

## A new course brings sustainability to floristry

The Foundation in Sustainable Floristry equips florists with the knowledge and tools to embed sustainability into their design and business practices.

The online course was developed by the Australian-based Sustainable Floristry Network (SFN), which has a mission to transform floristry through a continuing professional development education program, Flowers 2030.

“We see florists as champions of nature,” says Rita Feldmann, a second-generation florist and science writer who founded the SFN. “But we’re in the middle of a climate crisis, and modern floristry and floristry education are still founded on unsustainable practices.”

To create the course, the SFN worked in collaboration with academics from the Sustainable Cut-Flowers Project UK, and was guided by experts in sustainability and floristry education.

Students learn how to assess the sustainability of a flower, support ethical supply chains, practice zero-waste design, participate in the circular economy and overhaul their business practices. All practices support the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Engaging and practical**

Most importantly, the course teaches florists how to create and sell more sustainable floral designs and products – which consumers are increasingly demanding.

“It all comes down to four core principles,” says Rita. “Choose better flowers, design out waste, invest in ethics, and communicate with community. The course unpacks these principles.”

The content is engaging, rich in video content, and practical. It takes around nine hours, but is self-paced and totally online, so florists can fit study into their busy schedules.

### **Evidence-based**

Creating the course was a challenge.

“We had to bring two fields – sustainability and floristry – together,” says Rita. “That meant synthesising an enormous amount of information from science, academia, NGOs and industry experts.”

Professor David Bek (Coventry University) and Dr Jill Timms (University of Surrey) from the UK’s Sustainable Cut-Flowers Project have been researching the industry for over a decade. Interviews with these global experts forms a large part of the course.

“Flowers can actually have a significant carbon footprint,” says Bek, horticultural supply chain expert and Professor of Sustainability and Economic Development. “Deciding which bunch of

flowers to buy seems like a small decision, but it actually has an impact on these vast, complicated systems involving multiple countries and many thousands of people. The environmental impacts from these systems can be quite significant.”

Dr Timms, a sociologist with over 20 years’ experience looking at cut flower supply chains, believes widespread industry behaviour change is essential. “There is a very strong case to say that if we don’t start seeing changes, the industry itself won’t be sustainable,” she says.

The course also features an interview with Dr Charlene Trestrail, an Australian research scientist who conducted the first ever study into the effect of floral foam on the environment.

### **Transformation through education**

“Part of the reason the industry is in this position is because floristry is completely unregulated,” says Rita. “Anyone can call themselves a ‘sustainable florist’ or say they practice ‘sustainable floristry’, but there is no standard or definition. In fact, many industry training programs do not address sustainability at all.”

The SFN’s solution was to create a new standard for floristry based around established sustainability principles.

The Flowers 2030 education program outlines this standard – and explains how to meet it. Foundation in Sustainable Floristry is its first course in the program.

As a certified provider of Continuing Professional Development training courses, the SFN is not only supporting industry florists to upskill, but educators too. It is hoped that teachers will use their learning to create better floristry training packages throughout the world.

### **SFN Member Florists**

Florists who complete the course and commit to the Sustainable Floristry Pledge can join the SFN’s Member Florist program, which helps consumers identify florists genuinely committed to building a more sustainable industry. The program is launching February 2024.

“SFN Member Florists will lead the global industry to a new standard of design and business,” says Rita. “We are united in wanting to create a better industry by prioritising sustainability in all decision-making.”

**\*ENDS\***

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SFN’S FOUNDATION IN SUSTAINABLE FLORISTRY.](#)

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE FLORISTRY NETWORK](#)

[LEARN ABOUT THE SUSTAINABLE CUT FLOWERS PROJECT, UK](#)

TO REQUEST AN INTERVIEW WITH SFN FOUNDER RITA FELDMANN, PROFESSOR DAVID BEK, DR JILL TIMMS OR DR CHARLENE TRESTRAIL, PLEASE [EMAIL THE SFN](#)