U-Pick Power for Your Flower Farm



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WELCOME

Chat questions will be collected for Q&A throughout the presentation.

Please submit questions before we begin the Q&A.
Once Q&A begins, we may not see new questions.

All audience chat messages are private.



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OUR PRESENTERS



Debra Prinzing
Slow Flowers Society



Melanie Harrington
Dahlia May Flower Farm



Sarah Daken



Tom Precht

Grateful Gardeners & Floraponics

The Hensley's team



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Grateful Gardeners

SARAH DAKEN and TOM PRECHT ▪ April 2025



Who we are...



Married partners in life and business! We both love nature, love plants, love being together. I guess it was only logical that we pursued a farm of some type. My Mom, Diana, was our muse as she has grown Dahlias for 30 years. We value the environment over everything, and we strive to move our practices, and the industry, towards organic and sustainable methods. We want to revitalize the US Flower Farmer!



Proud dog parents of Cosmo and Finn

The Realities of Flower Farming



- Extremely Hard Work
- Thin Margins
- Labor
- Diversify Revenue Streams



Grateful Gardeners

U-Pick Flower Events



- Agritourism boom
- Experience is key
- New revenue streams
- Education
- Emotional payoff
- Why we do this…

Agritourism



"Agritourism is a form of tourism that combines agricultural activities with recreational, educational, or entertainment experiences for visitors." – National Agricultural Law Center

The new approach leans heavily on wineries, breweries, and distilleries.

But orchards, veggie farms, and flower farms all can have similar offerings.



Facilitates partnerships, collaborations with us!

What Kind of Experience Do You Offer?





- Food trucks on site?
- Coffee?
- Music?
- MUST be beautiful
- Weather permitting
- Other vendors?
- What unique thing do you have on your farm?

Education

Slow Flowers SOCIETY



- The benefits and advantages of local flowers!
- How we grow flowers
- General plant knowledge
- New methods for growing
- Environmental concerns

FLORAPONICS
Sustainable Floriculture

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New Revenue Stream?

- Data still to be collected and analyzed, but worth it in the short term, on a manageable scale (<1/2 acre)
- Pros and Cons and scaling is daunting (Labor mainly)
- Planning for how much cutting needs to happen for plants to continue to bloom throughout the event season – Successions?
- Twice the production out of the same field, if you need that. Great, easy summer stuff (zinnias, cosmos, sunflowers, celosia, ageratum, gomphrena, amaranth)



The Emotional Payoff and Why We Do This!!!











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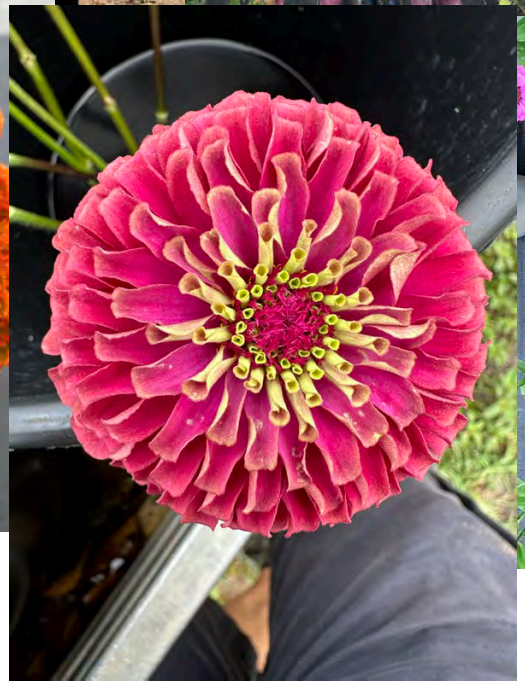


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Thanks

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DAHLIA MAY
FLOWER FARM
EST 2014
MELANIE HARRINGTON, FOUNDER



OUR STORY

From humble beginnings as a self serve flower stand on the front lawn of our country farmhouse, to an award winning business, flower shop, community pillar and destination farm, over the last 11 years Dahlia May has undergone many evolutions.

We've tried it ALL over the years, and we love sharing the lessons we've learned along the way.

@DAHLIAMAYFLOWERFARM



BEGINNINGS

DAHLIA MAY: 2014

After earning a dimpola in horticulture and floral design, I spent close to 7 years working in traditional flower shops, where I became increasingly aware of the high environmental impact of the flowers imported and sold, and increasingly frustrated with the disconnect from locality and seasonality.

NEXT STEPS

Those frustrations lead me to leave my job, in hopes of starting a farm, where I could pair seasonally inspired floral design with local farm grown flowers.

The idea seemed simple, but the execution proved to be anything but.



BEGINNINGS

DAHLIA MAY: 2014

In our first year our ‘farm’ was nothing more than a glorified garden of Zinnias, and Sunflowers. We didn’t know anything about succession planting or crop diversity, but we were eager to plant flowers and share them with our community.

We started selling our flowers at the local farmers market. It was a great way to meet our community, and learn what they were looking for. Our arrangements and displays needed a little work, but, it was a starting point!



