

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Seed Your Future, SAF Join to Promote Hort Careers

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Seed Your Future (SYF) and the Society of American Florists (SAF) have announced a plan to join forces to promote increased awareness of horticulture and floriculture, and inspire more people to pursue careers working with flowers and plants.

It's a joining of old and young: SAF was chartered by an act of Congress in 1884 and has been a long-time advocate for consumer awareness of the floriculture and horticulture industries, while SYF was founded in 2016 as a coalition of like-minded industry partners to promote horticulture and floriculture careers. SYF has grown to a coalition of more than 200 partners, including horticulture companies, gardening organizations, schools, colleges, universities, public gardens, youth organizations, nonprofits and individual advocates.

"We started the Seed Your Future movement in order to address a critical issue across the breadth of the horticulture industry," said Anna Ball, CEO and chairman of the board of Ball Horticultural Company, and co-chair of SYF. "There have never been so many career opportunities in horticulture, yet awareness of these opportunities was at an all-time low."

SYF has been housed under the supportive fiscal agency of Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, but they've been looking for a permanent home, which is where SAF comes in.

"Joining forces and creating a new 501(c)3 entity under the leadership of SAF is the perfect partnership to reach our long-term goals to open more eyes to the power of plants and flowers, and the rewards of a green-collar career," says Susan E. Yoder, executive director of SYF.

"In 2019, we established career and workforce development as a top priority of our strategic plan," said Chris Drummond, AAF, PFCI, president of SAF and owner of Penny's by Plaza Flowers in Philadelphia. "We looked around to see what others were already doing in this area, and we were impressed by the momentum of Seed Your Future. Instead of creating a new initiative for SAF, the most impactful decision was to join forces and work together to build more interest in careers across horticulture and floriculture."

Operational and governance transitions will occur throughout the year, with a goal of late 2021 for the finalization of the partnership.

In the meantime, both organizations will work full speed ahead on their 2021 initiatives. For SYF, that means the creation of new videos and resources for youth, families and educators; and the continuation of their #YearOfPlantPower and #NatureNeverCloses campaigns to show how—especially during these times of the global

health challenge—plants and flowers have the power to calm, soothe, heal, nourish and inspire.

For SAF, it's about advocating for the industry's interests in Washington and getting education, training and marketing resources into the floral community so the industry can provide outstanding flower and plant buying experiences. **GT**