



Molly Oliver
FLOWERS

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALTY CUT FLOWER GROWERS 2022

**The Evolution of a
Flower
Subscription
Service**



Molly Oliver Flowers is a farmer-florist based in Brooklyn, NY, offering **hyper-local flower subscriptions** and **sustainable event design**.



What we do...

My path: From food justice + farming to full-time floristry

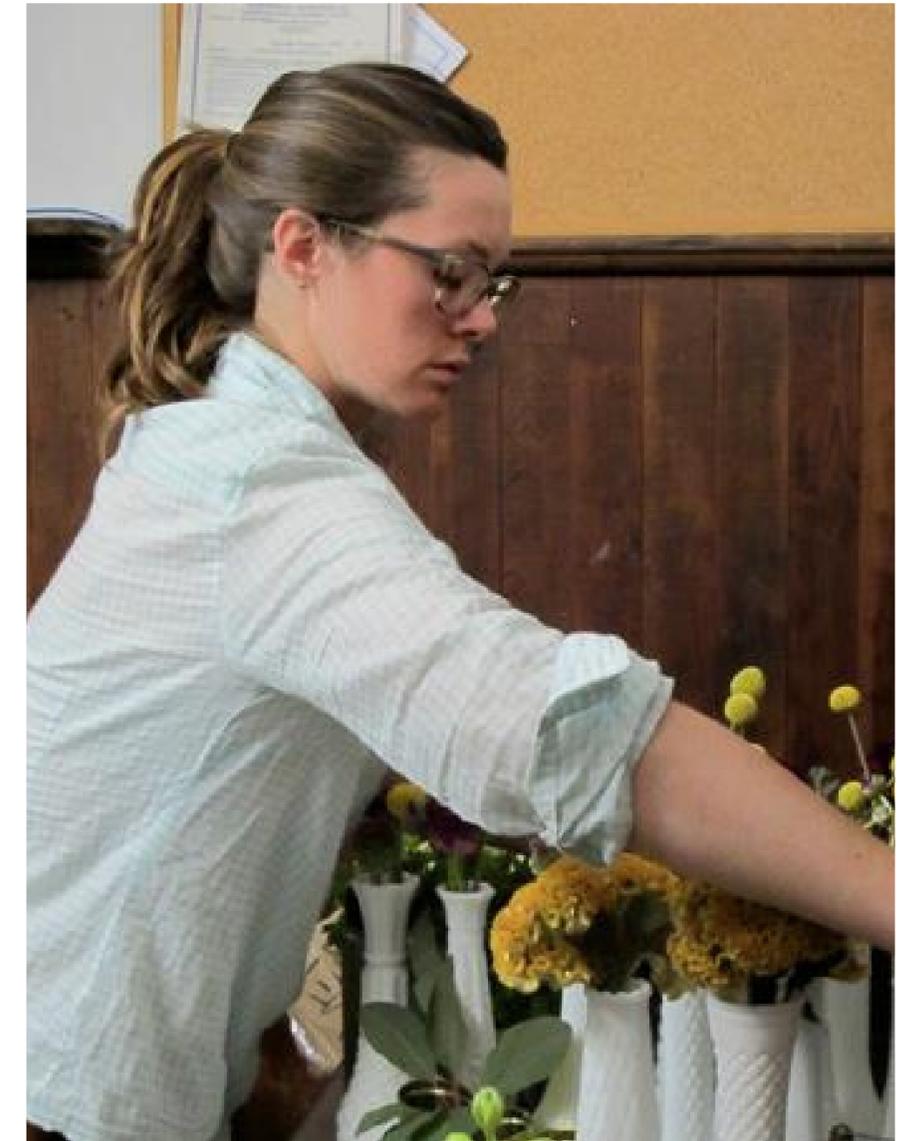
Earning a Certificate in Ecological Horticulture, UC - Santa Cruz 2008



Cultivating flowers and new farmers as Co-Farm Manager of the Youth Farm, 2011-2019



Launched MOF 2011, with the goal of connecting NYC clients to local, seasonal flowers



Values:

MOF aims to connect New Yorkers to the flowers and foliage of the region through the seasons, to **support local farmers + economies**, and to **honor the earth by reducing waste** through responsible product sourcing, vendor vetting, and disposal.