BEGINNINGS

DAHLIA MAY: 2015-16

We polished our skills in those first few years, learned to plant more than just zinnias and sunflowers, up levelled our farmer's market displays, and discovered the value of high quality imagery in storytelling and marketing.

In these early years, we tried it all: farmers markets, a self serve farmstand, weddings, and more.

The biggest lesson we learned was that more ISN'T better. We spread ourselves too thin, and needed to refine our business plan.

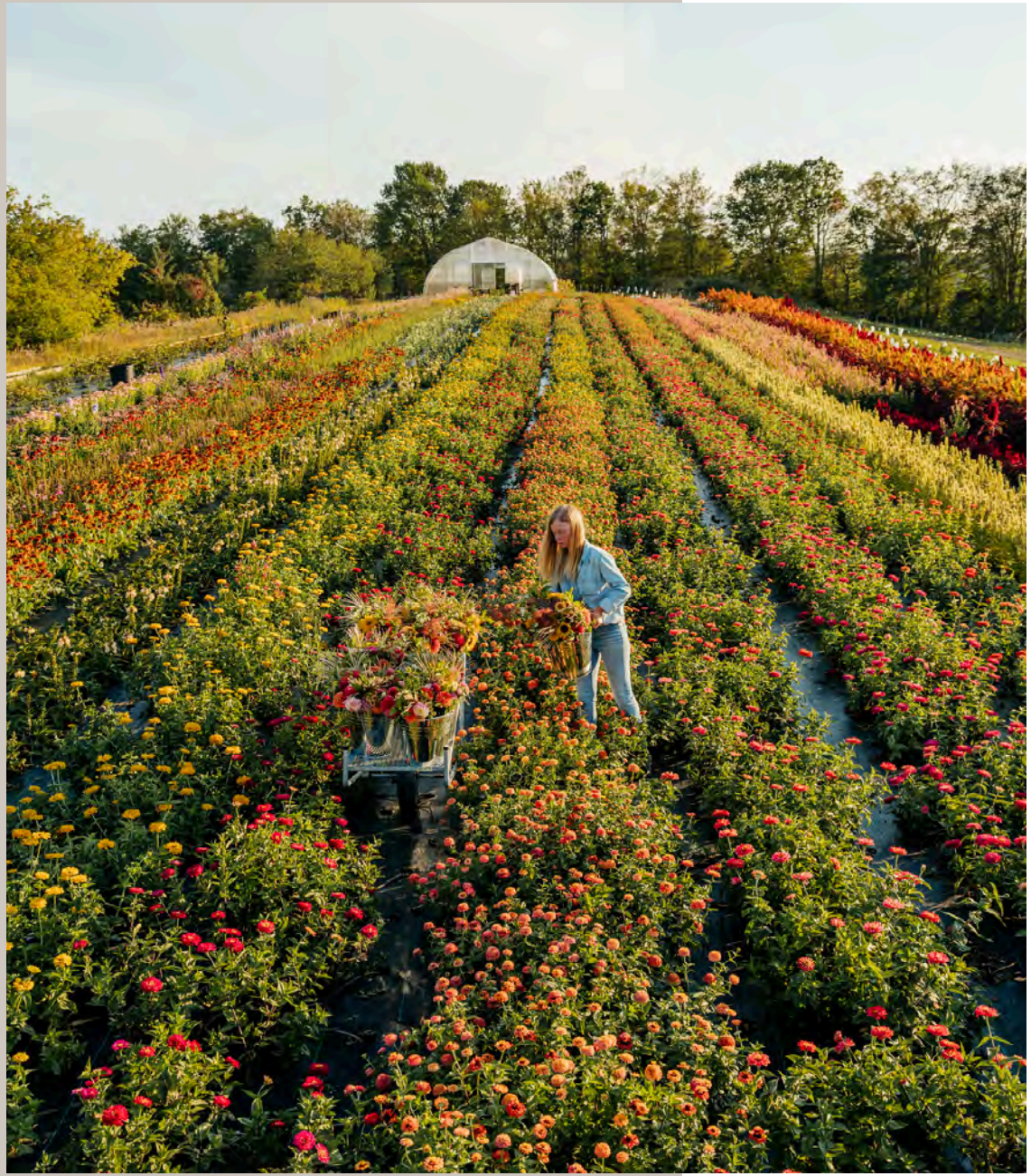


BEGINNINGS

DAHLIA MAY: 2017-19

We quick learned that farmers markets can be fickle and too reliant on good weather and other factors out of our control. We shifted our efforts to bringing customers to our farm, where we had more control over the experience we could create for them.

We turned a premade shed into a busy destination farmstand, offering customers a place to buy our flowers AND connect directly with where their flowers were being grown. Seeds were planted—so to speak— for what would become our very popular on-farm experiences.



EVOLUTION

DAHLIA MAY: 2020-2022

With 6 years of farming under our belts, we finally had a firm grasp on what I takes to build an incredible seasonal flower field. While these flowers supplied our farmstand and filled our orders, we couldn't help but wonder what else we could to with this private paradise we had created.

