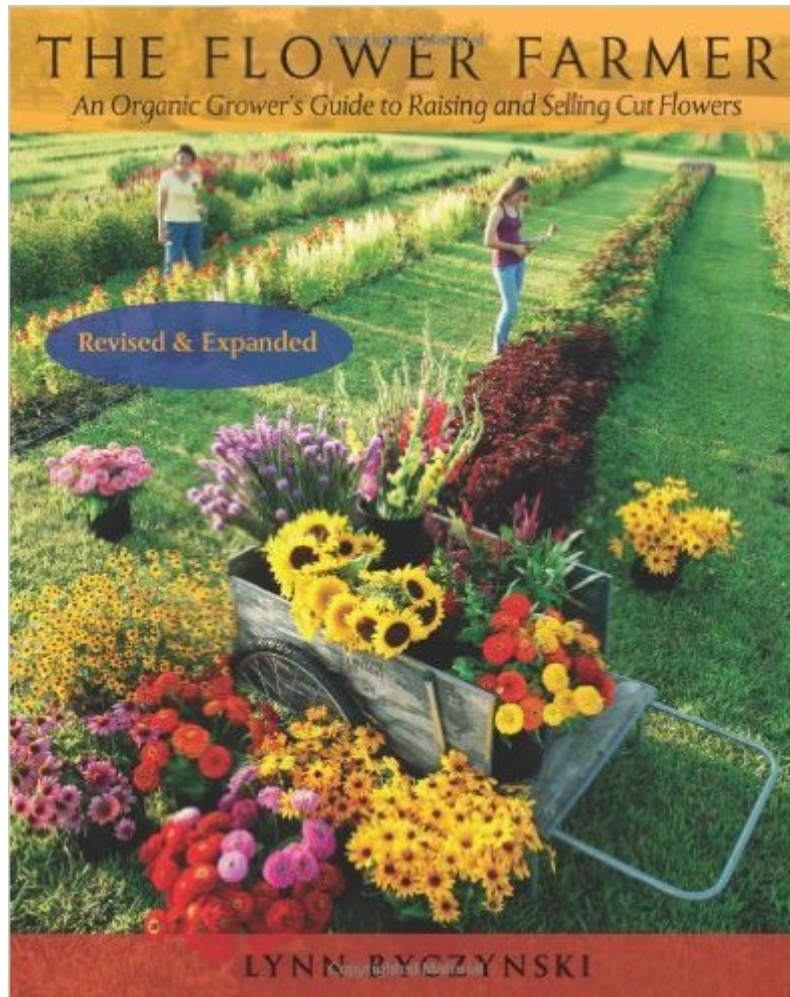


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# The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide To Raising And Selling Cut Flowers, 2nd Edition



## Synopsis

The domestic cut flower business has experienced a renaissance in the past decade, thanks in large part to the first edition of *The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide to Raising and Selling Cut Flowers*, which helped thousands of small growers start successful businesses. This newly expanded and thoroughly revised edition will be equally as influential for novices and experienced growers alike. With the cut flower business growing at record rates, demand is at all time highs, challenging growers to take advantage of new techniques to prolong the harvest. New sections on utilizing greenhouses, recommendations for flower cultivars, and post harvest handling growers throughout all of North America will help improve their bottom line. Also updated is the acclaimed resource directory, complete with sources of seeds, plants and supplies, and expert information on organic production under the National Organic Program. For the beginner and backyard gardener, there is an extensive section on the basics—variety selection, soil preparation, planting, cultivation, harvest, and floral design. For the commercial grower, *The Flower Farmer* includes information about larger-scale production, plus advice about selling to florists, wholesalers, supermarkets, brides, at farmers markets, and more. Also includes revised profiles of successful growers offering behind-the-scenes insight into the operation of some of the cutting edge flower farmers in the country. Because of the extensive revisions and enhanced content, this new edition of *The Flower Farmer* is essential reading for those already in the flower business, as well as those who dream of growing flowers for enjoyment or profit.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been growing flowers for personal use for some time, and have recently decided to begin selling at Farmer's Markets, but where to begin? Ordering this book was probably the best beginning I could have happened upon - it is packed full of useful and realistic information covering all aspects of beginning a flower business, not only on growing but how to get started, marketing, how to price, where to buy supplies, how to learn more about the business, even where to purchase a canopy for using at the market and how to build a flower cooler. Also, the farmer profiles were informative, frank, and uplifting and the pictures were beautiful and helpful. I read this book from cover to cover, including the appendices, which is rare for me - I usually pick out the interesting chapters and focus on them, but all chapters here were interesting! Thank you Lynn for a marvelous reference. Although I know I have hard work ahead of me, I am even more inspired to begin my small flower business after reading your book.