I work from a social justice perspective; 15% of Seasonal Flower Project profits are donated to BIPOC farmers and BIPOC-led land-based reparations initiatives.



Our ecological commitment, beyond sourcing local:

- 1) REDUCING CONSUMPTION THROUGH RENTED VESSELS:** Offering a variety of vessels for rent to our clients, and re-using these as long as possible, cuts down on waste.
- 2) REUSING MATERIALS:** Cardboard, bubble wrap, and other packaging from past vessel shipments are re-purposed for safe transport of designs.
- 3) STRICT AVOIDANCE OF SYNTHETIC CHEMICALS:** To support a healthy working environment for all, we avoid purchasing flowers that are sprayed with pesticides/fungicides. MOF avoids all use of synthetic floral foam or other non-biodegradable products and chemicals.
- 4) CHOOSING BEESWAX / PARAFFIN-FREE CANDLES:** Source locally made beeswax candles - they can compost!
- 5) COMPOSTING/COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING:** MOF composts all organic waste from production in the studio and post-event at a local urban farm, half a mile from our studio.
- 6) INVESTING IN TERRACYCLE BINS:** Terracycle Zero Waste Bin in our studio enable us to upcycle waste like soft plastic sleeves, nylon twine, scraps of metal, rubber bands, etc. aren't accepted by NYC's recycling program. Terracycle will sort, smelt down, and repurpose these materials into park benches, tires, and more.



The farmers we love:

MOF regularly purchases from about 30 regional farms, within 200 miles of NYC, including long established cut flower operations, younger/micro farms and family-run nurseries.

In 2021:

- **100%** of Seasonal Flower Project flower purchases benefitted local farms (95K)
- **87%** of event flower purchases benefitted local farms (34K)



MANY GRACES FARM
HADLEY, MA

Now in our fifth season, we are growing our high-tunnel crops, perennials and “pick-your-own” crops on 4 acres of a 5.5 acre, certified-organic field. Dubbed “the lower meadow,” this field is situated at the bottom of a wooded hill, surrounded by the forests abutting the beautiful Connecticut River.



HICKORY GROVE GARDENS
PHOENIXVILLE, PA

Hickory Grove Gardens strives to provide our community with top-quality cut flowers. We ensure the flowers we grow are safe for your hands and home by using natural fertilizers, beneficial insects, and sustainable growing practices.



JIG-BEE FARM
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Jig-Bee is a flower farm located on a former vacant lot in Kensington, just minutes from downtown Philadelphia. Jig Bee offers flowers and foliage for a seasonal floral share, markets, weddings and events, and wholesale purchase.

Design Style



Carole Cohen Photography



Clean Plate Pictures

Design Style





Design Style

And then, a global pandemic more or less halted business as usual, overnight.

We had 40 events booked for 2020; most were postponed within 2 weeks of 3/13/20.



If flowers were harvested at the farm, then delivered directly to a florist, then delivered contact-free and curbside to your building, would you feel comfortable?

YES

95%

NO

5%



I took to social media for answers...

3. Regardless, could you use some locally grown flowers in your life?

YES

100%



Thanks to all who filled out our poll! While Cuomo gave the OK for this, I still wanted to check in with you all!



Molly Oliver Flowers curbside flower delivery poll:

Thank you for filling out this poll! I appreciate you taking the time during such an uncertain and challenging time. This poll will help us gauge interest and the viability of organizing weekly flower deliveries of fresh, locally grown flowers from local farms for customers in Brooklyn.

WHY FLOWERS?

NYC was on lockdown, and the safety of delivering flowers door to door was ambiguous. W/ signs of interest, we launched...

