

OCTOBER 2026

# TEXAS

*in Bloom*





TAKE A LOOK  
BEHIND THE SCENES  
AT THE TEXAS FLORAL EXPO

IT'S WHERE THE **MAGIC HAPPENS**



# Texas in Bloom

OCTOBER 2026 | VOLUME LII | NUMBER 9

## FROM THE *President*



TSFA President  
Marisa Guerrero  
AIFD, CFD, TMF

One of the best things about the floral industry is there is always something new to learn, and something new to share! Throughout the year, TSFA provides education to floral professionals in a variety of ways.

In this issue, you'll see more inspiring pictures and insightful stories from the year's biggest event, the Texas Floral Expo. In September, many of you attended an exciting Texas Floral Showcase in Waco, and earlier this year, we had the chance to show off our homegrown talent at a Texas Floral Spotlight. TSFA volunteers and staff are hard at work behind the scenes, to ensure that through on-demand videos, the TSFA School of Floral Design, this magazine, and more, you can take something meaningful back to your business.

In my shop, we use the TSFA on-demand video collection to refine our techniques and help ensure we are all using the same terminology for techniques, principles and elements. This helps us more clearly communicate corrections and desired design outcomes.

When we attend events together, everyone leaves with a renewed passion for the work we do daily. Plus, the business-focused tips we learn together are a great reminder that while we may do this work because we love it, we also have to run profitable businesses.

That is where the real value of education comes in. Take the inspiration home. Try something new. Share what you learned with your team. Look at your business through a different lens. The education and connections TSFA provides will continue working for you long after the event ends.

I hope you'll find something that inspires you within the pages of this issue, then take it back to your business and put it to work!

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WIRES AND INSPIRES

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS STATE FLORISTS' ASSOCIATION

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# The Stars Shine Brightly ... Deep in the Heart of Texas During the Stars of Texas Presentation

Deeply Rooted • Weaving the Cultural Tapestry of Texas Flora  
Featuring Ellie Grande AIFD, CFD, EMC, and Tricia Won AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

Inspiration surrounds us all. While hiking in Central Texas, the beautiful landscape and a love of history sparked an idea for the Stars of Texas presentation “Deeply Rooted – Weaving the Cultural Tapestry of Texas Flora”. This program highlighted techniques that can help floral artists create impactful designs. For example, working more sustainably can be as simple as using local resources and repurposing product. Similarly, a strong understanding of plant morphology, paired with creativity, can expand possibilities with every part of a plant can be used in design! The tremendous talents of Ellie Grande and Tricia Won were seen throughout a presentation that will long be remembered!

Underwritten by  
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# *Texas State Florists'* ASSOCIATION PRESENTS DESIGNS BY ELLIE GRANDE AIFD, CFD, EMC

## THE INSPIRATION

The “Texas Tornado” tells a personal story rooted in the childhood memories of Ellie Grande AIFD, CFD, EMC. It was inspired by the Texas landscape and a lifelong connection to nature. Even a storm can inspire art reflecting strength, resilience and beauty, celebrating the contrast of nature’s powerful and delicate qualities. This composition captures the sensation of wind spiraling upward – unpredictable and constantly in motion. Overall, the “Texas Tornado” celebrates the spirit of Texas-strong.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Texas grapevines were woven and interlocked to create a strong, sculptural, tornado-like form. Natural materials extend beyond the central structure, creating directional lines reminiscent of wind currents. Asymmetry strengthens the illusion of movement, while Monarch butterflies symbolize the delicate side of nature. Spanish moss adds organic texture, and the “Yellow Rose of Texas” brings hope and beauty into the center of the storm.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Floral design can be a powerful form of storytelling through mechanics, movement, texture and symbolism. By studying the natural movement of a tornado, Grande translated its spiraling energy into a sculptural structure. The design illustrates the importance of contrast and visual movement. Rugged grape vine, branches, grasses and Spanish moss communicate strength and texture, while yellow roses and monarch butterflies introduce color and delicacy. Each material has a purpose and contributes to the story.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



### THE INSPIRATION

The Golden Lady of Spain was inspired by an important chapter in Texas history rooted in Spanish influence and a desire to interpret that heritage through floral artistry and wearable design. In this contemporary floral sculpture, the human form is an architectural foundation – a canvas where history, fashion and botanical artistry can become one visual story.

### CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

Strength, continuity and regal presence were created by a monochromatic, metallic surface. The material was manipulated, folded, gathered and sculpted around the mannequin. Above the neckline, a dramatic vertical extension strengthens the silhouette as flowers deliberately contrast with the metallic structure. Hand-manipulated wire, woven details, leather, pearls and metallic materials create linear patterns as multiple design principles are explored.

### KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Floral design serves as a powerful narrative medium when it combines history, culture, craftsmanship, engineering and botanical materials. Start with a clear concept, and ensure every chosen material directly supports and advances the central story. Techniques provide the physical ability to construct an arrangement, but the overarching concept is what gives those techniques meaning and purpose.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

## THE INSPIRATION

Inspired by the timeless beauty and elegance of the traditional Spanish fan, this design represents artistry, craftsmanship and cultural tradition. It reflects the determined spirit of Spanish travelers whose stories are woven into the cultural identity and history of Texas. The traditional fan provided the form, while Grande's passion and artistry granted the freedom to reimagine it as a contemporary, sculpted floral design.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

The heart of the concept is the radiating fan form. A simple, square piece of wood was transformed into a handle. Precision was essential, with spokes carefully measured and drilled. A delicate wired garland was placed on the framework where botanical embellishments introduce rich sophistication. Vibrant orange and magenta orchids bring passion and energy.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

A well thought out design honors the past while expressing an entirely new idea. This meaningful design began with a well-researched idea and an understanding of what floral artistry can communicate. It explores ways culture and history can inspire floral artists to tell powerful stories. A recognizable cultural form provides an opportunity for designers to apply their own artistic voices.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



## THE INSPIRATION

This design serves as a respectful artistic tribute to the rich histories, traditions, artistry and craftsmanship that form a vital part of the larger story of Texas. Grande transformed a traditional bridal bouquet into a contemporary sculptural work. The eye begins at the rounded handle and travels continuously downward through flowers, feathers, pearls and delicate linear details, resulting in an avant-garde silhouette.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

An internal wired structure was engineered to support the extraordinary length of the composition, while ensuring the materials appear light and fluid. Feathers are the dominant textural element, contributing character. Hundreds of pearls were introduced as a distinctly contemporary design element, with orchids and roses enriching the bouquet with a monochromatic color palette.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Designers fuse research, mechanics, symbolism and the principles of design to transform botanical material into meaningful works of art.

# *Texas State Florists'* ASSOCIATION

## PRESENTS DESIGNS BY TRICIA WON AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF

### THE INSPIRATION

The concept draws from the Texas plains and changing seasons of Central Texas. It captures the peaceful simplicity of tall grasses transitioning from dry to alive, mimicking the sound of wind blowing through a meadow.

### CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

The project consists of three bowls of varying sizes designed to flow into one another like cascading pools of water.

The Frame: Floral stub wire and natural paper-covered wire were used to construct the frame.

The Body: Bunches of prairie grass and Inland Sea oats were bound to the structural wire arms using silver bullion wire.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



The Centerpiece: A floral mesh basket was placed in the center, featuring woven lily grass and long, hanging braids of bear grass on both sides.

The Florals: Fresh flowers were secured inside the basket, bound to the wire arms using water tubes to keep them hydrated.

### KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

The design heavily relies on wrapping and binding techniques. A major benefit of this setup is that the wire frames are reusable, allowing them to be redesigned for a variety of future floral arrangements and placements.



## THE INSPIRATION

The hand-tied bouquet stands as one of the most significant and time-honored floral gifts. Originating in Europe, this classic arrangement style is one of many beloved European traditions that has traveled across the globe to influence modern floral artistry.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

This design highlights Smilax, a versatile Texas-native botanical that is easy to manipulate and highly reusable after weddings and events.

**The Structure:** The leaves can be stripped to reveal flexible vines, which are ideal for crafting wreaths, design bases and bouquet armatures.

**The Technique:** This bouquet was constructed using the spiral method, ensuring the finished arrangement stands perfectly balanced on its own.

**The Palette:** Florals were grouped using warm, analogous colors (adjacent on the color wheel) to create harmony, while a single complementary color was introduced to inject striking visual tension.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAYS

**Sustainable Practice:** Never toss out products that can be repurposed. Smilax vine serves as an excellent natural armature to give designs structure.

**Maximizing Visual Impact:** Utilizing a structural armature allows the overall design to look significantly larger, while using fewer focal florals.

