

ISSUE No. 21

Slow Flowers  
JOURNAL

By Debra Prinzing

# A Flower Farm for Brides

Cutting gardens and a picture-perfect cottage draw florists and wedding photographers alike.

**W**ildflowers bloom in Nixa, Mo., where **Kelly Hill** once grew and preserved antique garden roses to make handcrafted wreaths for craft fairs in the 1990s. Today, after a few decades spent raising her children, Hill has returned to floral art. She has transformed her family's five acres into **Blossom Thyme Hill Flower Farm**, a boutique flower farm growing specialty cut and heirloom flowers using sustainable and natural practices in the Missouri Ozarks outside of Springfield.

The property is surrounded by forested land, and at its heart

is a charming Amish-built cottage with flowering pear and crab-apple trees and drifts of perennials growing nearby. The inspiration to build the 14-by-20-foot structure began years ago, when Hill started a folder of magazine clippings about sheds and cottages. She originally dreamed of having a play cottage for her daughter **Shelby**, but time and resources never aligned to make it a reality.

In 2015, the little girl was engaged and ready to wed her fiancé, **Jared Lung**. With images of that playhouse still in

her imagination, Kelly and her husband, **Robert**, decided to use a small inheritance to build a charming cottage next to the wildflower fields, just in time for the nuptials. The inviting structure has tall windows and a whimsical cupola, like something straight out of a storybook.

“On that beautiful June day, Shelby and Jared had their first-look photographs taken outside of the cottage,” Hill recalls. “She opened the doors and walked out to surprise him. They strolled to the wildflower field and had their moment together while being filmed.”

Owners of **Shea Brienne Photography**, the young couple collaborates as graphic designers and destination wedding photographers. It’s no surprise that their event-planner friends inquired about using the cottage for styled shoots.

That led to Hill also saying “yes” when wedding photographers asked to take “first look” portraits in the cottage garden with the white-clad structure as a focal point. Last year, Blossom Thyme Hill Farm added flower workshops for adults and children, and began selling cut flowers to wedding floral designers, as well as renting the cottage for elopements, parties and photography. Mother and daughter are currently collaborating on a line of flower seeds to offer customers.

Hill’s transition to floral designer and farmer-florist happened naturally, as her abundant cutting garden provided plenty of blooms for local customers, small conferences and events in their area. She found it easy to draw from her past dried-flower crafting business, thanks to her garden’s vintage roses and peonies, and new fields where heirloom annuals, perennials and herbs now flourish.

“My life has come full circle, back to where my love affair began with flowers,” she says. “It’s so fun to see how excited people get about the cottage and the flower farm. At this season of my life, with a near-empty nest, I’m so fortunate to share this place with other people and bring them joy through flowers.” ■

## DETAILS

### Blossom Thyme Hill Flower Farm:

[blossomthymehillflowerfarm.com](http://blossomthymehillflowerfarm.com), @blossomthymehill

### Shea Brienne Photography:

[sheabriannephotography.com](http://sheabriannephotography.com), @sheabriannephotography

**First-Look Photography:** Cassidy Brooke Photography, [cassidybrooke.com](http://cassidybrooke.com)



1) Framed by *Cosmos* and other meadow flowers, the cottage at Blossom Thyme Hill Flower Farm is a destination for workshops and a beautiful focal point for wedding photography.

2-3) Kelly and Robert Hill, of Blossom Thyme Hill Flower Farm, built their cottage as a surprise for their daughter’s “first look” wedding photographs. Shelby and Jared Lung are seen in those images from 2015.

4) Designs for the diminutive architectural element were inspired by Hill’s favorite historic cottage images.

5) Inside the cottage, a series of multipaned windows line the walls and offer a glimpse of the garden outside. The Hills often rent the structure for private parties and gatherings.

6) Florist-farmer Kelly Hill (left) and her daughter Shelby Lung.