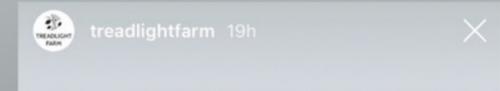


SEASONAL FLOWER
PROJECT

a weekly flower delivery service on Fridays!



Flowers will be harvested safely by the farmers we love.



How we are harvesting flowers these days. Gloves and a mask. Safety first.

@treadlightfarm

It was just what cooped up NYers needed.



Year 1: 2020

May - October 2020

1-month subscriptions only

1 size bouquet only (\$20 w/s value)

Molly driving to all farms

Direct-delivered on Fridays

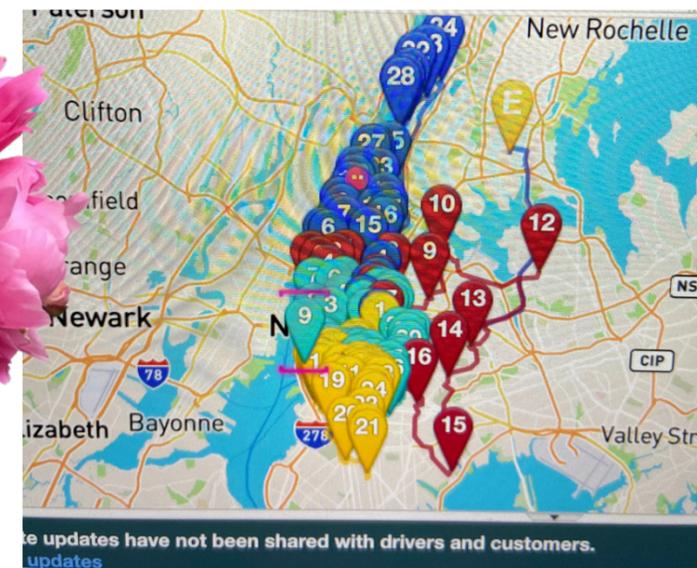
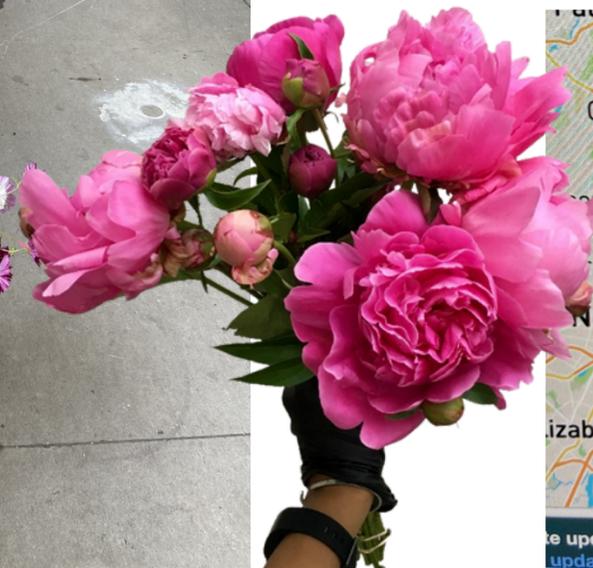
Team of 3 processing

5 drivers all day!



\$39,930 in flower purchases from 23 flower farms, May - Oct

(Compared to 54K in 2019, full event season of 40 events)



