



# Flower

Summer cut flowers are a wonderful addition to garden centers. Photo courtesy of Sakata.

## POWER

Find out why your IGC should stock cut flowers as a product category.

By Teresa McPherson

Flowers are the new hugs, Katie Dubow said earlier this year when introducing Garden Media Group's 2022 Garden Trends Report. When we can't gather with loved ones and personal connections are limited (e.g., during a pandemic), we often turn to sending and receiving flowers — both of which get the feel-good dopamine going in our brains.

### Market Overview

And there's data to back this up. A report from Research and Markets says

the U.S. cut flower market is expected to grow from \$9.2 billion in 2021 to \$12.8 billion by 2028, at a compound annual growth rate of 4.8%.

According to the report, demand for cut flowers was growing in the U.S. market before the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to people using more cut flowers as home décor, as well as for their various health benefits.

When the pandemic had a negative effect on the consumer goods industry, with manufacturing shutdowns, limited materials availability, and restrictions

on operations, the cut flower market was affected as well. Thus, market growth stayed steady.

Trade-related restrictions also impacted the import of cut flowers, which then impacted the U.S. cut flower market. Now, however, businesses are gaining ground as government restrictions ease.

### Selling Cut Flowers

More than 50% of cut flowers are purchased at the grocery store, according to the Garden Trends Report.

Dubow suggests that IGCs set up a flower stand in their stores (see a clever example of “The Shop Within a Shop” in our CAST recap on page 15). In addition, potted flowering plants can be promoted as DIY cut flower gardens with less work for the consumer, and flower-arranging workshops can also spark new sales.

Bob Croft, technical support manager, Sakata Seed America Inc., says summer cut flowers are a wonderful addition to garden centers — especially those that sell pottery and vases.

“Summer cut flowers are mostly found at roadside stands or farmer’s markets, which usually offer limited hours or days of the week. During the busy gardening season — April to October — a garden center should consider partnering with a local flower farmer (ASCFG member or other) to offer retail space for cut flowers to increase sales and revenue.”

He says while florists usually offer the standard carnations, chrysanthemums and roses, “consumers are looking for nostalgic favorites, like ageratum,



Cut flower displays were a recurring theme at California Spring Trials, with Sakata (shown) and many other breeders emphasizing varieties they had to offer domestic growers of cut flowers. Photo by Stephen Kloosterman.

campanula, cosmos, dahlias, dianthus, gladioli, lisianthus, snapdragons, stock, sunflowers and zinnias, all of which have a long shelf life. The presence of cut flowers might also motivate consumers to purchase cut

flower seeds, bulbs and corms, as well as hard goods such as scissors for cutting flowers and flower frogs for flower arranging.

“Offering local farm-fresh cut flowers in dedicated self-serve vases enables

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people to mix and match as they like,” he says. “Selling cut flowers by weight is also another idea to make it easier to sell. Adding cut flowers will increase traffic to your store and complement all of the other wonderful plants and hardgoods already in the store.”

### Subscription Services

Garden centers can also consider offering a flower bouquet subscription. Briggs Nursery, in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, partners with a local floral designer to offer a flower subscription CSA that runs for 12 weeks. The 24 available spots sell out, and customers pick up their bouquets weekly at the garden center.

Laurene Hulbig harvests, processes and designs the bouquets. “Each week, you will get to see the gardens evolve throughout the season and enjoy an array of blooms. These are fresh, locally grown flowers that not only add beauty to this world, but are necessary to beneficial pollinators that are a huge part of our ecosystem,” she writes on her website, [www.laurenehulbig.com](http://www.laurenehulbig.com).

Miller Flowers Greenhouse & Garden Center also offers locally grown flowers in-store and in bi-weekly subscriptions throughout the growing season.

Owned by sisters Gina and Caitlin Miller, Miller Flowers is a greenhouse and flower farm in rural Ohio. Their subscription service provides a hand-tied (without vase) bouquet of spring flowers, which customers pick up at their shop twice a month.

“We had about 10 signed up last summer and it moved our cut flowers,” Caitlin says. “We are still discussing whether to continue and expand that option during the summer months.” 🌸