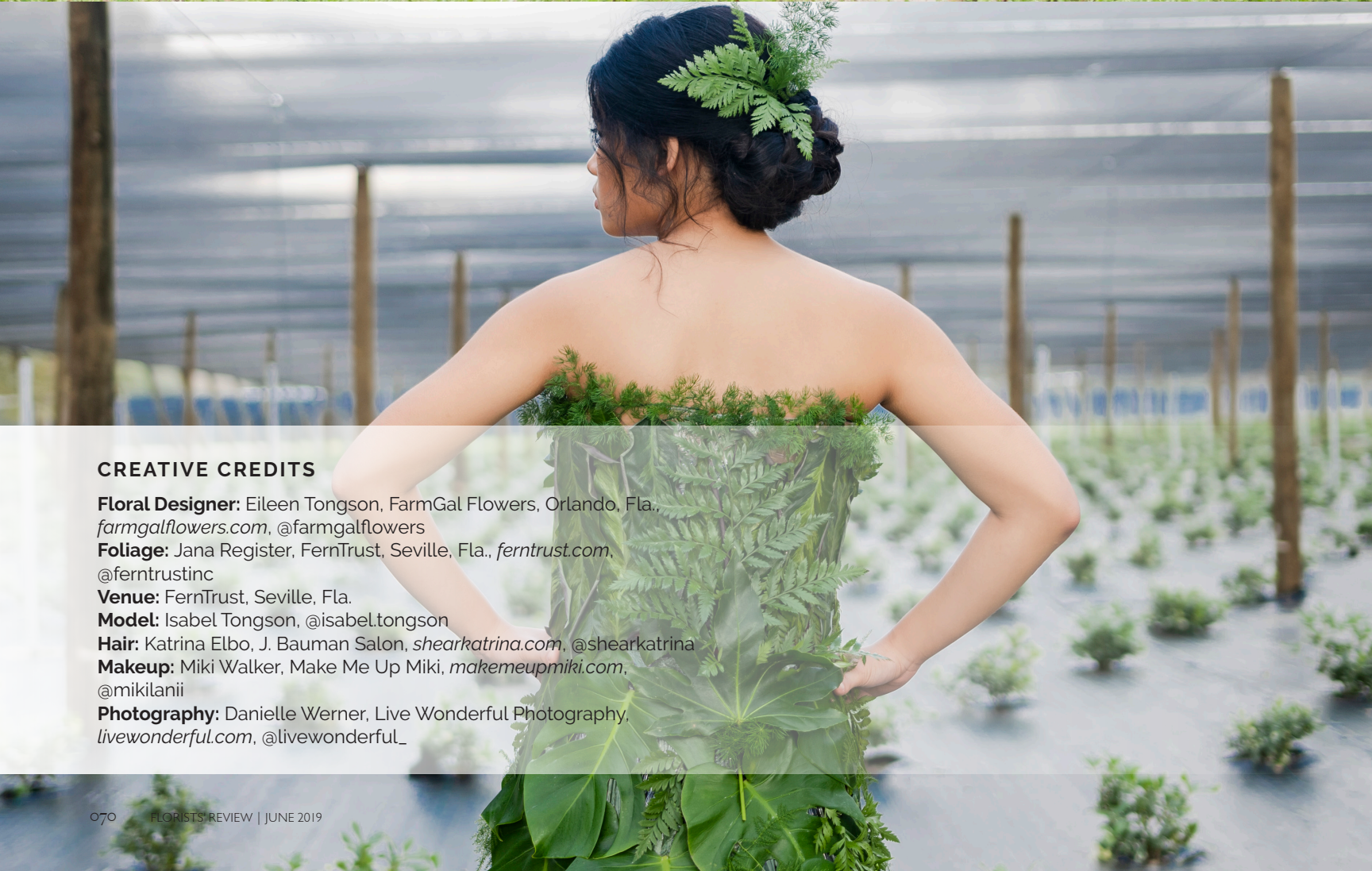
**"As a designer, I loved working with all of the Florida-grown ferns and foliages from FernTrust."**