Year 2: 2021

March - November 2021

Moved delivery date to Wednesdays

1-month, 3-month, + 9-month subscriptions

2 sizes: Full and Half bouquets

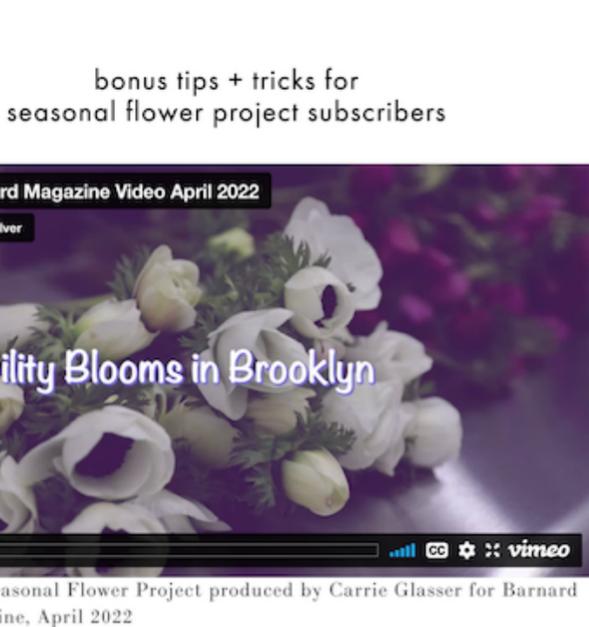
15 small businesses become host sites in Brooklyn, Manhattan and LIC, Queens

Added special orders to go out Weds. only



- Set up an online archive with farm tours, design demos and care tips
- Added a Referral Program
- Did some member spotlights on IG / in our SFP weekly newsletter

\$95,230 in flower purchases from 12 local flower farmers



Year 3: 2022

Added Tulip Subscription for Feb 2022

March - November 2022

Weekly and Biweekly options

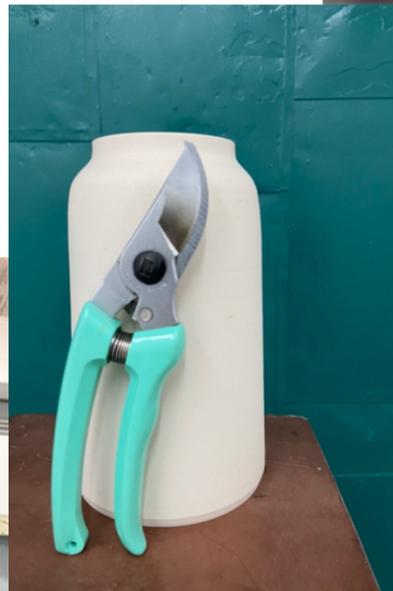
4-, 8- and 12-Bouquet subscription bundles

Full Season options (20/40 bouquets) w/

freebie vases and clippers

1 size only!

17 small businesses are host sites



\$TKTK in flower purchases from 12 local flower farmers

- Planned with 10 farmers over winter '21-'22 to pre-schedule orders
- Hired an SFP Coordinator to run customer service and lead processing + packaging
- Hired Monday "Farm liaison" to p/u flowers
- Hired 3 delivery drivers for Weds.
- Built a CoolBot cooler to fit all bouquets, all the time



Location, location, location

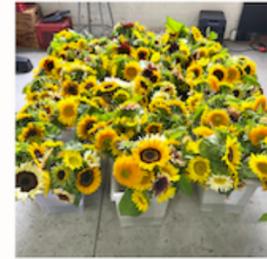


Become a
Neighborhood
Pick Up Site
With Us!



for our

SEASONAL FLOWER PROJECT



Presented by

Molly Oliver
FLOWERS



- Eco - Laundromat
- Coffee shops
- Ice cream shops
- Cafes
- Restaurants
- Home goods store
- Hair Salon



how it works:

1. We source from local flower farmers within 200 miles of NYC.
2. Select your subscription for weekly bouquets: Choose a FULL or SMALL bouquet for 1 month, 3 month, or 9 months.
3. Pick up your flowers every Wednesday at 1 of ~15 small businesses! See mollyoliverflowers.com for all pick up locations in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and LIC.
4. Flowers bring beauty, inspiration, and joy into your home each week for a month or more! What's more: **You can pause anytime.**



15% of profits will be donated to BIPOC farmers and BIPOC-led land and farmworker justice organizations.

Info cards and fliers at host sites!



How it works, now:

MY ACCOUNT

SUBSCRIPTIONS SHOP EVENT DESIGN SUSTAINABILITY

Welcome to the
Seasonal Flower Project!