**Efficiency Tip:** Use bind wire to secure the bouquet's binding point quickly and efficiently without disrupting the spiral form.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



## THE INSPIRATION

The design draws from European Texas prairie women who wore decorative shawls. Won was encouraged to sew and craft from a young age. She seized the opportunity to elevate these historic, everyday concepts to the stage.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

**The Base:** Korean lace was chosen as the foundation for a runway-ready decorative shawl. One large piece was measured, folded and sewn along the entire edge and sides to achieve the required size.

**The Fringe:** This accent was added around the edges using durable leather cord.

**The Metallic Accents:** Gold and Smithers-Oasis round wire was shaped into spirals and glued along the length and ends of the scarf to mimic a traditional knitted pattern.

**The Botanical Textures:** A detailed pattern was built using dried Texas botanicals secured with hot glue. Fresh botanicals were later added to the middle of the scarf for a dynamic, living element.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

**Material Potential:** Simple, everyday materials can create a massive visual impact when used creatively. Dried botanicals are highly effective, durable and beautiful choices for wearable floral art.



## THE INSPIRATION

Women have gathered throughout the ages to create community and history through quilting. Instead of traditional fabric, Won chose native Texas botanicals as her medium. This unique living quilt features island sea oats, juniper and cotton to weave together natural texture and heritage.

## CORE STRUCTURAL MATERIALS

The Focal Point: To replace the traditional “Lone Star” center, Texas succulents provided a stunning, modern pivot, creating a rich and sculptural focal point.

Movement and Rhythm: Smilax vine was diagonally across the entire installation, embedded with discreet water tubes to support featured florals.

Color and Harmony: Iconic “Yellow Rose of Texas” blossoms were woven throughout the vine, establishing a vibrant, rhythmic flow across the piece.

## KEY EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAYS

Large-scale botanical wall installations are highly sought-after, premium designs for both contemporary homes and corporate spaces. This installation balances longevity with fresh appeal. The succulents can thrive for months, while the integrated fresh-cut florals can easily be refreshed on a weekly basis.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

## BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE

# Color Pop PARTY

### DECOR CHAIR MORGAN RICHARDS CFD

After being invited to serve as the Color Pop Party Decor Chair, I turned to my students and asked this question: “When you hear the words ‘Color Pop Party’, what comes to mind?” What followed was a fun discussion of color theory as we brainstormed ideas. One student made a point that stuck with me. Ella suggested, “The designs need to be big and loud.”

Volunteering allowed me to teach and learn. By leveraging the creativity of my students, leaning into my design instincts and soliciting support from respected colleagues, the party décor came to life. In the end, I stepped away from my original concepts to create with varying color palettes and pay homage to people who have guided me on my floral journey.

The decor was all about having fun with color and creating a place with a party vibe! This experience was a practical educational opportunity I could share. So, while working through the procurement process and itemizing my list, I engaged my students so they could benefit from this segway into real life events.

This project was a big deal! After all, an industry event isn't like a high school prom or other school function, where the process is fluid and we can design what we want. It is a formal commitment, and it had to be treated as such. The students and I went over color theory and reviewed proportion and scale, revisiting the principles and elements of design repeatedly. In what I knew would be my last year of teaching, this event was a nice opportunity for my students to add their two cents and contribute creatively.

I must thank dear friends Ashley Bishop, TMF, and Ashlynn Childress, CFD, TMF, because they knew just how to work with me on the day of the event. They helped make this happen, and I am happy that they are a part of my floral family.

Tropical flowers were used as an homage to memories made while assisting Hitomi Gilliam AIFD during the 2025 Texas Floral Expo. The birds of paradise “chit chatting with each other” honors Brandy Ferrer AIFD, CFD, TMF, and a special memory of talking with her into the night before PFDE testing, reviewing designs over FaceTime. Kari Gaudet AIFD is the queen for teaching me how to open the birds of paradise, showcasing the orange to make them more prominent, which helps every blossom. Thank you, Kari! One special perk was getting to play with some flowers I had never touched before. The Xanadu leaves made me so happy!





For this specific design, it was all about new techniques being featured to make something that is visually different and kind of fun in the end. During the Expo, I learned a new technique with the abstracted Gerbera. Thanks to Tricia Won AIFD, CFD, EMC, IMF, TMF, for teaching me that detail! A special thank you to Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI, for teaching me the manipulation of carnations where you remove all the petals from a carnation and have these “cute little green guys” as a point of interest! These easily framed the unique Gerbera!

The inspiration for this elevated design was the Hogarth curve, baby! I personally love this line of beauty and really wanted this style to be part of this event. Eremurus referenced memories of my 2025 AIFD Professional Floral Design Evaluation. (PFDE). Anthurium provided shape and texture. Bells of Ireland, which are another personal favorite, extended the line of beauty and provided a happy movement.

