

Meet the 2014 ASCFG Conference Speakers

Gretel and Steve Adams

We always say farming found us, but we are glad it did! Gretel's degree is in Psychology and Steve was a professional barista when we met the farmer that we apprenticed with, who just so happened to be a flower farmer. After working on his farm for a year, we fell in love with providing people with beautiful flowers. We started out about 50/50 veggies and flowers, even had pigs, ducks, and chickens, with the idea of living off the land. The more of a business our farm became, and as the flowers became our niche, we transitioned our focus to growing only flowers. We sell to grocery stores, florists, farmer's markets, and provide beautiful florals for weddings. www.oursunnymeadows.com



Rita Anders

I was born and raised on a dairy, pecan and peach orchard farm. I married in 1979 and was blessed with 3 wonderful children who we raised on our farm while raising greenhouse tomatoes and assorted vegetables. In 2004 I joined the ASCFG and started growing flowers instead of full time vegetables. I sold all my flowers at a farmers' market and dabbled with weddings. In 2012 I started selling to a large grocery store in a upscale Houston neighborhood and increased my wedding work. During these years our children graduated from their colleges of choice, married and now we are enjoying 6 (soon to be 8) wonderful grandchildren and plan to spend lots of time with them. Growing flowers and having a wonderful family has allowed me to have a very fulfilling, enjoyable career and one that keeps me very busy.

www.cutsofcolor.com

Frank and Pamela Arnosky

Frank and Pamela Arnosky farm 20 acres of cut flowers in Central Texas. They grow over 70 varieties of flowers year 'round and sell through grocery stores, florists and their own on-farm market. Frank and Pamela have spoken at many national events and can put on a lively presentation about their farm. Having farmed in Texas for over 23 years, they have weathered just about anything from hurricanes and tornadoes to mothers of brides. Frank says he'll take the tornadoes. www.texascolor.com



Steven Catando

Steve is a graduate of the University of Delaware and currently resides in South Jersey with his two children. For the last 20 years, Steve has been working for DVflora, one of the largest flower importer/distributor/wholesalers of fresh cut flowers and plants in the United States. Dvflora distributes primarily to retail florists and serve upwards of 1500 shops. Its sister company, Fresh Blooms, serves the niche supermarket and other mass market chains. Dvflora has an extensive distribution fleet including a trucking company, Flower Transfer Logistics, that feeds to 110 refrigerated route delivery trucks. Their main delivery footprint is the northeast United States, Massachusetts to northern Virginia and everything in between. Steve's flower background began in a small local florist in his hometown. In the mid 1990's Steve became a Product Manager (Buyer) for DVflora. Today, Steve is the Purchasing Manager where he oversees a staff of ten Product Managers, each specializing in certain products. Steve has traveled the globe extensively, visiting just about every major flower-producing region in the world.

www.dvflora.com

Keith Cramer

Keith Cramer is the president of Cramers', Inc. His primary responsibilities are growing, marketing, and selling over 50 acres of specialty cut flowers including five acres of high tunnel production. The Cramers' products are sold to wholesale florists in the mid-Atlantic region. Keith started working for his father, Ralph Cramer, in 1991 and became a full partner in 2005. Over the past 20-plus years the Cramers have diversified from a primarily dried flower operation into fresh cut flowers, woody ornamentals, seed production, and limited vegetable production. Keith, his wife Erin, and sons Landis and Marshall live in Marietta, Pennsylvania. www.cramersposiepatch.com



Kasey Cronquist

Kasey has served as CEO/Ambassador of the California Cut Flower Commission since 2007. In addition to ongoing governmental affairs outreach, Kasey has worked closely with the CCFC marketing and promotion committee to develop a strategic three-year plan for public relations on behalf of the California cut flower farmers while firmly establishing the "CA Grown" brand to help increase sales and attention of California Grown Flowers as America's best source for high quality and the most sustainably grown cut flowers. He is also responsible for much of the impetus behind the American Grown movement, promoting locally-grown flowers across the United States. <http://ccfc.org/about-ccfc/our-staff>



Mimo Davis

Horticulture Regional Educator at Lincoln University is just one hat Mimo wears. She's also a flower grower, and with her partner Miranda Duschack, started Urban Buds in St. Louis five years ago. They sell to high end florists and at the Tower Grove Farmers' Market. Mimo is also active in the urban farming movement in the Midwest, and has worked with several programs in the St. Louis area.

