

Sept Farm Update + Mentoring + Fertilizer Course + Green Career Week



Crop culture and commentary for fresh-cut flower growers

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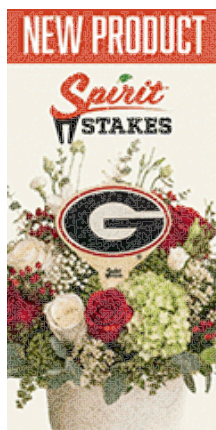
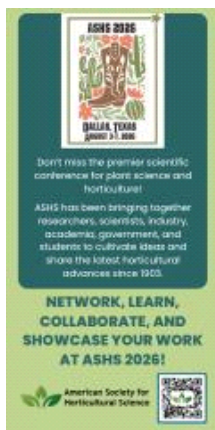
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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

September Farm Update
ASCFG Mentor Program
Webinar Alert
Wage & Benefit Survey Time!
UF Nutrition Course Online
Green Career Week



September Farm Update





One of Tater's magical load of dahlias.

September is one of those funny months on the farm when it feels like we have one foot in fall and the other foot in spring.

Our fields haven't gotten the memo that summer is winding down. The dahlias are in full swing—they are putting on one of their best shows of the season! Every trip through the field feels incredibly special because in six weeks peak season will be over and Tater and I will start labeling dahlias next week to make lifting tubers easier.

Celosia, cosmos, amaranth, gomphrena and ornamental grasses are also adding rich textures and colors that make September flowers some of my favorites of the entire year. It's the month that all flower farmers dream of.

At the same time, Tater and I are shifting our attention toward what comes next. September is a month of constant turnover in the greenhouses. As summer crops finish, beds are cleaned out and replanted with cool-season flowers that will carry us through fall and winter. We're constantly looking ahead several weeks or several months to what we want to be harvesting next.

For instance, we've already started our anemone and ranunculus crops for Valentine's Day. I'm grateful that we saved some corms from our last fall shipment because we have yet to receive our new 2026 shipment of corms. In Michigan, the timing for Valentine's Day is very delicate; if we start them next week they will not finish. It can feel a little strange to think about February in September, but that's the reality of growing flowers year-round. Many of the flowers we hope to harvest months from now begin with work happening today.

While I'm standing in the field cutting dahlias in September, part of my brain is thinking about Christmas flowers, another part is thinking about Valentine's Day, and somewhere in the background I'm already planning for next spring.

But despite how hectic this time of year can be, there are moments when September makes me stop. The mornings are a little cooler. The light hits the dahlia field differently. The farm begins to take on those first hints of autumn while still holding onto the abundance of summer. We know frost will eventually bring our outdoor season to an end, but we're not there yet. For now, September is giving us plenty to harvest and we're going to enjoy every bucket. Tater and I will hold onto this feeling because in December we will be ready to do it all over again.

In this edition of *Bloom Beat* we are talking about *GrowerTalks'* annual Wage & Benefit Survey, webinars and more.

With all that being said, let's talk shop!



Grow Together: ASCFG Mentor Program

The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers (ASCFG) is bringing back its cohort-based **Mentor Program** for 2026–2027 after a successful pilot year. This year's program will include four cohorts based on business model— Wholesale, Weddings & Events, Farmer-Florists & Events, and Retail (Direct-to-Consumer). Each group will be guided by experienced grower-mentors and will give beginning and early-career growers a place to talk openly about their goals, challenges,

successes and lessons learned. Participants get to ask questions, troubleshoot real problems with other growers and learn from people operating businesses similar to their own.

The 2026–2027 program will build on lessons learned during the first year, with an emphasis on creating strong relationships that will hopefully continue long after program ends. Participants must have been ASCFG members for at least one full year, maintain their membership throughout the program, and may participate in one cohort. Mentees will meet via Zoom four times during Fall 2026 and four additional times during 2027. In early 2027, ASCFG plans to launch its first Established Growers' Cohort, a pilot program for growers with more than six years of full-time growing experience.