One takeaway is that designs may may not always be exactly as planned, but they can still look absolutely gorgeous in the end. A special thank you to Clay Honeycutt AIFD, CFD, TMF, for providing stands for this event! I am most grateful!

This design is an homage to the 2025-2026 American Floral Trend Umbra and the wonderful Keith White AIFD. I could hardly wait to see the trends revealed for 2027-2028 during the 2026 Texas Floral Expo! For this design, my original thought was dark and moody. I envisioned a line of delphinium with bupleurum swirled around the container. The spiraling effect of the vivid aubergine carnations moves visually upward to meet the delphinium. In review of a downward spiral, the carnations layer to the side of the Eryngium. Green Trick Dianthus fills the base to best accent the color of bupleurum.

There is one detail that was developed onsite with the help of two lovely ladies who were there to add the finishing touches to each and every detail! Thank you to two immensely talented friends, Ashley Bishop, TMF, and Ashlynn Childress, CFD, TMF. Blue metallic cellophane, that remained from the photography backdrop, was an unexpected addition to the design. We simply cut and tucked it into the design in all the right places. One side was silvery and one side was blue, and it provided an accent that popped the decor for the Color Pop Party!



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

# The Spotlight Shines ON FABIAN SALCEDO FEATURING KOKEDAMA IN EVERYDAY STYLINGS

How do everyday business owners bridge the gap between high-end design concepts and predictable daily revenue? For floral professionals, the answer lies in translating complex mechanics into accessible, consumer-friendly creations. At the recent Texas Floral Expo, Fabian Salcedo laid out this exact roadmap during the presentation, “Featuring Kokedama in Everyday Stylings.”

“Finding ways to translate the out-of-box mechanics and design concepts we see in many high-end design programs into ideas for everyday consumption is the key to bringing new ideas into our business,” Salcedo shared. “Taking a bit of this idea and connecting it with that technique, and adding a little bit of our own personality, is how we further expand these concepts and make them our own.”

From small, budget-friendly everyday plantings to high-end luxury gifts and grand event installations, the creative possibilities of Kokedama are truly limitless. Salcedo set out to prove that this beautiful, Japanese-inspired art form is incredibly simple at its core and highly commercially viable. The beauty of the technique lies in its adaptability; designs can be easily upgraded by adding more foliage or switching to premium plants.

“While our initial collection relied on vibrant kalanchoes and bromeliads, upgrading to a stunning orchid instantly elevates the arrangement’s price point and premium appeal,” explained Salcedo. “By marketing these creations as living arrangements, we cater to clients looking for sustainable, long-lasting beauty – unlocking an endless tier of design options and sales potential.”

Embracing a favorite palette of yellow, pink and orange, this structural design uses a pair of orchid wires as the primary mechanic to thread multiple Kokedama plants onto a wooden base. To ensure stability and prevent the moss balls from spinning, plant stakes are inserted into the arrangement – with the excess snipped clean to hide invisibly beneath the yarn.



This living sculpture concept can easily scale from simple and clean to bold and grand, making it the perfect customizable entry design for corporate spaces and luxury homes alike.



Using negative space is the ultimate secret weapon for keeping your cost of goods lower while delivering a premium, high-end aesthetic. By letting the log breathe, the arrangement gains visual volume and movement with significantly less product.

Inspired by the clean, low-profile silhouette of these exquisite orchids, this concept balances structural modernity with timeless elegance — proving that luxury isn't about being loud, but about lasting design. The result is a premium, long-lasting aesthetic with high-turnover selling potential for luxury spaces.