-- Eileen Tongson, FarmGal Flowers





## FLORIDA



### CREATIVE CREDITS

**Floral Designer:** Eileen Tongson, FarmGal Flowers, Orlando, Fla., [farmgalflowers.com](http://farmgalflowers.com), @farmgalflowers  
**Foliage:** Jana Register, FernTrust, Seville, Fla., [feritrust.com](http://feritrust.com), @feritrustinc  
**Venue:** FernTrust, Seville, Fla.  
**Model:** Isabel Tongson, @isabeltongson  
**Hair:** Katrina Elbo, J. Bauman Salon, [shearkatrina.com](http://shearkatrina.com), @shearkatrina  
**Makeup:** Miki Walker, Make Me Up Miki, [makemeupmiki.com](http://makemeupmiki.com), @mikilanii  
**Photography:** Danielle Werner, Live Wonderful Photography, [livewonderful.com](http://livewonderful.com), @livewonderful\_

## Nine Ways to Participate in American Flowers Week

I created **American Flowers Week** in 2015 as a community-focused floral holiday that encourages participation from everyone in the floral industry — from flower seed and bulb producers to growers, from designers to retailers, and from cutting-garden enthusiasts to artists.

Here are nine ways you can participate in the original American-grown floral holiday.

**1. Share your flowers.** First and foremost, this is a grassroots social-media-focused campaign that includes all voices to promote the benefits and value of domestic flowers. It's simple: Take photos of flowers and foliage that you grow, harvest or design. Post the images to social media outlets, and use #americanflowersweek #slowflowers as your tags. Tag @myslowflowers and @florists\_review so we can see and document your posts, too.

**2. Create an installation.** Floral installations and large-scale botanical displays are ambitious but exciting ways to stimulate interest and generate buzz about you, your flowers and your commitment to American Flowers Week.

**3. Host an event.** Throw an American Flowers Week party to engage florists and consumers in the cause. It's as simple as choosing a date and bringing flowers and people together. Add your event to the master calendar at [americanflowersweek.com](http://americanflowersweek.com).

**4. Teach a workshop.** A hands-on floral workshop is a brilliant way to connect people with flowers. Share your ideas with workshop participants hungry for information and inspiration. Past years' participants have invited students to "Design with Seasonal Flowers" and "Make a Flower Crown" workshops.

**5. Engage the public.** Pop-up events are inclusive and festive, making your flowers accessible to people in locations where they frequent, such as coffee shops, farmers' markets and other retail settings. Sell, share and include local flowers in the life of your community.

**6. Use our graphics.** Thanks to support from Slow Flowers members and sponsors, we've invested in fabulous graphics, coloring pages and other visuals for you to incorporate into your American Flowers Week activities. Take advantage of this free creative content, and put your own spin on it! See the **FREE DOWNLOAD** button on the top of the [americanflowersweek.com](http://americanflowersweek.com) home page.

**7. Produce a styled shoot.** We're so impressed with the creativity and inventiveness of Slow Flowers members. American Flowers Week offers a great platform to gather a creative team for a styled shoot. Pull your team together and see what you imagine and create — and share it with us!

**8. Tell the media.** Whether it's an event or beautiful visuals, seize the opportunity to connect with local media and engage them (and their readers) with relevant and meaningful content. Use the sample press release at [americanflowersweek.com](http://americanflowersweek.com), and deliver it along with flowers to a local editor or news outlet.

**9. Be a brand ambassador.** Share your ideas with others! Get in touch, and we'll be happy to send you extra resources for your projects. The best connections happen when you tell your story in an authentic and passionate way to people in your community. Tell your story in the context of **American Flowers Week**, and let your audience know why it's so important! — Debra Prinzing ■

