

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, including light lime green, medium green, and dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the page, framing a central white area.

Ten Books Every Flower Pro Should Read

Get Smart.

1 Flower Confidential by Amy Stewart

Flower Confidential is THE book to read to understand how the global floral industry works. It is a comprehensive treatise which covers the spectrum of floriculture: science, business, culture, trade, history, and ethics. Most significant to me, Amy Stewart addresses the issues of importing flowers from an American perspective. Not only is it a seminal book for my own floral education, it is the inspiration for my business, Local Color Flowers, which sources 100% locally grown flowers. This book is a must-read for every floral professional.



I had the pleasure of meeting Amy Stewart once and was able to share with her how her book inspired my business.

2. The 50 Mile Bouquet by Debra Prinzing

Debra Prinzing's inspiring book profiles pioneering farmers, farmer florists and designers of the modern local flower movement. It was reaffirming to read about floral professionals who shared my values and practices: sourcing locally grown flowers, eschewing floral foam, using upcycled vases, composting and more. For the first time, I felt part of a movement. I found my flower people.



Some of my flower people (left to right) Julio Freitas of The Flower Hat, Laura Beth Resnick of Butterbee Farm, Dave Dowling of Ednie, Ellen Frost of Local Color Flowers, Jascha Owens of Butterbee Farm, Jess Valmas of Bloomhouse

3. The Surprising Life of Constance Spry by Sue Shephard

Constance Spry was the first celebrity florist. In the first half of the 20th century, Spry popularized the use of uncommon design elements for her wealthy clients including kale, foraged vines and seasonal local blooms not often seen in flower shops. She also championed the use of all kinds of mechanics including curly willow, sand, moss, flower frogs and our favorite, chicken wire.

A quotes of Spry's is an inspiration to a new generation of designers:

“Do whatever you please, follow your own star; be original if you want to be and don't if you don't want to be. Just be natural and gay and light-hearted and pretty and simple and overflowing and general and baroque and bare and austere and stylised and wild and daring and conservative, and learn and learn and learn. Open your mind to every form of beauty.”

4. The Reason for Flowers: Their History, Culture, Biology, and How They Change Our Lives By Stephen Buchmann

The Reason for Flowers is, for me, best read in small snippets rather than all the way through. And I use it as reference often.

Flowers are my medium. When I design, I want to know as much about each stem as I can. This book teaches me about how flowers start, how they grow, how they came to be used in culture, art and celebrations and so much more. *The Reason for Flowers* belongs on every floral professional's bookshelf.

5. The Secret Lives of Color by Kassia St. Clair

Kassia St. Clair's book is a bite-sized history of the deep and complex topic of color. It's filled with charming stories and historical tidbits about dozens of colors that florists use in natural design.

Color is fundamental in floral design. It's no secret that the better trained designers are in the use of color, the more beautiful our arrangements will be.



6. Floret Farm's A Year in Flowers: Designing Gorgeous Arrangements for Every Season By Erin Benzakein

Erin Benzakein's second book is a primer on how to design with local flowers. Even as a seasoned florist, I learned a lot from this book. Floret has introduced me to numerous flowers and foliage that I subsequently requested from my own growers. Also notable from this book is the focus on the vessel in arrangements. Erin provides insight into the how vase types, shape and size affect overall design of a floral composition.



7. The Flower Workshop: Lessons in Arranging Blooms, Branches, Fruits, and Foraged Materials by Ariella Chezar

I have taken several classes with Ariella Chezar and I am always inspired by how she elevates the most simple design element from her garden following the lead of Constance Spry 100 years ago.

In *The Flower Workshop*, the reader is encouraged to use seasonal and locally elements to shape the arrangement. This philosophy informs design at my shop. I return to this book often for inspiration.

8. Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants By Robin Wall Kimmerer

This beautifully written book is about our connection to the natural world and how we can honor that connection. The lessons in *Braiding Sweetgrass* are personal to me. I run my business and live my life by making as many connections to nature as I can. Amongst the 80 or so books we've read for the LoCoFlo book club, this remains everyone's favorite.

9. Martha's Flowers : A Practical Guide to Growing, Gathering, and Enjoying By Martha Stewart

No list of must-read flower books would be complete without a book by Martha Stewart. Martha is and continues to be a trend setter in the world of flowers. Last year, our team traveled to see Martha live at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania for the launch of her most recent flower book *Martha's Flowers*. Together with Kevin Sharkey, her long time floral designer, Martha discussed growing, harvesting, conditioning and designing with flowers she grows at her Connection home. Halfway through the talk, when Martha was bemoaning how hard it is to keep lilacs hydrated after harvesting, I blurted out to our team...Martha is just like us! That's the magic of Martha! The book is stunningly beautiful and totally accessible for growers and designers at all experience levels.



10. Cool Flowers by Lisa Mason Ziegler

I think all floral designers dream of having their own little cutting garden. *Cool Flowers* is the perfect book to help you get started. This easy to read book, with easy to implement instruction, will have you growing snapdragons, sweet William, bells of Ireland and more just like master farmer Dave Dowling.

As a florist and designer, I didn't read *Cool Flowers* so that I could become a farmer, I read the book to understand more about the process of growing and harvesting flowers. It has helped me to be a more knowledgeable buyer of flowers for my business and a better seller of flower for my customers.