## ... AND THEN SALCEDO TAUGHT THEM HOW IN The Art of the String Garden!

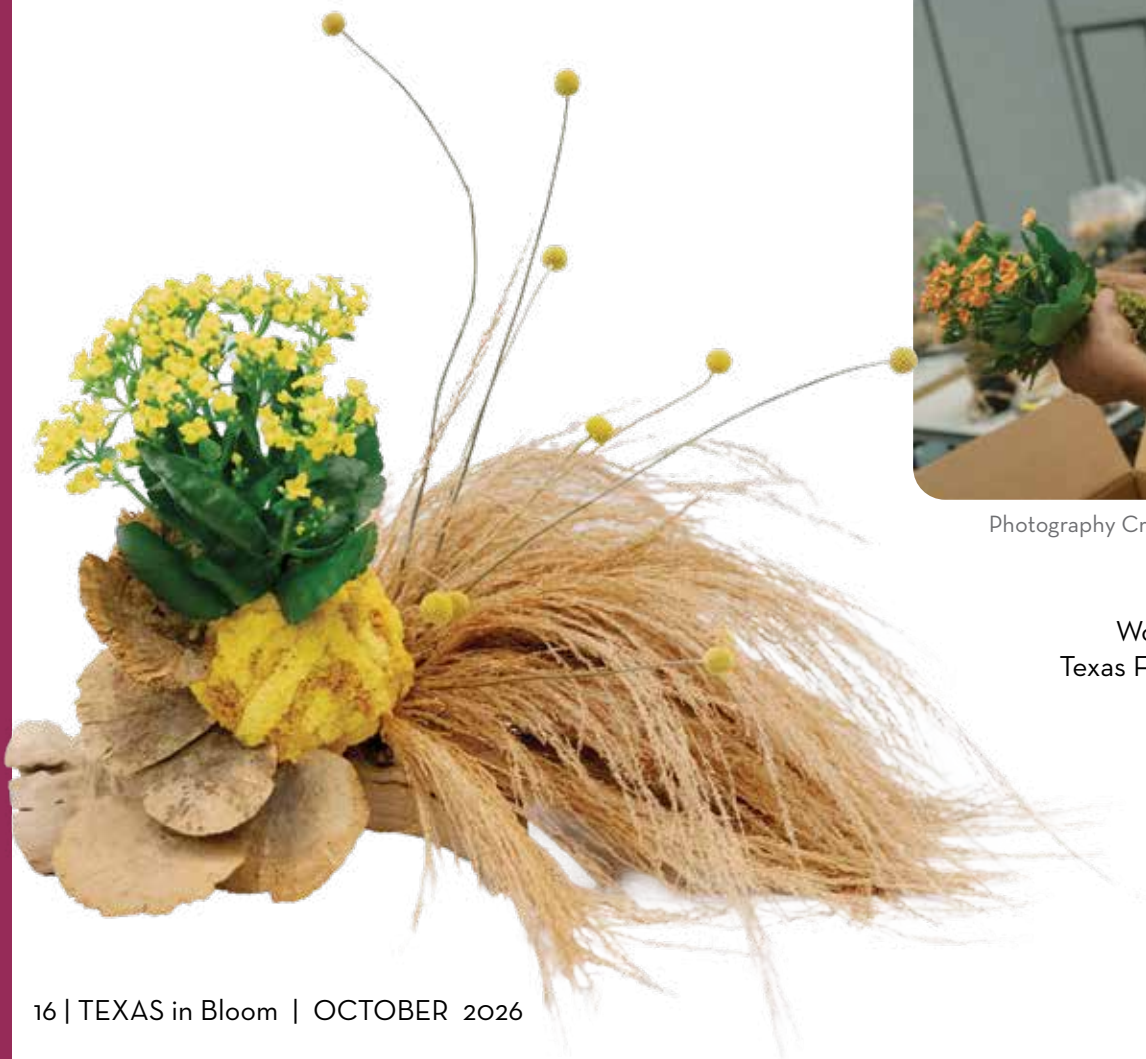
While designing magnificent, grand-scale displays for hotel lobbies and massive expo floors is an exhilarating creative outlet among peers, the ultimate success of any design concept lies in its ability to translate into tangible sales. Commercial reality inspired one of Fabian Salcedo's latest hands-on workshops, which was developed to pull high-end concepts straight out of the design workroom and reimagine them as accessible, salable products for everyday consumers.

At the heart of this transition is Kokedama – a remarkably simple Japanese botanical art form that wraps plant root balls in moss. By taking this elegant, minimalist technique and applying a dash of creative innovation, the workshop

demonstrates how a grand aesthetic can be distilled into a high-margin, artistically versatile product with immense profitable potential for any floral business.

After demonstrating how to build a basic Kokedama structure, Salcedo opened up a world of design possibilities. He highlighted clever techniques – using simple items like nails, skewers and stakes – to mount the Kokedama to creative bases or link multiple Kokedamas together in breathtaking arrangements. He saved the best for last, wrapping up with an invaluable discussion on how to successfully market and sell these ideas to clients. For many, this business breakdown will prove to be the real showstopper of the day.