Join in 3 EASY STEPS:

- 1) SELECT YOUR PRODUCT
- 2) CHOOSE YOUR START DATE
- 3) SELECT PICK UP OR DELIVERY

Visit [How it Works](#) for more details!



- Customer chooses a subscription bundle
- Customer chooses Start Date
- Customer picks up every Weds. or receives their bouquet via direct delivery
- Customer receives a weekly newsletter with vase life, care tips + more
- Customer has access to online archive
- Can Pause anytime

15% of profits donated to BIPOC farmers and land justice initiatives (5K in 2021)

The weekly newsletter...

Flower care tips:



First step is opening your package gently. We recommend tearing the paper along the seam with two hands.



STOCK

Genus: Matthiola ... There are roughly 40 species of Stock, all members of the Mustard family (Brassicaceae), meaning Stock is distantly related to Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, and Bok Choi!

Origins: Mediterranean

Fun Fact: They smell like Cloves! Said to symbolize contented existence or affection.

Expected vase life: 5-7 days

RANUNCULUS asiaticus
Latin for "little frog"
Origins: Eastern Mediterranean, southwestern Asia, southeastern Europe
Family: Ranunculaceae aka Buttercup family.

Some of you are getting Telecote



Below is my interview with Leah Ducey, of Spring Wind Farm!

Who makes up SWF?

My husband and I own the farm with our 2 kids but he teaches full time so I run the cut business with 2 full time employees and 3 part time employees.

How long have you been in operation?

We are in our 5th season.

What inspired you to become a flower farmer?

While in high school in the 1990's I worked picking flowers for a woman leasing land on an organic veggie farm to sell cut flowers at the Summit market. She grew the most amazing flowers and had such a charismatic spirit it stuck with me. Plus I like to work with my hands, be outside and enjoy tackling a multitude of issues/tasks each day and farming seems to fit that!

Who do you sell flowers to?

I sell wholesale to florists locally and through the Garden State Flower Coop and I have a small retail flower CSA. I moved away from retail sales and farmers markets so I could free up my weekends to be with the kids.

How is the Seasonal Flower Project helping you / your business?

The seasonal flower project has been a huge help! My goal this year is to grow more of less varieties and by having another outlet to move nearly half a crop or more it allows me to reach that goal.



Overnight, I was an e-commerce business.

It's been the most exciting / challenging / rewarding 2 years in my 11 years of business.

BUNDLES + INCENTIVES

ROUTING SOFTWARE

EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

MARKET RESEARCH

LOW WASTE PACKAGING

REFERRAL PROGRAM

HIRING DRIVERS

SEO

REELS?!?!