www.facebook.com/urbanbuds

Becky Devlin

After 11 years of flower farming and selling at farmers' markets, to florists and specialty stores, and designing for weddings, floral design took over Becky Devlin's career in flowers. She has downsized from a 7-acre farm to a backyard cutting garden and opened Roost Flowers, a design studio and flower shop in Virginia Beach, Virginia. www.roostflowers.com



John Dole

John is Professor and Department Head of Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University. He grew up working in floriculture, planting and harvesting glads as a child. He conducts research on cut flower production and postharvest, bedding plants, and poinsettia production. He co-coordinates the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers National Cut Flower Trials, teaches Physiology of Flowering, and has co-authored *Woody Cut Stems for Growers and Florists* with Lane Greer, *Cutting Propagation* with Jaime Gibson, and *Floriculture Principles and Species* with Harold Wilkins.

<http://cutflowers.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Dave Dowling

Dave Dowling was a cut flower farmer in Montgomery County, Maryland for 20 years. He served as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers from 2002 through 2004, and served as President from 2006 through 2009. With field, high tunnel, and greenhouse production, Farmhouse Flowers & Plants produced cut flowers year round. Most of the flowers raised were sold at farmers' markets, including two year-round markets in Kensington, Maryland and Dupont Circle in Washington, D.C.. Flowers were sold direct to florists from Baltimore to Washington, D.C. through Capital Flower Growers, LLC, a cooperative formed with two other flower growers in 2013. Early in 2014, Dave closed his cut flower business and is currently working for Ednie Flower Bulb, Inc. He keeps busy as a sales rep and advisor to cut flower growers with small to medium sized farms. Dave also oversees the warehouse/shipping department, and manages the production of 12,000 potted lilies and callas grown for mass merchants.

www.ednieflowerbulb.com



Ellen Frost

Owner of Local Color Flowers, a Baltimore-based event florist that specializes in using locally grown flowers for weddings and special events. She has an MBA from Loyola University in Maryland. After several years of volunteering as a Master Gardener, working as part-time farmhand, working at farmers' markets and as a volunteer flower arranger, Ellen began Local Color Flowers as a socially conscious, green alternative to conventional florists. She is excited to share her passion for flowers and all things Local. www.locoflo.com



Mike Hutchison

Mike came to farming with a degree in biology education and a strong need to be outdoors. After a few years of teaching environmental education, farming called. Mike apprenticed with organic vegetable farmers in northern California and marketed into the Bay Area, including delivering for a bulb-oriented over farm. Back in Rhode Island, Mike, along with his wife Polly, ran Casey Farm, a 300-acre historic farm for 14 years. They started a vegetable CSA, developed an education program and set up an on-site farmers' market which has grown to be one of the largest in the state. Flowers were part of a full-scale operation that sold for a seven-month season. In 2006, he and Polly started Robin Hollow Farm and focused solely on specialty cut flower production. After several years, the business is thriving, growing on 3 1/2 acres and in several greenhouses and unheated tunnels. Mike is in charge of

farm production for everything from greenhouses, woody and perennial beds and annual flower production. He has a burgeoning "cool plant" collection for special arrangements only! www.robinhollowfarm.com

Polly Hutchison

Polly is owner of Robin Hollow Farm LLC and operates the farm with her husband Mike. She focuses on the marketing and events side of the business during the season, with about 35% of the farm income in weddings and other events for 2011. In the off-season, you'll find her in one of the three greenhouses or three unheated tunnels. Polly has been farming using organic practices since 1992, and flowers exclusively since 2006. www.robinhollowfarm.com



Barbara Lamborne

Barbara owns Greenstone Fields with her husband, Dennis. They started farming in 2006 after moving to the 400-acre, multi-generational farming community of Wheatland, in Loudoun County, Virginia. Barbara co-owns Capital Flower Growers, a wholesale flower business, with Bob Wollam. Barbara is current Secretary of the ASCFG. www.greenstonefields.com

Jennie Love

Owner and Creative Director at Love 'n Fresh Flowers, Jennie Love is a trained professional horticulturist and an experienced, life-long farmer. Jennie has led numerous workshops over the past five years, including the sold-out Seasonal Bouquet Project LIVE series and classes for Longwood Gardens' Floral Design Certificate program. She has also presented to many garden clubs and other organizations throughout the Mid-Atlantic area. A charismatic and passionate flower farmer, Jennie found her natural niche as a "farmer florist" for wedding and event design, becoming a recognized leader of the local flower movement. She was recently featured in the *New York Times* for her farm-to-centerpiece efforts. Her distinctively lush and textural floral designs have been used in hundreds of weddings as well as for numerous photo shoots, magazines, style blogs, and books. Jennie is a board member for the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and writes a regular column for *The Cut Flower Quarterly*. www.lovenfreshflowers.com