Lynn Byczynski, herself a flower farmer, does an excellent job of sharing her wisdom to others who wish to make a living tending the earth. This book is not only applicable to those who wish to grow and sell cut flowers, it will also be useful to herb farmers, u-pick farm owners, and even those who just wish to grow beautiful flowers for their own use. The book's focus on organic growing techniques is especially useful, as is the author's descriptive list of recommended flowers to grow. Throughout the book you are introduced to other specialty farmers who have carved a niche in the competitive horticultural market for their home grown products. No one claims this way of making a living is easy, but you can feel the pride and the love of the labor come through in each profile. Each small farmer generously shares stories of their successes and failures and paints a realistic picture of what is involved in the business. The book also lists many useful sources for seeds and nursery products, wholesale plant companies, tools, marketing supplies, and other organic gardening reference books. I highly recommend this book to the potential flower farmer or market gardener.

The author spends a great deal of time telling you how to plant, transplant, fertilize, etc. She spends way too much space on basics of horticulture. Surely, anyone interested in selling flowers already knows how to grow them! The Ball RedBook would be a better reference for plant-specific growing advice. This book has extensive information about marketing and field yields, but I would take her

advice with a grain of salt. I do not agree with some of her calculations and her other information is so far off the mark that I do not trust her opinions in this regard either. The best info in this book is from her "case studies". The farmers she interviews give good information about their methods and mistakes, but very few specifics about the most important topic: preservation. Just as top chefs will alter recipes so that no one can duplicate their masterpieces exactly, most flower growers are very tight-lipped about their secrets and will write pages and pages without giving specifics. This book is true to form. "Proper conditioning" tips go no farther than adding sugar or aspirin, or buying commercial (and expensive!) potions. My greatest complaint has to do with her guide to cut flowers at the end of the book. Some flowers that keep beautifully (after conditioning) are dismissed as having "no vase life". For example: Poppies and Cleome are dismissed as lasting a day or two, but using certain methods my Cleome lasted 2 WEEKS in the vase and won a blue ribbon at the county fair, and poppies can fetch \$5 a stem and last 7-10 days if you do it right. "Flowers for Sale" by Lee Sturdivant has much better conditioning and plant selection information.

I've always wanted a cutting garden. Although I love having bouquets of flowers in my house, I don't like picking flowers from my carefully planned borders. A separate plot, preferably in an inconspicuous spot from which I could plunder as many blossoms as I wanted without worrying about leaving holes in my planting scheme, is definitely the answer. But how to begin? How to decide what to plant, when to plant, the best methods of harvesting to ensure the longest vase life? Surprisingly, I found the answers to all of my questions as well as questions I didn't know I should be asking in "The Flower Farmer: An Organic Grower's Guide to Raising and Selling Cut flowers". In this revised and expanded edition, Lynn Byczynski covers every aspect of raising flowers for sale in easy to understand terms. The book is incredibly detailed but I was never bored. Rather than a manual or a textbook, it was like a friendly talk over the backfence. It's obvious that she loves flowers and the business of growing flowers. The author starts with the basics of site, soil, seeds and plants then moves through pests, diseases, season extenders and harvest. She devotes several chapters on what to grow, not only the usual annuals and perennials, but also plants one doesn't usually think of, trees and shrubs, whose foliage, flowers and berries are used in both fresh and dried arrangements. Then she moves on to flower arranging, transport and marketing. Along the way, successful flower farmers are featured. Their farms, their market niches, how they got started and how they have expanded or shrunk their businesses to suit their financial and lifestyle goals are explained. All of the information is presented in an easy to understand format. Each concept is clearly explained. Technical terms are defined. No prior knowledge is assumed on the part of the

reader. Nor is the book limited to one climate or region of the country. For information not covered in the book, sources are given where the information can be found. The author points out how the each section applies to both large and small farms and even cutting gardens such as I envision. Whether you are thinking of growing flowers for market or just want a cutting garden, I can't recommend this book highly enough. But don't take my word for it. Cathy Jones of Perry-winkle Farm in central North Carolina was one of the experienced flower farmers asked for their Top Ten varieties for each area of the country. Cathy says, "It doesn't seem that long ago that I was reading The Flower Farmer to learn just these sorts of things!"(page 25) As for me, I'm finally going to plant that cutting garden. Thanks to "The Flower Farmer", I know what to plant, when to plant it, and how to plant it. I've learned about succession planting and other techniques to extend the season. And when it comes time to harvest my flowers, I know the proper way to harvest each variety to prolong its vase life.

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