REFERRAL PROGRAMS

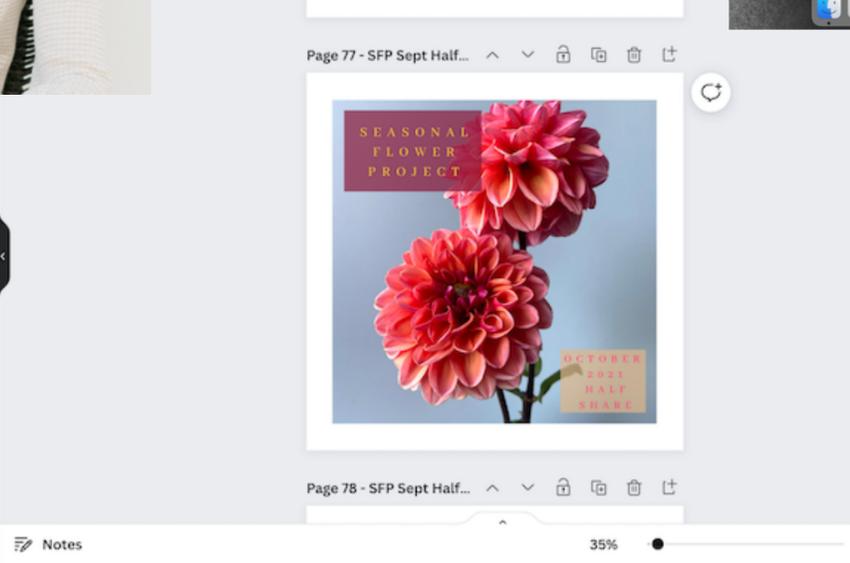
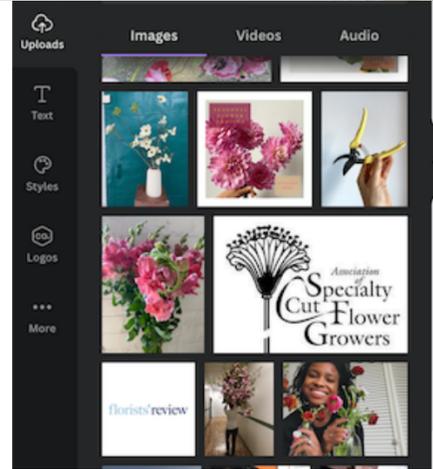
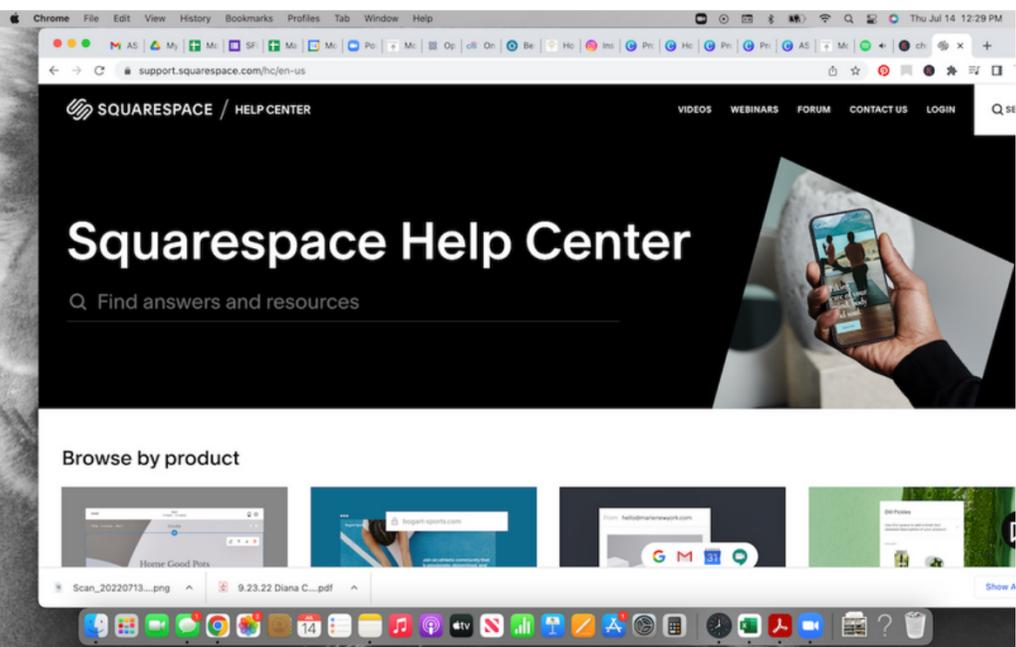
DISCOUNT CODES

UX



I got resourced, slowly but surely:

I hired a local business owner friend with a similar model for local vegetable subscriptions to consult with me (about 25 hrs). I listened to *many* episodes of the '**My Digital Farmer,**' podcast and invested in Sara Dunn's **SEO Bootcamp.** I hired a bookkeeper, found a **SCORE** mentor, and invested in a financial advisor.