No matter what stage you're in, having a community of people willing to share what they've learned is invaluable. If you're eligible for this year's Mentor Program and interested in participating, mark September 16 on your calendar. Enrollment is first-come first-served. You'll want to register early.

For more information click [HERE](#).



Webinar: Soil Science for Cut Flowers

The American Floral Endowment's Grow Pro Webinar Series will welcome Dr. Melanie Stock of Utah State University for Soil Science for Sustainable Cut Flower Production.

Soil Science for Sustainable Cut Flower Production

Speaker: Dr. Melanie Stock, Utah State University

Date: September 29

Time: 1 p.m. Eastern/Noon Central

You may already be familiar with Dr. Stock's work. Her research and Extension program at Utah State University has tackled a wide range of cut flower production challenges, including anemone and ranunculus production and overwintering/high-tunnel production.

Dr. Stock will take you beneath the surface—literally—to explore how the physical, chemical and biological properties of our soils affect plant growth, nutrient availability and ultimately crop performance. The presentation will focus on practical soil science that you can use to make better management decisions while building healthier, more resilient production systems.



For those of us growing cut flowers intensively, often planting multiple crops into the same beds over the course of a season, understanding what is happening below ground is every bit as important as what we see above it.

To register click [HERE](#).



It's Wage & Benefit Survey Time!

Tater and I have a little homework assignment for you this month: *GrowerTalks/Green Profit* and AmericanHort have opened their [Salary & Benefits Benchmark Survey](#), and if you employ anyone on your farm or horticulture business, I think this one is worth taking a few minutes to complete because it is an invaluable industry benchmarking tool.

One of the hardest parts of running a growing business is figuring out what "competitive" salaries and benefits are. Are we paying enough? What are other operations offering? How do you budget for labor next year when you don't really know how your numbers compare with everyone else's? This survey is designed to give us some actual data to work with.

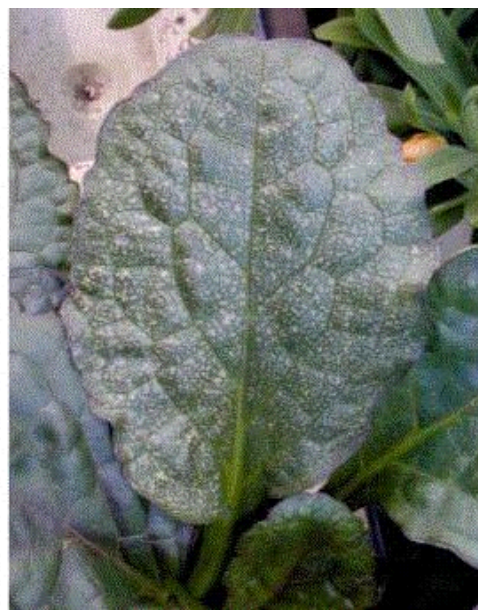
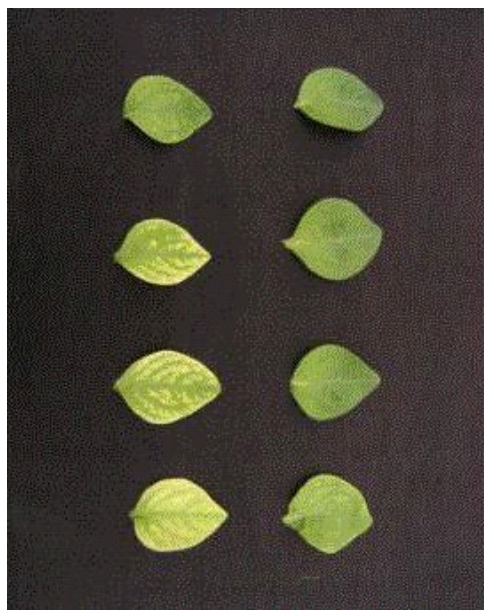
It asks about staffing, wages and benefits across full-time, part-time and seasonal positions, and the results are analyzed by the firm Industry Insights. You don't have to be an AmericanHort member or operate a large business to participate. Farms and horticulture businesses of all sizes are welcome, and everyone who completes the survey receives the full report.