Marian Maloney

Although I was blessed to be a Mississippian with several generations of agrarian forebearers, I spent my formative years of education in medicine, art and design. Now, as a senior, I have been able to pursue a lifelong interest in horticulture and gardening. Truly, I have returned to my roots; I am a farmer. The name of our farm is Memory Orchard. It consists of fifty acres of rolling hills and woodland. There is great variety in our harvest. It is derived from a three hundred tree orchard to a multitude of vegetables, herbs, shrubs and a huge spectrum of flowers. With my love for design and creativity, I have concentrated my floral plantings with an emphasis on cutting and design.

Presently, I market a line of preserved fruits and vegetables, unique desserts, and flora. Our flowers are picked up here at the farm by the local florists, individuals having events and some custom arrangements are available by special order.



Sullivan Owen

Sullivan Owen is the owner and creative director of her eponymous floral design studio located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is sought after for her lush and fashion-forward style, and is a trendsetter whose work is regularly featured in wedding publications, most recently *Martha Stewart Weddings*. Her business acumen and background in marketing and branding have made her just as passionate about running an excellent business as she is about creating gorgeous designs. She loves working with the best flowers available and loves to get to know the growers behind the amazing products they cultivate. Photo by Holly Chapple. www.sullivanowen.com

Chip Planck

Chip and Susan Planck operated Wheatland Vegetable Farms in Loudoun County, Virginia, from 1979 through 2010. They used sustainable methods on 20 to 25 acres and sold at numerous producer-only farmers' markets in the Washington, D.C. area. Seasonal crews of 5 to 15 lived at the farm, doing their own housekeeping.

www.wheatlandvegetablefarms.com



Ellen Polishuk

Ellen Polishuk is an ecoganic vegetable grower, biological farm consultant and teacher. She helps farmers, agricultural professionals and eaters of all kinds appreciate and understand the complexity and beauty of food: the nexus of plants, soils and people. Ellen is one of three owners and a co-manager of the Loudoun County part of Potomac Vegetable Farms (PVF) where they cultivate 20 acres of land using organic practices: 10 acres of vegetables and herbs, 10 acres of soil building crops. PVF in total sells at 6 farmers' markets, runs two roadside stands and serves a 550 member CSA in the Washington DC metropolitan area. For many years she has presented workshops at

conferences and meetings around the country on numerous agricultural topics including composting, marketing, weed control, farm business management, soils, fertility, and labor.

She also works closely with Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) to develop and present Growing Farm Profits, a workshop to educate growers on how to keep records, how to use them to analyze their farm's profitability, and how to change management strategies to increase farm profits. She worked for two years as a lecturer and adviser at the University of Maryland, College Park, at the Institute for Applied Agriculture.

www.potomacvegetablefarms.com



Paula Rice

Paula Rice, along with her husband, has been growing and selling cut flowers since 2006 in northern Idaho. In her earlier life she was a secretary and bookkeeper. After being married they started their own electrical company in which Paula did all the books. Having 9 children in the mix has been the motivation and key to her success in getting highly organized so that she could remain true to her mission as wife and mother and yet transform her passion of flower growing into a career and business. Being a homeschool mom, she has a knack for breaking down large ideas into workable steps that will ensure success. You will not walk away wondering what your next step should be.

www.beehavenfarm.com

Sarah Ryhanen

Sarah is a self-taught floral designer, stylist and writer. She is co-owner of Saipua in Brooklyn, New York. She is also co-founder of The Little Flower School. In 2011 she bought a farm in Montgomery County, New York in order to start growing flowers. In a few short years, she created a place that has become a unique crossroads where floral designers, farmers, and enthusiasts can gather to learn from one another and produce beautiful things. Her work has appeared in publications such as *New York Times*, *Vogue* and *Martha Stewart*. Her flowers and experiences are chronicled in her blog: www.saipua.blogspot.com. www.saipua.com



Joe Schmitt

Grew up on Long Island in the fifties in one of the most important cut flower centers in the country. In our family first you learned to crawl, then while you were in that position anyway, you learned to weed. Walking upright came later when it was handy for cutting tall stuff and carrying wooden boxes of roses and crushed ice. The melting ice trickling down your back made you walk very upright indeed.

