

Coping with Corona

Face the situation with courage

If you're experiencing immediate financial trouble, contact your bank ASAP. The worst thing you can do is nothing. Everyone knows this pandemic is taking a toll on small business. Don't be afraid, or ashamed, to admit you're going to need forbearance.



Pivot your business model



- Grow seedlings for sale.
- Contact florists now, even if this is new to you. Overseas product may be hard to find in the coming months. Be their new go-to.
- Cabin fever may make for some new opportunities. Offer flower crafting buckets and printed bouquet instructions for on-farm pickup. Hold midsummer eve photographer's events – with everyone keeping their distance!
- Are there value-add ways to use your crops? Drieds, edibles, crafts?
- Sell your skills as a flower grower to landscapers (who usually know more about mulch than flowers) homeowners, or businesses. There's a niche for "garden makeovers" and renovations.

Rethink your growing plan *Ideas include:*

- Switching to dried or dual-purpose flowers.
- Planting perennials, biennials and woodies. These take time to mature so it may be a great time to add these to your farm. Make sure these permanent residents make sense for your farm layout.
- Focusing on fertility with cover crops to build your soil. Start when you'd be planting your early successions. Keep it going if you don't need the field space. Repeated successions of buckwheat can help defeat weed pressure while adding biomass to improve tilth. Legumes add nitrogen and other cover crops sequester nutrients making them available for the next crop.
- Trialing small amounts of new-to-you annuals to see how they do.



Tips from the Society of American Florists

If you're a farmer-florist, these tips may help.

- Be proactive with customers. Call wedding and event clients to stay ahead of their fears. They'll appreciate your professionalism.
- Be as sensitive and flexible as you can, but be businesslike too. Do not return deposits, but do try to find ways to accommodate changes. Explain how much time you've already invested and, like all businesses, your overhead never goes away. If the wedding is downsized, offer to upsize the bouquets and arrangements rather than reduce the contract. Booking dates for Saturday weddings will now be even more in demand. Suggest Sunday–Friday as flexible rescheduling options.
- Smaller home weddings are likely to increase. Be ready with package deals.

Use the time for special projects

- Spruce up your website, Facebook page, and localflowers.org page.
- Consider creating a Pinterest gallery to share with potential bridal clients.
- Dedicate time to upping your skills in floral design, photography, welding—whatever interests you or helps your business. Just stay active!



And, remember to focus on what's STILL GOOD while we all get by, like the caring support of the ASCFG community!

WARNING: Standing this close is NOT cool right now. However, Virtual Hugs (VH) are highly encouraged!