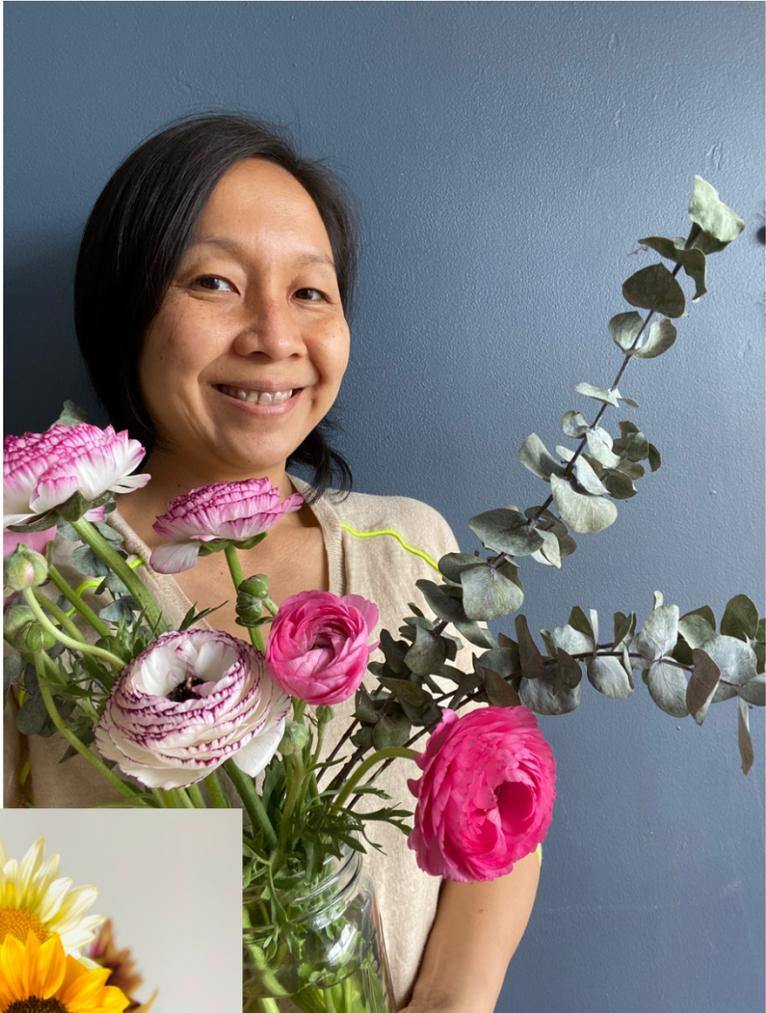
Used **Squarespace Help** A LOT.

Got a **CANVA** subscription.

Got a free **SCORE** mentor.

Find Your Business Mentor

The joys are multiplied. I have hundreds of customers/year, instead of 40. I have stronger relationships with farmers. I have 17 new small business colleagues. Education around local, seasonal flowers is growing. I was able to hire a full time employee...



Occasionally, I receive really nice notes:

 To: Molly Culver >

Flower Delivery

Hello Molly,

I just received my bouquet for the week and realized that it was time to tell you how absolutely amazing your subscription flower delivery is. Every single week I am blown away by the beauty that is delivered to my door. THANK YOU! Best money spent all summer.

Xx
Hannah

It's been a real treat to have your bouquets grace my home all month long. They've smelled amazing and been filled with such lovely, delightful & interesting blooms. Who needs a zoom background when you've got these on the coffee table?! I've really enjoyed your newsletter as well and learning more about your company and customers.

- Jalyn, May 2021



I am obsessed with today's bouquet



9:51 PM

I am so happy to hear that!!!

The work to streamline costs, improve the customer's experience, and make this work as well for farmers as it does for our business is ongoing.

The feedback from farmers is a mixed bag, and I'll continue to strive to find the right farmers so that it works for them. Surveys + interviews are KEY.

"The first year I worked with you, it was great to be able call you up when I had a large quantity of something to sell - especially when I had a bumper crop of marigolds - in 2021 my successions had overlapped more closely than I expected so we were swimming in marigolds and you came to the rescue!"