For Salcedo, the magic lies in pairing a simple color palette with a rich playground of textures. This design masterfully creates rhythm by repeating the soft form of a yellow yarn ball against the clean lines of extended craspedia. A terraced arrangement of mushrooms introduces an earthy tactile element, perfectly balancing the airy sweep of uva grass. Sticking to a unified color story while multiplying the textures is always a winning formula for a truly dynamic design.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

Workshop underwritten by  
Texas Floral Education Underwriters



Elevating the single Kokedama, a power drill allowed for precise wheat placement, while hidden skewers stacked the bases into a substantial, multi-tiered arrangement. Terraced mushrooms completed the look by anchoring the design's rich colors and textures.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography

Here's proof that the right vessel can change everything. An unexpected sculptural base turns an everyday variegated English ivy into a gallery-worthy statement.

This design evolved as a creative solution to a top-heavy piece of wood. The weight of the pothos Kokedama was counterbalanced by a plain moss ball wrapped in matching yarn, while an integrated yarn-covered wire foot ensured stability. Additional wrapped spheres can be introduced as both structural mechanics and decorative elements.

## Jeff Floyd Hill's Wholesale Florist

My span of working in the floral industry goes back to my sophomore year in high school, some 55 years ago. I was your happy delivery guy – spreading cheer all over Marshall, Texas, from Duncan's Floral. I learned floral design from the owners of that shop, who were known in the '70s as pioneers of design and innovation in East Texas – doing design shows throughout the region. Through their love of the floral industry, I also fell in love with good floral design, beautiful flowers, floral events and this industry.

I went to my first design show at Harvey Hall in Tyler, Texas, when I was a senior in high school – being in total awe of the talent and beautiful design work. Frankie Shelton, an industry icon at that time, was the commentator at the show, and there were probably six designers creating a stunning array of designs. I was hooked and have never left the industry since that time. The understanding of color, texture, depth and balance have aided me in doing product development for two major retailers, event planning, design and, certainly, in owning and being involved in the day-to-day operations of Hills Wholesale Florist.

My wife, Susan, and I have two children, a daughter who works with us in this business as a super salesperson and a son who lives in Dallas. To some people, it is strange that we currently work side by side at Hills, but to Susan and me, it comes naturally. After all, we have worked together for the past 25 plus years in various jobs.



One of many annual family trips to Port Aransas.



Jeff, Susan, and Amy at the 10-year Anniversary family party celebrating 10 years of purchasing Hill's Wholesale Florist. The business was founded in the mid 1990's.

We have four grandchildren, who are the LOVE of our lives, and we spend as much time as possible with them. One family tradition that dates back to when Susan and I had small children includes taking a family beach vacation to Port Aransas, Texas, each year. We go and enjoy relaxing, playing games, eating and being a big family in a place other than home. This allows us all to unplug and have fun doing exactly what we want to do – be a family! It is my favorite thing that I look forward to each year.



The family gathering at a University of Texas Longhorn game.

Travel is our hobby! We have been blessed to travel throughout the United States, Asia and Europe. Our most recent trip was a Costa Rican adventure with a group of friends. It was our first time visiting there.



Visiting Keukenhof Gardens in the Netherlands.

Our son lived outside of Amsterdam for a while, and on one of our trips, we visited the tulip fields of Keukenhof Gardens and the Royal FloraHolland Flower Exchange – the world's largest flower exchange. On a typical weekday, 43 million flowers and 5 million plants are sold worldwide! This was one of the highlights of our time in Europe, for sure!

My favorite travel adventure happened while traveling in China, doing product development. Most of the time was spent in factories, on showroom floors and working long hours creating products. On one of those trips, Susan and I took a side trip to Xian to see the Terra Cotta soldiers. There is nothing to prepare you for the enormity and grandeur of that site. Thousands and thousands of warriors, each carved from stone, with each face, hand and uniform different from all the others. It is my favorite destination out of all the trips I have ever taken.

When we purchased Hills Wholesale, I was afraid I might become immune to the beauty of each flower that came into our cooler. Thankfully, that has not happened! Seeing the changing color story – the changing assortment of each week and season – keeps me excited to see the weekly deliveries. What's new, what's fabulous, what's my fave-of-the-week! My favorite color and favorite blossom changes often! My favorite color is orange (hook 'em Horns) and has been for years! Right now, we are getting FABULOUS blossoms from a local farm, and the Feather Wheat Celosia is my favorite – but that changes weekly!

