



In response to the escalating importance of sustainability in today's global landscape, the American Floral Endowment (AFE) created a new program known as Sustainabloom. This program seeks to equip the floral industry with important tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to embrace, and promote sustainable practices.

The initial two-year launch project will set the foundation and groundwork for the program and is being led by North Carolina State University expert researchers and industry advisors Dr. Melinda Knuth, Dr. Brian Jackson, and Ph.D. graduate student Amanda Solliday. The project is being conducted in three phases. Phase I – Discovery and assessment of the adoption and application of sustainability practices being done at all business size levels. Phase I focuses primarily on collection and analysis of currently written documentation of sustainability; Phase 2 and 3 will be a physical and communicative measurement of sustainability practices, barriers of entry, the opportunity for expansion, and the dynamic nature of how sustainability is utilized in business. Applicable resources, guides, SOP's, and call-to-action plans will be created and made available to all industry members.

In tandem with the forthcoming draft guides, a new digital platform is also in the works. The **Sustainabloom** website, set to be established as a subsite of AFE's existing website, will serve as a comprehensive hub for all materials and resources generated throughout the project. This dedicated space will house not only the draft guides but also supplementary content, success stories, and collaborative initiatives. The **Sustainabloom** website will become an integral tool in spreading awareness, fostering engagement, and propelling the industry towards a greener future.

By identifying and understanding the big picture of what's already out there, what's working, and what's not, the Endowment aims to compile new resources, share success stories, bring together experts in both academia and industry, and provide action plans for businesses large and small. While industry certifications have already provided an incredible amount of information for those seeking to promote, validate, and educate about their sustainability practices, **Sustainabloom** will provide a library of resources that can be used by all to initiate new efforts and/or complement current efforts.

As consumer preferences increasingly gravitate towards environmentally responsible products and practices, the need for such a project has never been more pressing.

The second and third phases include interviews to evaluate directional efforts of doors that open to sustainability practices and causes for opportunities, in addition to a floriculture sustainability website that houses all materials. Experts from each arena of sustainability will come together for roundtables to create sustainability goals, checklists, and guides for businesses to pull from in various fields (lighting, greenhouse structures, IPM, water, growing media, packaging, recycling, and more). Additionally, and equally important

is the creation of industry messaging around these sustainability resources and the need for a unified industry message related to sustainability in the floral industry. AFE will be seeking support in creating succinct communications and messages that can be used by all.

The Endowment is not alone in funding this forward-thinking initiative; nine industry leaders have all signed on to support this important program. Additional sponsors are being sought to fund additional and upcoming work on this project. Additionally, AFE is actively collaborating with the Floriculture Sustainability Initiative in Belgium to support each other's goals and missions. All major sponsors of the Sustainability Project will have a seat on the newly formed Sustainability Task Force for the roundtable meetings and will review and receive data prior to it being published.

Major Sponsors

- Altman Plants
- Armellini Logistics
- Ball Horticultural Company
- Berger
- Kennicott Brothers
- Mayesh Wholesale Florists
- Smithers-Oasis/Floralife/DESIGN MASTER
- Tagawa Greenhouses

Additional Supporters

- CalFlowers

Sustainabloom stands as a testament to the dedication and foresight of the American Floral Endowment Board, its partners, and the industry. This visionary endeavor embodies a commitment to preserving the natural world, aligning with consumer values, and securing a thriving future for generations to come. As the project unfolds through its phases, the impacts will ripple far beyond the floral industry, resonating with communities, consumers, and the environment alike.

Stay tuned for the forthcoming release of the draft guides and the launch of the **Sustainabloom** website.

To make this vision a reality, the project welcomes the support of industry leaders, sponsors, and advocates who share in the belief that sustainability is not just a buzzword, but a fundamental responsibility. Our major sponsors have already taken a resolute stance, and their contributions are pivotal in shaping the project's trajectory.

But the journey is far from complete, and additional supporters are encouraged to join this transformative movement. By becoming part of the **Sustainabloom** program, sponsors will wield influence in shaping the project's direction and be at the forefront of an industry-wide paradigm shift.

In closing, **Sustainabloom** isn't just an initiative; it's an imperative. The commitment to sustainability echoes not only in business practices but in the very legacy we leave for future generations.

Together, we have the power to foster a sustainable future for the floral industry and beyond, leaving an indelible mark on the world we share.

If you are interested in learning more or partnering with AFE, please contact Debi Chedester, AFE Executive Director - dchedester@afeendowment.org.