Left for school in the sixties at the usual age while my family relocated to Delaware to fill a gap for the New York flower market as Spring made its way up the East Coast. We were later than Virginia and the Carolinas and earlier than New Jersey with 5-10 acres of celosia, cornflowers, sweet William, candytuft and asters. We included me, on and off, between stints in school, the Peace Corps and, by special invitation, the US Army.

The seventies sent me “back to the land” to the woods in West Virginia, a long story, wherein I became a licensed Land Surveyor, a portable skill I took to Philadelphia, married, and followed my wife to Wisconsin. Here, 21 years ago, I helped my neighbors launch a vegetable CSA, Vermont Valley Community Farm, which has gone from its original 50 shares to 1400. And here I quickly realized that flowers are way lighter than potatoes.

Thus was born a CSA flower share which grew nicely, along with a local bucket run to fifty florists, until a heart attack and triple bypass (in March for Pete’s sake) shut that whole thing down for nearly half of the season. Simplification being in order, I dropped the flower share, refunded a pile of money (way more painful than the coronary) and merged my Madison florist customers with those I supplied through Fair Field Flowers, our cooperative marketing venture in Milwaukee, an arrangement just beginning its 11th year and surviving nicely.

If I had the chance to do it all over again, I’d refuse. I hate reruns, except for M*A*S*H. www.fairfieldflowers.biz

Diane Szukovathy

In addition to helping found the Seattle Wholesale Growers Market Cooperative, Diane Szukovathy co-owns and operates Jello Mold Farm, a highly diversified, 4 ½-acre specialty cut flower farm. She has served as president of the co-op’s board of directors since it was established in 2011. Currently, the co-op provides a profitable distribution outlet for fifteen Washington, Oregon and Alaska member flower farms, helping to fuel the growing “buy local” movement for flowers. www.jellomoldfarm.com



Karl Vahrmeyer

I am 31 years old, married to the love of my life, Anne Marie, and have four children under the age of 8. With the exception of one summer landscaping job, I have always been working on the family farm. I have no degrees or certificates from university or college. Everything I have learned has been firsthand experience under the watchful eye of my father. I like to think of myself as a simple man; one who enjoys dirt on his hands, working hard, and enjoying a sunset or thunderstorm on the horizon after a long day in the fields. For me it's never really been about the money, but the passion, challenges, and love of growing. I have always believed if you put in the hard work for a quality product the money will come. Green Park Nurseries is a thriving business in the heart of Niagara, Ontario, Canada. It was originally started by my parents Karl and Wilma Vahrmeyer and is now co-owned alongside my parents with myself, my brother, and my youngest sister. We specialize in cut ornamental branches and flowers. We also provide a service for potted shrubs and evergreens for peak seasons and holidays in the year. Green Park Nurseries provides quality products, fresh flowers and services for the landscape trade, floral industry, garden centers, and event planners.



Bob Wollam

Bob is a grower of specialty cut flowers on his 11-acre farm in Culpeper County, Virginia. His flowers are sold at farmers' markets and to florists and designers. Wollam Gardens is also a "destination flower farm" where painters, photographers, garden clubs, families, and plant lovers are invited to stroll their fields and see the beauty of 70 varieties of flowers laid out in rows of color. Bob has been a flower farmer for over 20 years. While he will be quick to tell you he had an exciting life before 50, he'll be even quicker to tell you his addiction to beautiful cut flowers has been nothing but thrilling, and he intends to continue the addiction well into his nineties. www.wollamgardens.com

Lisa Ziegler

Lisa Mason Ziegler has been a cut flower farmer since 1998; her three-acre urban farm produces over 10,000 stems of flowers each week in season. Lisa sells her flowers to upscale florist, supermarkets, through her farm pick-up Garden Share program and Subscription Drop-off. Lisa's sustainable and organic gardening experiences have been gathered from everyday life on her farm nestled in the heart of the city of Newport News, Virginia. In 2005 she launched a mail-order catalog business, The Gardener's Workshop, offering the gardening and flower arranging tools and supplies she uses in her own gardens and cut flower operation. Lisa spends the winter months writing and lecturing on growing cut flowers and organic gardening. www.thegardenersworkshop.com