Eleven years ago, my wife, my sister and I were looking for a business to buy. Susan and I were wanting to be home more, after traveling a lot for work, and Amy, my sister, was looking because she was an empty nester. I had bought flowers from

Hills for years and felt there might be an opportunity to purchase the business. We bought the business and WENT TO WORK – building relationships (friendships), providing great customer service, offering quality product and LEARNING this wholesale industry! In that short span of time, we have been able to grow the business tremendously and continue to grow!

My role in the business is on the side of marketing and sales – I lead a tremendous sales force that believes that a strong relationship grows a business!! My favorite aspects of this job are just that, making meaningful, long-lasting relationships with business owners across East Texas and industry friends through organizations like TSFA and CalFlowers. One highlight of my time in this industry is being able to serve on the board of the Texas State Florists' Association. This organization is focused on the long-term health of this floral world. Through high school certification testing, the future is bright for our industry. Through exceptional training programs at the TSFA School of Floral Design in Leander, through regional and state floral design events, serving with this organization excites me to think of the future of our great multi-faceted industry.



A family engagement party designed by Jeff Floyd.

I love phenomenal, creative, well-thought-out design! This can be a beautifully designed interior of a home, the well planned and executed layout of a retail store (my favorite) and, certainly, a beautiful floral creation, bursting with color, texture and a well-executed floral design! I believe it is a beautiful thing when a career and a passion collide, and for me, that sums up my life as an owner and operator of a local wholesale florist!

# 2025 TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR REBECCA SULLIVAN AIFD, CFD, TMF, DESIGNS WITH HEART AND BUILDS WITH INTENT SPOTLIGHTING INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS THAT MAKE BUSINESS SENSE



## WHAT WAS THE OVERALL INSPIRATION THAT LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SPOTLIGHT?

Though I enjoy designing for joyful milestones like weddings and birthdays, my heart belongs to sympathy and memorial floristry. To me, crafting a final tribute for a cherished family member is an intimate, deeply meaningful act of love. I frequently receive requests for sympathy crosses. I am also trying to be more sustainable in my floral practices. The combination of sustainability and sympathy are symbiotic. I wanted to be able to share easy ways to achieve both in this Spotlight presentation. This collection focuses on sustainable, organic, budget-conscious design choices that bring lasting comfort. I love showing how everyday memorial elements can be repurposed into family gardens, home displays or plant trellises – transforming funeral flowers into enduring symbols of remembrance.

## THE INSPIRATION

Create a rustic cross or natural materials for a celebration of life or funeral service using simple materials. I wanted a piece that would be used later at home as a decoration in a garden or even as a trellis.

## THE DESIGN CONCEPT

This design is perfectly suited for a masculine celebration of life. I used warm tones that were harmonious with the rustic materials of the cross structure. The floral material follows the vertical line of the cross while having the swirling dynamic line from the deconstructed grapevine wreath. Using smooth, glossy materials against the rough cedar, grapevine and lotus pods provided contrast and interest.

## THE EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Creating low-cost, sustainable and beautiful pieces can help florists be successful by using readily available products in an unconventional method. Having these materials pre-made eases pressure on busy days.



## THE INSPIRATION

This companion piece to the rustic cross was intentionally designed for long-term versatility. It creates a cohesive look during the memorial service and can be effortlessly repurposed by the family as a meaningful floral keepsake afterwards.

## THE DESIGN CONCEPT

Two baskets were wired together using bind wire and lined with biodegradable mache liners. By using materials similar to those of the wooden cross, while leaving an area for a cremation urn, this design mimics the original wooden cross design.

## THE EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Repurposing sympathy arrangements is a practical, budget-friendly approach to floral design. By using accessible, sustainable materials, florists can craft deeply meaningful keepsakes with minimal effort and environmental impact.



## THE INSPIRATION

This eco-friendly arrangement is crafted to honor a loved one during, and long after, the memorial service. By using a Kokedama Peace Lily alongside the cremation urn, the design creates a meaningful display for the service. After the ceremony, the urn can be gently removed and replaced by the Kokedama, allowing the family to bring home a thriving, long-lasting reminder of love and remembrance.

## THE DESIGN CONCEPT

Using two baskets to create something familiar, but with a twist, this design is a nice companion piece to the wooden cross. This basket design can easily be utilized at a traditional funeral service, a celebration of life or cremation service. Each piece is designed to be taken home and enjoyed after the services conclude.

## THE EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Using materials that may already be on hand in a traditional floral shop, this piece creates something a bit different and unexpected, while still being budget friendly.

