

SELLING TO FLORISTS AND BRIDES, WHAT A COMBO!

Nancy Stedman
Little River Flower Farm
160 Turkey Lane
Buxton, ME 04093
Email:lrff@sacoriver.net

Why sell to florists?

They use a large quantity of cut flowers so you have a captive audience.

The trend is to buy local so they are looking for quality producers.

They pay cash and carry and a delivery fee.

They place orders weekly so whatever you cut is sold, no leftovers.

They are willing to give you information to be successful; what flowers they like, what colors they like, and at what stage to pick them.

The Process.

Set up a meeting in late fall or early winter. Make sure it is not around a holiday because they will be too busy to see you. Tell them you grow quality flowers and wanted to discuss their needs. You don't know if it is a good fit but would like to explore this opportunity. Bring pictures of flowers that you have grown or bring a catalog of color photos. This is a fact finding meeting to learn what varieties they buy, how many per week, what day of week they order, when they want deliveries, what colors they like etc. Get details. If they say they like orange, you need to find out what shades. Most florists like strong bold colors not pastels.

I let the florists I work with choose flower shades. They get very excited about this process. They have taken some ownership in the process and will be more apt to purchase those flowers from you. At the end of the meeting decide if it is a good fit for both of you. Talk about the next step. Approximately when you might have the first blooms ready. Call them a few weeks before flowers are ready.

Why Sell to Brides?

New England is a destination area for weddings. Hundreds of weddings take place each year in this area.

Brides are looking for options besides working with traditional florists.

Many brides are looking for more of a "wild flower" look for their wedding flowers.

Many of them call during off-season so you can spend time discussing their needs.

A 10-20% deposit is given initially so you have cash flow during off-season.

Wedding flowers and design work is a higher priced category.

Marketing to Brides.

Include a section on your website for wedding flowers. Create a handout and keep them with you at all times. Hand them out at the farmers market, when you go to a meeting, give to friends, let people know what you are doing. Get the networking and referral systems going!

The Process.

Set up a meeting with the bride at your farm. Develop a list of questions to help both you and her with the decision making process. Invest in one to two good wedding books that show lots of bridal bouquets. Get a how to book on making corsages, boutineers, bridal bouquets etc. A picture is worth a thousand words. Have them pick pictures of bouquets they like. You will then get an idea of the overall feel they like and be able to quote prices knowing number of flowers to include. If they ask for something you do not know how to do, purchase it through a florist your selling to. Always ask the bride what her budget is. If she says she does not know, come back with bracket pricing. For example, I think it will be between \$300 and \$700 dollars. They will usually have a response and you can go from there.