

# Q+A

## FLORISTS

A series featuring interviews with wedding specialists in each issue of *The Connecticut Bride*.

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Your dream day is here. Your hands tightly grasp your bouquet. The smell of your favorite flowers fill the air. You look down and admire the fresh, clean, crisp look of your polished centerpiece knowing your florist worked hard to make every detail perfect.

Your wedding day showcases flowers every step of the way — from getting ready, transportation, your ceremony, portrait moments and your reception. Boutonniere, bridesmaids bouquets, ceremony aisles, wedding cakes, backdrops, fireplaces, ceiling drops, ceremony arches, centerpieces ... even your headpiece can feature decorative floral accents.

Unless you're a flower expert, you'll likely need the aid of an experienced florist to make flowers flow throughout your big day. We asked four local florists to share tips on wedding flowers for each season.

• Alyson Moschcovich



Olivia Leary is surrounded by bouquets designed by Montville Flowers, consisting of sunflowers, baby's breath, lisianthus, stock and veronica.

## SPRING

### Tammie LaBonte

#### BLOOM. Creative Floral & Events

Moosup | bloomcreativefloral.com

**Q: With so many varieties of flowers in bloom in spring, how should brides start the process?**

**A:** Part of the beauty of designing is including blooms that offer a little something for all of the senses. Flowers serve as “eye candy,” but keeping scent in mind when designing, especially in a bridal bouquet or boutonniere, helps bring another level to the design. We love to infuse a little something to tickle the nose. Subtlety is key, because some people find certain scents overpowering. While I love lilac, the scent is strong, but some of our couples love it. When work-

ing with your designer be sure to let them know if you find certain floral scents overpowering.

Each part of spring has its shining stars: In early spring, some of my personal local favorites to design with are anemone, sweet-scented muscari, daffodils, and early tulip: La Belle Epoque and Double White Mondial are breathtaking options. Outside of local, you cannot beat Japanese Sweet Pea for their scent and beauty! In mid- to late spring, you'll find peony — another sweet-scented stunner — lilac, wisteria and, of course, garden roses in June.

While a good wholesaler can help extend the season for some of these decadent “spring” specialties, there are so many choices to be found through Connecticut's local flower farmers, which means fresher product and less impact on the environment. It's a win-win!

JENNIFER CARDINAL PHOTOGRAPHY

## SEASONAL PICKS

### YEAR-ROUND

Anthurium \* Baby's Breath \* Calla Lily  
Carnation \* Chrysanthemum Delphinium  
Gardenia \* Gerbera Daisy \* Hydrangea  
Hypericum Berry \* Larkspur \* Lisianthus  
Rose \* Waxflower

### SPRING

Anemone \* Anemone \* Daffodil  
Delphinium \* Forsythia \* Fritillaria  
Gardenia Hyacinth \* Hydrangea \* Lilac  
Lily of the Valley \* Marigold \* Muscari  
Peony Poppy \* Queen Anne's Lace  
Ranunculus \* Rose \* Snapdragon \* Stock  
Sweet Pea \* Tulip Viburnum \* Wisteria

### Spring alternatives

Butterfly Ranunculus, Cosmos (especially double), Garden Rose, Lisianthus, Peony, Double Tulip

### SUMMER

Ageratum \* Calla Lily \* Celosia  
Cornflower \* Cosmos \* Dahlia  
Delphinium \* Freesia \* Foxglove  
Gerbera Daisy \* Gomphrena \* Hydrangea  
Lisianthus \* Scabiosa \* Snapdragon  
Sunflower \* Yellow Craspedia \* Zinnia

### Summer alternatives

Astilbe, Butterfly Ranunculus, Hyacinth, Iris, Lilac, Muscari, Narcissus, Poppy, Sweet Pea, Tulip

### FALL

Amaranthus \* Alstroemeria \* Astrantia  
Camellia \* Celosia \* Chrysanthemum  
Dahlia \* Marigold \* Pansy  
Rose \* Scabiosa \* Stock \* Yarrow

### Fall alternatives

Astilbe, Cremona, Hypericum, Lysmachia, Marigold, Privet, Rose, Snapdragon, Veronica, Waxflower, Yarrow

### WINTER

Achillea \* Anemone \* Amaryllis  
Calla Lily \* Campanula \* Carnation  
Gardenia \* Gerbera Daisy \* Hydrangea  
Hypericum \* Lisianthus \* Orchid  
Peony \* Phlox \* Ranunculus \* Rose  
Snapdragon \* Stock \* Tulip

### Winter alternatives

Baby's Breath, Hellebores, Narcissus  
Paperwhite, Phalaenopsis Orchid,  
Star of Bethlehem, Stephanotis, Waxflower

### ACCENTS

Berries \* Bunny's Tail  
Clover \* Dusty Miller  
Eucalyptus \* Grass  
Hops \* Pine Cones  
Silver Brunia \* Succulents  
Vines

COLLEEN ANNE LENNEHAN PHOTOGRAPHY



## SUMMER

### Justine Ramsey

#### Floral Designs by Justine

Bethlehem | floraldesignsbyjustine.com

**Q: What are ways to help flowers withstand harsh temperatures and avoid premature wilting?**

**A:** There are a few important steps to take when handling fresh-cut flowers that will help keep them hydrated for your event and prevent premature wilting. First, you want to make sure you have fresh, healthy plant material. The older the flower the higher chance you have of them wilting and not lasting as long. You also want to make sure that when you are designing the arrangement, a fresh cut is given to the bottom of the stems before hitting the water every time. If the bottom of the stem has started to heal over and dry up, the flower will not take up water efficiently. Especially in the summer months, flowers should be kept in a cool, dark location until the day of the event (a cooler would be best). Finally, a finishing spray like Crowning Glory should be used on all the blooms to secure peak freshness. This should be sprayed on the flowers prior to entering a cooler, or prior to being set-up at the event. If a finishing spray is not on hand, misting on a really hot day can help.

## FALL

### Leah Van Ness

#### Montville Florist

Uncasville | montvilleflorist.com

**Q: Which color palettes work best in the fall?**

**A:** We have found that richer, deeper tones accent the change from summer to autumn. Deep purple such as lisianthus or anemones; brilliant orange such as gerbera daisies, lilies or spray roses; and sharper green tones such as trick dianthus, button chrysanthemums or hydrangea, mimic the changes that naturally occur across our landscapes. When complementary colors are added to the purple, orange and green tones, the composition fills out a seasonally appropriate color palette.

Welcoming your guests with a magnificent arrangement will set the tone for your wedding. Whether your wedding is an intimate affair or a lavish event, a stunning arrangement will heighten their anticipation of what your wedding will bring. Recognizing that a photo captures a moment frozen in time, like the groom's mother pinning her son's unique boutonniere, or a grandparent pinning flowers into the bride's hair, allows the smallest of details to live on forever.

## WINTER

### Melissa Beard

#### Floral Designs by Melissa

Sandy Hook | floraldesignbymelissa.com

**Q: Which winter flowers are harder than others?**

**A:** Some great options are tulips, amaryllis, phlox, ranunculus, anemones, stock, roses and hydrangeas. While traditionally thought of as a spring flower, select varieties of peonies are available in December. During the later winter months they decrease in availability and have to be sourced from places such as Israel and Chile. A great alternative to a peony can be a garden rose, and these are available year round.

My best advice is to trust your floral professional to make the best suggestion for your wedding month. We are working with Mother Nature, and even within the same season, flower availability can truly range. This is especially true depending on the weather. Being a professionally trained florist for 25-plus years, it has taken time to learn what is best to use when.