The cross was constructed from a 6' cedar fence picket that was cut, glued and nailed together. A length of rustic wire was used to create a hanger on the back of the cross. Using bind wire, the deconstructed wreath was secured. Finally, a block of poultry-wire-covered Oasis Renewal foam was secured in place with the rustic wire. The foam should be soaked prior to attaching it into place.

## THE INSPIRATION

Designed with a softer, more feminine aesthetic, this set repurposes the same materials from the original wooden cross arrangement. Light, monochromatic blooms create a soft contrast against the rustic wood structure. The frilly textures of peonies, gerbera daisies and stock blossoms offer a delicate textural contrast to the smooth, glossy roses and the Kokedama Peace Lily (briefly removed from the lower center for the photo).

## THE DESIGN CONCEPT

Using the same concept of the wooden cross and deconstructed grapevine wreath, I was able to create a very feminine piece. The water source is a block of Oasis Renewal foam wrapped in poultry wire and attached with Oasis rustic wire that has been manipulated into a hanger for the entire design.

The basket was traditional in construction and design, but negative space was filled in with Kokedama Peace Lilies and English Ivy plants. Kokedama were created with small potted plants wrapped in sheet moss and natural twine. Oasis Renewal foam was placed in a mache container to practice sustainability.

## THE EDUCATIONAL TAKEAWAY

Kokedama serves as a meaningful, lasting token of remembrance in sympathy and funeral arrangements. Incorporating living plants offers greater longevity than traditional cut flowers, while adopting eco-friendly practices helps lower costs without sacrificing design quality.

Design with Heart • Build with Intent  
Spotlight underwritten by Texas Floral Education Underwriters



## 2016 TEXAS DESIGNER OF THE YEAR ALAN MASTERS AIFD, CFD, PFCI, WIRES AND INSPIRES AS HE EXPANDS SYMPATHY DESIGNS INTO A THIRD DIMENSION

Assisting families and friends in selecting the perfect tribute to express their final goodbyes is a cornerstone of our industry – and an area Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI, holds close to his heart. Recently, his passion has driven him to explore innovative ways decorative wire can be used to expand floral creativity. Emphasizing the truth that we never stop learning, Masters notes that his latest favorite wire technique was recently shared by Renee Polreis AIFD of South Dakota.

These elements sparked the inspiration for Masters' recent hands-on workshop, "Wired and Inspired: Expanding Sympathy Designs Into a Third Dimension."

The session featured what Masters calls the "cobra" technique. While previously used in boutonnieres, corsages and bouquets, the technique recently made its debut in sympathy styling at the Texas Floral Expo. Attendees stretched their creative boundaries by using an everyday shop staple in an entirely new way. Repurposing these mainstay products not only introduces a fresh artistic approach but also maximizes profitability.



Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



2016 Texas Designer of the Year  
Alan Masters AIFD, CFD, PFCI

The workshop was designed to help florists create with a clear, multi-fold purpose.

**Personalized Storytelling:** Discover new ways to honor the deceased by weaving their passions, hobbies and unique life stories into the floral tribute.

**Artistic Elevation:** Learn to elevate designs so they stand out in a sea of traditional sympathy arrangements.

**Creative Fulfillment:** Open your mind to new techniques, feeding your artistic soul and giving yourself permission to create without limits.

**Personal Success:** Participate in continuing education to remain fueled, encouraged and determined, elevating your craft to meet your customer's needs and stand out in your community.

Wired and Inspired • Expanding Sympathy  
Designs into a Third Dimension  
Workshop underwritten by  
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# TSFA Calendar of Events

Design Credit | 2026 Texas Designer of the Year Competition Top 3

First Place: Bruce Easley, AAF, AIFD, CFD, TMFA

Second Place: Kari Gaudet AIFD, CFD

Third Place: Erica Morgan, CFD

Photography Credit | Shy Laurel Photography



## OCTOBER

- 5 World Teachers' Day.
- 12 Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- 17 Intermediate Sympathy Design.
- 20-21 Level 1 and 2 Floral Certification in Pittsburg for Teachers and Professionals.
- 31 Halloween.

## NOVEMBER

- 1 TSFA Board of Directors Meeting, All Saints' Day and Daylight Savings Time Ends.
- 2 Dia de los Muertos.
- 3 Election Day.
- 8 Diwali.
- 11 Veterans Day.
- 26 Thanksgiving Day.
- 27 Presidents' Day.

## DECEMBER

- 1 Giving Tuesday.
- 5 First day of Chanukah/Hanukkah.
- 12 Last day of Chanukah/Hanukkah.
- 25 Christmas.
- 31 New Year's Eve.

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