That's probably my favorite part. By contributing a little information about our own businesses, we get access to a much bigger picture of what's happening across the industry. And the more of us who participate, the better the information becomes. I'd especially love to see more specialty cut flower farms represented in industry benchmarking like this. Responses are confidentially collected and maintained by Industry Insights, and if you've participated in previous years, some of your information may already be populated to make the process a little easier.

The deadline is September 30, so don't leave it sitting on your to-do list until September 29 like Tater and I probably will. Okay, like I probably will—she has already informed me that filling out industry surveys falls under MY job description, not hers. Plus, Tater remains completely unconcerned about industry compensation trends—she is completely satisfied with her junior whopper patty for lunch every day.

Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.

EDUCATION ALERT: Ready to Nerd Out About Fertilizer?



If nutritional deficiencies throw you for a loop, this class will help sharpen your skills.

If terms like alkalinity, nitrogen form and substrate pH get you a little excited or completely overwhelmed, here's an upcoming course worth knowing about.

UF/IFAS Extension is offering **Nutrient Management 2**, an advanced online greenhouse training course running September 28 through October 30 and taught by Dr. Paul Fisher. The course is designed for experienced growers and other horticulture professionals who want to better understand what is actually happening in the root zone of their crop so they can make better-informed fertility decisions.

This course goes considerably deeper than simply learning which fertilizer to use. Participants will work through fertilizer concentration and calculations; fertilizer formulation; lime and substrate pH; the interactions between water, fertilizer and plant species; correcting high and low pH; hydroponic nutrition; tissue and water testing; and diagnosing nutritional problems. You'll even design a two-tank fertilizer program and work through real-world troubleshooting case studies.

For those of us growing cut flowers intensively in greenhouses and high tunnels, I think there's a lot of practical value here. When a crop isn't behaving the way we expect, it's easy to immediately reach for a different fertilizer. But understanding the relationship between our irrigation water, substrate, fertilizer formulation, pH and the crop itself gives us a much better toolkit for figuring out what is actually going wrong.

The course is completely online, with prerecorded lectures, readings and assignments that can be completed on your own schedule. New modules are released throughout the four-week course, and participants can interact with instructors online to ask questions along the way. Even better, lectures and assignments are available in both English and Spanish.

Nutrient Management 2

Instructor: Paul Fisher, Ph.D.

Dates: September 28–October 30, 2026

Cost: \$293 per employee

Level: Advanced

There's a 20% discount when enrolling five or more employees, and growers who complete the course requirements receive a personalized certificate. The course also counts toward UF/IFAS Extension's Root Zone Expert Program.

For those of us who occasionally stare at our fertilizer injector wondering whether we're feeding the flowers or conducting a chemistry experiment, this might be a good one to add to the fall education list!

Green Career Week is back!



Mark your calendars! Seed Your Future's fall [Green Career Week](#) will be October 5-9.

Green Career Week is a national initiative led by green industry leaders (like you!) to increase awareness of our industry among young people (and their teachers). Not only do you get to showcase opportunities at your farm and share your story, but you also get to build relationships with local colleges, high schools, and universities. Plus, it is a creative way to engage with the youth in your community. And who knows, you might get a budding flower farmer to join your crew this summer! It's a win-win for everyone.

Tater and I hope you will consider participating because the future of our industry depends on all of us engaging with the next generation.

Tap [HERE](#) to register your farm and receive a free resource guide and template to help you successfully connect with high school vocational programs in your area.

Until next time!

Lindsay 

[Lindsay Daschner](#) (and [Tater](#))
Editor-at-Large—*Bloom Beat*
Owner—Forget-Me-Not Farms

This email was received by 6,161 of your fellow fresh-cut flower growers!

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