Slow Flowers are blooming in Canada

At the centre of the Slow Flowers movement is the notion that faster is not better. Borrowing from the tenets that form the Slow Movement – which started in 1986 as a backlash against a McDonald’s opening near the Spanish Steps in Rome – Slow Flowers emphasizes the value of local, seasonal and sustainably grown flowers. More than this, though, Slow Flowers welcomes a return to growing flowers and connecting contemporary consumers with the source of their flowers. Putting a face to flower growers, farmers and designers helps to shape the cultural shift that is starting to slowly capture the floral industry, where attention to sustainability and seasonality is (thankfully) becoming more widespread.

Education and environment are keys to continuing the success of Slow Flowers.

By Becky Feasby
This return to connection is indeed the driving force behind Slow Flowers – a connection to the who, what and where of our everyday lives. Who is behind what we consume and enjoy? What do they grow or produce for us, and where do these products come from? Rather than demanding that our flowers transcend seasonality so that anything we want can be available anytime we want it, consumers are – slowly – starting to reconnect with the seasons and prize what is available during different times of the year. The emergence of tulips in spring signals the start of the growing season, the budding of lilacs tells us that summer is on its way, and the turning of leaves in autumn lets us know that change is in the air (all of this is, of course, true for me – in my Zone 4 garden in Calgary, Alberta).

Debra Prinzing is the fairy godmother of all things “slow” when it comes to flowers. She founded Slow Flowers in 2014 and helped establish a place for flowers in the broader Slow community. She has spearheaded the cultural revolution that is encouraging us to do things as well as possible rather than as fast as possible and to reclaim the value of growing flowers and enjoying them when they bloom for us. By choosing to purchase flowers that are grown locally and sustainably, we are also able to enjoy the added benefit of flowers that are grown without the use of unnecessary chemical nutrients and pesticides. By choosing Slow Flowers, we can tread more lightly on this precious Earth.

Here are some starting points for getting involved in the Slow Flowers movement in Canada:

• **Find flower growers and farmers near you.** You’ll be surprised to learn how many people are growing flowers as both large- and small-scale crops, in both rural and urban settings. In Alberta alone, there are more than 20 farmers growing cut flowers for profit – spanning from the southern part of the province, near Waterton Provincial Park, all the way north to Cold Lake.

• **Embrace the seasons.** Educate your customers on what is available seasonally where you live.

• **Stop using floral foam.** Floral foam is toxic to both humans and the environment. At the heart of the Slow Flowers movement is the conviction that we do things as well as possible rather than as fast as possible and that we preserve the environmental integrity of floristry.

*For more information on Slow Flowers, visit these websites:*

• [slowflowers.com](http://slowflowers.com)
• [slowflowerssummit.com](http://slowflowerssummit.com)
• [modernfarmer.com/2016/03/slow-flowers](http://modernfarmer.com/2016/03/slow-flowers)
• [thestar.com/life/fashion_style/2017/05/06/slow-flower-movement-blooming-in-ontario.html](http://thestar.com/life/fashion_style/2017/05/06/slow-flower-movement-blooming-in-ontario.html)

Becky Feasby is a gardener-florist working and growing flowers in Calgary, Alberta. She uses only Canadian grown flowers (mostly BC and Alberta) year-round and never uses floral foam in any of her designs. She operates a seasonal flower truck that makes shopping for flowers fun and convenient. She lives with her husband, two children and two dogs.