"Having the Seasonal Flower Project as a sales outlet helped me to feel more comfortable in hiring a full time employee. While planning ahead for weekly, pre-sold crops has been helpful in most ways, it can be a little scary (because...well farming is only predictable to a certain extent!). But, having a network of other growers who can help fill in when needed quells any stresses. The SFP has helped me to diversify my business model of growing and selling wholesale flowers, and I am so grateful!"

"To be successful with your model, small farms have to plan to plant 2-3 times as much of what they promise you and have an outlet for the extra on either end of the promised week...and/or plan to work together with other local farms to fill the order."

"I think your model requires the farmer and the florist to really collaborate and communicate but also both have to be patient and understanding! The weeks when we harvested for you were stressful sometimes and always epic but at the end of the week I always felt really accomplished as a farmer and proud/appreciative of our working relationship! So thank you for working with us."



**It's a
collective effort!**



How we talk about the WHY:

Appreciate + celebrate the best of each season

Meet the most surprising, unique flowers

Support small, local farmers + rural economies

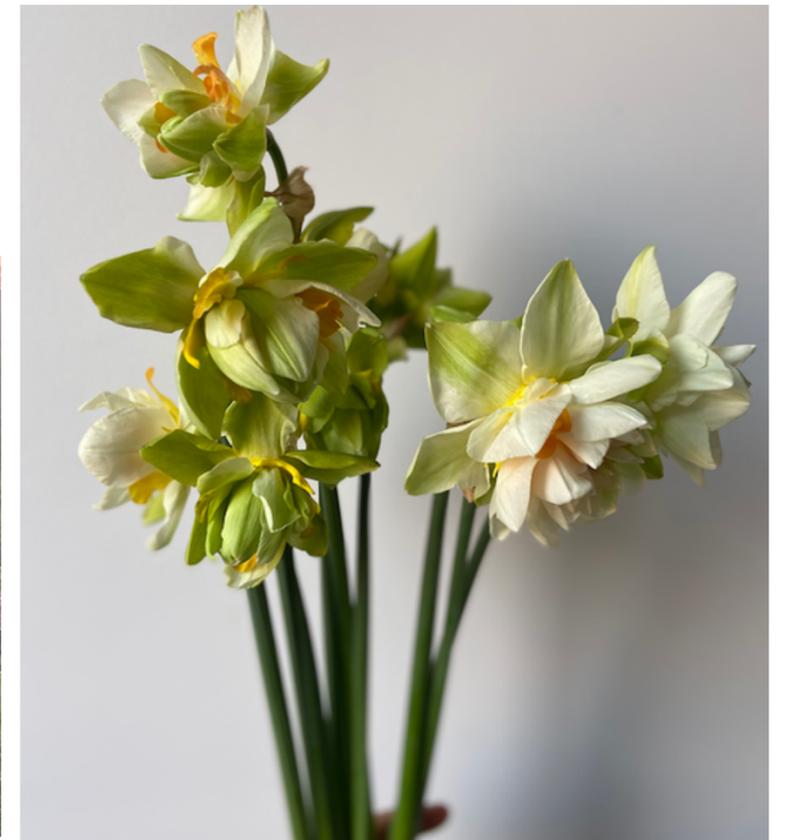
Support the re-growth of domestic flower farming industry, and hopefully a more diverse one!

Reduce transportation footprint of flowers

Support sustainable and organic farming practices (many/most new growers)

Reduce waste and use of synthetic chemicals –
– safer for you, the grower, their workers and customers

Never get bored!



Please follow along @mollyoliverflowers

Instagram



mollyoliverflowers

Edit Profile

674 posts 5,630 followers 2,913 following

Molly Oliver
She/Her
Farmer-Florist
Sustainable Floristry + Agriculture
NY, CT + Beyond
linktr.ee/mollyoliverflowers



SFP 2022



SFP '21



Solidarity



Val Day '21



SFP '20



Designs



Classes!

POSTS REELS VIDEOS SAVED TAGGED



Sign up for news at www.mollyoliverflowers.com



Clean Plate Pictures

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FLOWERS

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Slow Flowers
the conscious choice for buying and sending flowers

