

**2017 ACORN Conference & Trade Show
Best Western Glengarry - Truro, NS**

Workshop Title:

Keep Your Flowers Blooming with Succession Planning and Season Extension

Speaker:

Tania Cubberly

Executive Summary:

Tania explains how her farm is set up, the infrastructure involved, and the key elements for growing exceptional flowers, with detail into specific varieties.

Detailed Notes:

Building a career in flowers keeps you on your toes.

Tania decided to change growing her flowers as if she was in Zone 5 because with climate change, her climate was more towards Zone 5b. Tania also felt her winters were mild enough that she could keep growing flowers by extending her season. Selling her flowers at markets brought in US\$2500/day. Additional money was made from a flowers CSA (community shared agriculture) program. Knowing where you're going to sell your flowers is very important. Tania moved from northern Illinois to Maine in May 2017. She had a succession planning sheet set, although didn't know where to sell. Regardless, Tania and her family broke ground after 5 days of buying land. Many bottles of wine later and putting up structures, Tania realized she needed to act as if it was five years ago back in Illinois and reassess the succession planning. Drive for quality not quantity. Building your name is very important. Every year you feel you want to plant more so therefore you need to redo the succession planning. Trials are important, take notes.

Farm system: Field space, tunnel structures, direct seeding, transplanting, hand tools, tractors, and implements.

Communication: Some crops stay in the field all season long. In diversified farming (ex. many varieties, shared space with multiple farmers with their own plans), communication needs to happen to share the space appropriately. Ex. planting sunflowers by sweet corn. Corn stays in the ground a lot longer than sunflowers so make sure you can get the sunflowers out of there without damaging the sweet corn.

Irrigation: Plant so the droplets don't ruin the blooms. Keep in mind the location of irrigation system compared to where your most delicate blooms will be planted.

Make sure market stand is full, which will bring in customers.

*You can email Tania to get her to send you her seeding chart - she is not opposed to sharing it because "*who actually follows their own seeding chart perfectly all season?*" *

Flower growing guide: Tania uses Johnny Seeds.

Tunnels: Extend your growing season 4-6 weeks' early bloom to well after frost, pest control, weather barrier for wind and rain which will give you quality blooms. Tania uses 14x102 high tunnels - size tunnels for the measurements of your flowers. Be wary of the wind when removing the plastic from the high tunnel and remove plastic for the winter.

Low tunnels: anemone, ranunculus, lisianthus, etc.

High tunnels: snaps, larkspur, delphinium, dahlia, sunflowers, sweet peas, etc.

Types of flowers:

Cut and come again: Few weeks of harvest, mow down, regrowth in fall

Work horses: Cut and come again but then they're done. Pull out and make room for next succession (they don't have second fall bloom), these are branchy type flowers.

Cut and done: One cut and pull out, 4-7 successions, think all single stem flowers.

Differences between varieties:

Snapdragon: Cut and come again. They last all season but petals can be damaged by insects and therefore do better in a tunnel. However, if you keep them in a tunnel, can they afford the real estate?

Stock: They get damaged by flea beetles therefore the field isn't ideal. Flea beetles destroy the leaves of stock right away. Use row covers right away if your stock is in a tunnel or out in a field. Covers and tunnels are your insurance. They are worth it. Stock is preferred in tunnel and is 'cut and done'. Plantings are 30' beds, 5 rows per bed for stock since they are a single stem. They are easily susceptible to rain damage on petals therefore they again prefer a tunnel. Stock is known for spring, but with season extension and a shade cloth, you can have good stock throughout the season.

Anemone and ranunculus are not only spring bloomers - get that out of your head and do more successions!

Ranunculus: Soak, pre-sprout them, tunnel for sure, certain point in the spring a shade cloth can be used to prevent sun scorch, seaweed and fish emulsion to boost them. Low tunnel is ok cause they don't get crazy tall.

Lisianthus: Nightmare for germination. No overhead irrigation because the petals are too delicate. 6" spacing, as they are not a bushy plant but need enough air flow. They do extremely well close together because they almost hold each other up. Silky to touch. They take up real estate in the tunnel but are well worth it.

Yarrow: Cut and come, direct seeded. Pretty tight, 4 years' tops with yarrow.

Ageratum: Lasts past first light frost.

Feverfew: Well worth it! 5' rows. No problem with air flow or mold when planted closely.

Winged everlasting: beautiful dried flower, paper type of flower, cut and come again (similar to statice (limonium)).

Straw flower: 3 successions.