

November 2020 Program:

Scholarship Chair, Laura Inglis introduced Sarah Anderson, our LMGC 2019 Scholarship Recipient. Sarah graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College with a double major in biology and environmental studies. She has studied the science behind climate change and learned how drastically it will impact the near future. In an effort to make a positive impact on the environment, her career goal is to restore the diminishing green spaces in urban areas by starting her own small business as a sustainable flower farmer. Her career goal is inspired by her desire to support the declining pollinator population and to improve the fresh-cut flower industry. Currently, roughly 80% of flowers sold in the United States are imported from countries in South America and Africa. Those flowers receive excessive applications of insecticides, deplete water supplies, and create jobs that unethically employ women and children. Additionally, significant amounts of carbon dioxide are emitted as overseas flowers are transported to the US. By growing flowers locally and sustainably, she will incorporate nature into the city and create refuge for pollinators. Her long-term goal is to create a place to educate students about sustainability and inspire others to make choices that protect our environment.

Sarah is enrolled in the Masters of Horticulture program offered at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. This summer she worked with Dahlias at the Mill City Farmer's Market. <http://honkendahlias.com/> She is also working for Spark-Y Youth Action Labs, a 501(3)c nonprofit that empowers youth through hands-on sustainability and entrepreneurial education. <https://www.spark-y.org/> She will be developing curriculum and teaching elementary students about seeds and soil.

Sarah thanked our group and the scholarship committee for her award which has helped her pursue her education and develop her confidence to continue pursuing her study in horticulture. She discussed her work in the Masters of Horticulture at the U of MN, where our own Mary Meyer is her academic advisor. Through this program Sarah has helped design an outdoor education space, among other things.

Program Chair, Mary Meyer, introduced Christine Hoffman, owner and designer from Foxglove who shared her unique and sustainable approach to floral design. Christine has been part of the local flower market in the Twin Cities for at least 10 years. She is a member and speaker for the American Cut Flower Growers <https://www.ascfg.org/> and she started the Twin Cities Flower Exchange, a cooperative for local cut flower growers <https://www.tcflowerexchange.com/>.

Christine thanked us for inviting her to spend the day with our club. She shared lots of interesting information about what is happening in the Twin Cities Flower market as well as about her take on current flower arrangements – the trend this year is “muddy colors”. Christine started working with local farms to encourage them to grow flowers which led to her creation of the wholesale market with which she just finished her 4th season. This year they have 19 farmers and 140 registered buyers, and even in the setting of the pandemic they have equal or improved sales from last year. All of the flowers they source are 100% chemical free. Christine reiterated that currently over 80% of flowers in the US market are produced overseas. She believes that we could be growing a much larger percent of those flowers here. In the winter we can grow woody perennials (dogwoods, willows and winterberries) and fresh cut greens. We can also emphasize dried arrangements from flowers grown during the summer.

Christine shared her technique for drying flowers:

- Use fresh cut flowers
- Harvest flowers just before or at peak
- Place harvested flowers in water immediately
- Prep and hang harvested flowers within 24 hours
- Cut off wet ends, band stems together in batches of 10 or fewer stems
- Throw the bunches over twine lines in indirect/low light in a cool and dry environment
- Dry for 3 months or until the flower can stand up straight without the head drooping

She recommended that we always ask our local florists where the source their flowers and then buy from those who source locally. Customer demand is important in changing market behavior.

Christine highlighted the following sources in her talk:

- Prairie Garden Farm <http://pgfarm.com/>
- Shining Hills Farm <https://www.localharvest.org/shining-hills-farm-and-gardens-M19801>
- Blue Sky Flower Farm <https://www.blueskyflowerfarm.com/>
- Green Light Farm <http://greenlight.farm/>
- Slowflower.com <https://slowflowers.com/>
- Grace Rose Farms <https://www.gracerosefarm.com/>
- Lilia Flower Boutique (Wayzata) <https://liliaflower.com/>
- Rebel Girl Floral (Long Lake) <https://www.rgfloral.com/about-us/>
- Mill City Market <https://millcityfarmersmarket.org/>
- The Good Acre <https://thegoodacre.org/>