We decided to narrow our focus, eliminating farmers markets and all wedding offerings, to focus on our popular Farmstand, and on creating experiences for our customers directly at our farm.



TODAY

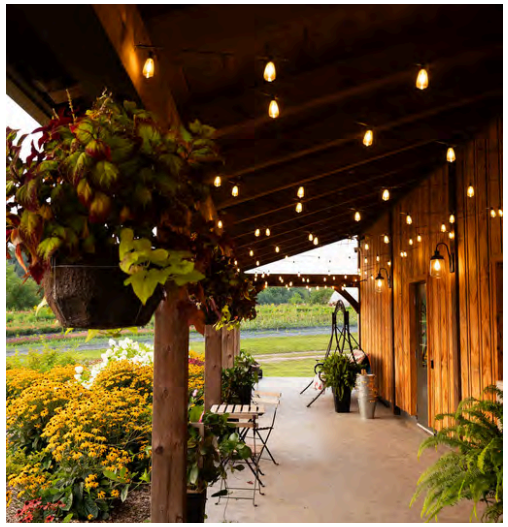
DAHLIA MAY: 2023-25

These days, in addition to running our farmstand-turned-flower shop, we focus on the farm, where we host workshops, offer field rentals for photographers, host events for our community, and create a place for folks to gather and create memories, in a beautiful country setting.

We also host a popular series of pick-your-own flowers evenings, selling approximately 500 tickets for these events over a six week period.

Sharing our flower field in this particular way is always a highlight of the summer.

OUR PICK-YOUR-OWN EXPERIENCE




CONNECTION & COMMUNITY

We offer our community an opportunity to relax in a beautiful setting, to disconnect from their stresses, and to reconnect with themselves and their friends and loved ones.



WHAT WE OFFER

OUR ATTENDEES ENJOY:

2 hours in our flower fields at golden hour (typically 6-8pm), where they can cut freely from our fields into a container they have been given to use. We also give them a vase to take their flowers home in.

OUR SALES OFFER:

If you're looking for the perfect way to relax, and spend time with friends, this is it! This is your opportunity to exhale, spend the evening in a beautiful space, and create something special to take home.



WHAT'S INCLUDED:

-2 hours at our farm
-A 10 minute intro/guide to how to harvest flowers
-A container to use to harvest flowers into
-Shears to harvest with
-A glass vase to arrange their harvested flowers into
-A cardboard delivery box to place their vase in for easy travel
-The opportunity to take any photos they would like/for us to take photos of them in the flower fields
-Staff guidance and support is available if needed



WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED:

-A design demonstration before attendees arrange their flowers
-Access to "premium crops" (like Floret Zinnias) or to certain parts of the field reserved exclusively for commercial production
-Indoor washrooms (we rent a port-o-john)
-Food or drink, although they are welcome to bring their own
-Pets or children (these are adult only events)



INVESTMENT

We carge $50 CAD/$36ish USD for our pick-your-own. Tickets are non refundable, but are transferable to another date if needed.



























THINGS TO CONSIDER

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Insurance

You'll need an insurance policy that covers on farm guests, with a recommended 2 million in liability coverage.

Staffing

Supervision is required, this could be a fun job for a well trained college summer student.

Parking

Parking will need to be well marked/may need guidance/supervision .

Washrooms

You will need to provide a washroom, renting a port-o-john by the month is easy and inexpensive.



QUESTIONS?

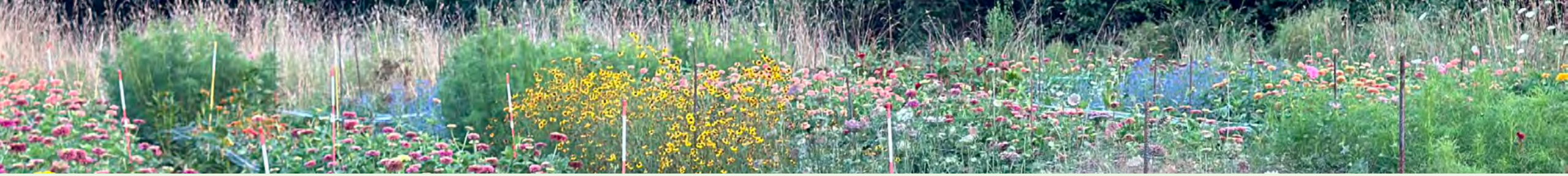
I'M AN OPEN BOOK

I've tried just about everything here on our farm over the last 11 years, and learned almost all of my lessons the hard way. I'm happy to share anything that I've learned and answer any questions.

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www.dahlia may.com

On Social:
Dahlia May Flower Farm



RESOURCES

- Original-source Flower Lineup
- Starting a U-Pick Flower Farm, From A-to-Z
- Original-source partnership with Slow Flowers
- Getting Started in Cut-Flowers • Top 15 Cuts
- Slow Flowers Society
- Dahlia May Flower Farm
- Grateful Gardeners
- Bloom to Boom: Flower Farm Profitability



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Thank You

We hope you enjoyed our presentation

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