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What is Flowers from the Farm?

Flowers from the Farm is the award-winning membership association championing artisan growers of seasonal, scented, sustainable British cut flowers.

Flowers from the Farm is a growing not-for-profit movement with over 1000 active members from Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to Inverness. Our members' flower farms range in size from micro-businesses on allotments and cutting gardens to sites of up to 6 acres or more.

Flowers from the Farm has three principal aims:

- to encourage more people to grow cut flowers for market in Britain
- to promote British flowers
- and to foster friendship and sharing through meetings, activities and communication.

As recently as 50 years ago, commercially grown British cut flowers dominated the UK market with imports known by traders as 'exotics'. Today, the opposite is true: today more than 85% of the flowers sold through florists, supermarkets and wholesalers are imported not just from Holland but flown in from growers as far afield as Ecuador, Colombia, Kenya and even Ethiopia. British-grown have become the new exotics.

Flowers from the Farm aims to address this issue and reverse the trend by building awareness of the virtues of locally grown flowers and developing a network of British cut flower growers across the country.

In essence, the grower members of Flowers from the Farm:

- offer seasonal flowers you won't find in shops
- offer flowers that are freshly picked from a local field
- offer flowers of garden-style informal beauty and fragrance • involve a fraction of the travel miles

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How did Flowers from the Farm begin?

The founder - and now Honorary President - of Flowers from the Farm is Gillian Hodgson of Fieldhouse Flowers in Yorkshire. After a couple of years of selling flowers at her farmgate, Gill expanded to take on a stall at Driffield Farmers' Market. It was there – face to face with her customers – that Gill recognised the immense potential for more and more people to grow cut flowers for their local markets.

Gill found that people queued up to smell her flowers and to buy them: “Customers reminisced about gardens they had known and they talked fondly about the people who had grown them. It was immediately obvious that flowers went straight to the heart of everyone who saw them, and who had believed that seasonal flowers were a thing of the past. I wanted to join an association of other growers: people who were as excited as I was by the possibilities of British flowers. I searched for such an organisation without success and one breakfast time in 2011, between one bite of toast and the next, decided to form one.”

Flowers from the Farm was founded with help from Yorkshire Forward, the National Farmers' Union and the Countryside Landowners' Alliance. Coming on the back of the 2007 BBC Gardener's World programme which had exposed the plight of the British cut flower industry, the story of a British cut flower revival captured the imagination of the public and media alike.

Initial features in The Yorkshire Post and on BBC Breakfast Time quickly blossomed into a vibrant nationwide movement of over 500 growers with a national media profile and a cabinet bursting with gold medals from the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, RHS Hampton Court, RHS Malvern, RHS Tatton Park and the Harrogate Flower Show.

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Who are the members of Flowers from the Farm?

There are over **1000** grower members of Flowers Farm (as at Feb 2021) working on sites across the country from the Scottish Highlands down to Cornwall and the Scilly Isles.

Their flower farms vary in size from allotments and cutting gardens to large walled gardens, farmland and nursery plots of up to 6 acres or more dotted with polytunnels and glasshouses.

Many members are professional horticulturalists, gardeners or farmers who have branched out on their own to establish their own growing businesses. Others are career changers passionate about flowers and , who find a more rewarding and creative outlet in the farming of flowers.

Members of Flowers from the Farm are supreme multi-taskers. Not only do they sow, grow and harvest the flowers, they bunch them up to sell at the farm gate, at farmers' markets, as DIY buckets and to retail and studio florists. Many offer courses on growing your own cut flowers or hold flower arranging workshops.

What is more, most Flowers from the Farm members also fulfil the role of **florist**, designing exquisite, informal wedding and event flowers, hand-tied gift bouquets and touching funeral flowers using the flowers and foliage grown on their land.

Some members of Flowers from the Farm are not growers at all, but florists first and foremost. These florists are so passionate about working with locally sourced flowers and foliage that they have become members to support the campaigning work of Flowers from the Farm and to network with the flower farmers who can supply what they need.

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