


Photo © Cameron Zegers Photography

# A MARRIAGE OF PLANTS AND FLO




 A large photograph of a greenhouse interior. The structure is made of a metal frame with translucent panels. Several large, colorful hanging baskets of flowers, including pink and red blooms, are suspended from the frame. In the foreground, there are more plants and flowers, some in wooden planters. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting sunlight coming through the translucent panels.
 

**A**t Pine Creek Farms & Nursery in Monroe, Wash., located about 30 miles northeast of downtown Seattle, Paul and Gwen Sayers have redefined the traditional role of a retail specialty nursery by expanding their 20-acre property to accommodate weddings and events.

Paul, a landscape designer, and Gwen, a flower grower and florist, have worked together for nearly three decades, building their tree and shrub nursery to serve the outer suburbs of Seattle. During the past decade, as the landscape marketplace has contracted, the Sayers recognized an opportunity to convert some of their tree production area into a beautiful garden for ceremonies and parties. They also earmarked one acre for Gwen's new cut flower farm.

Paul explains that most nurseries have a narrow window, from March to June, to maximize sales. "Pine Creek Nursery has three criteria: to be creative, challenging and profitable," Paul says. "This business has progressed into more and more growing and less landscaping. By July, we're not busy. We decided to do something different with this space – and we've made a garden area for weddings."

Hosting weddings wasn't exactly an overnight idea; rather, it was one that had been developing for years, ever since Paul and Gwen built a Craftsman-style lodge to house a retail garden shop, which Gwen operated from 2007 to 2016.

In 2015, Paul began to landscape the former tree production yard into a series of garden rooms. There is a strolling lawn encircled by evergreen hedging, perfect for an outdoor ceremony. There is a stone-wrapped patio for dinner receptions and dancing, as well as an outdoor fire pit for after-hours drinks and marshmallow toasting. The former gift shop now connects with an atrium and second lodge-style structure for cocktail hours or indoor ceremonies. Every spot, indoors and out, is picture-perfect for a quintessential Northwest-style wedding.

How a retail nursery turned its growing fields into a destination wedding venue and cut-flower farm.

# OWERS





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Photo courtesy of Pine Creek Nursery/Scattered Seeds



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Events at Pine Creek Nursery is managed by a wedding planner, and expanded to 39 weddings and events in 2019. When I interviewed the Sayers at the end of last year, they already had 41 bookings for 2020. While Pine Creek hosts Friday, Saturday and Sunday ceremonies on summer weekends, the venue also stays busy in the off season, thanks to the cozy indoor lodge, complete with a giant stone fireplace – all designed by Paul.

As the wedding business took off, Gwen returned to floristry and found that her passion for flower growing was rekindled. “It spurred me to start looking at plants in our landscape as possibilities for arrangements,” she says. “I started experimenting with what grows here and began to appreciate everything – from branch structure to *Heuchera* leaves. Everything was game to me as a designer. And now, I have this need to grow as much as I can for my floral designs. It’s painful to have to buy anything.”

Gwen formed a separate venture called **Scattered Seeds** and now grows hundreds of varieties of annuals, perennials, bulb flowers and uncommon foliage. She sells some blooms to area bouquet subscribers and wholesales flowers to area florists, but the majority appear in bridal bouquets, boutonnieres, centerpieces and arches for weddings that take place just steps away from the flower fields.

“My floral designs are natural, with movement. Some of my favorite elements – more than flowers – are foliage and texture, seedpods, lichen branches and twigs,” Gwen explains of her

seasonally inspired aesthetic.

The Sayers do not require that Pine Creek Nursery’s wedding clients order their flowers from Scattered Seeds, knowing that not everyone’s style is a fit. Yet two-thirds of last year’s wedding bookings requested Gwen’s flowers.

What makes this farmer-florist happier than anything is to see couples and their guests stroll away from the manicured lawn where vows are said and pose for wedding photographs in the cut flower fields. There is a beautiful bench with a trellis placed in just the right spot.

“It’s a nice backdrop to our event space,” she says. “I absolutely love Saturday nights, when I hear the music out on the patio and know people are having fun. Then, at sunset, I see people wander out to the flower fields to look at the sweet-peas and *Dahlia*. It’s something that feeds Paul’s and my souls – to be able to share that with people.” ■

## DETAILS

### Pine Creek Farms & Nursery

[pinecreeknursery.com](http://pinecreeknursery.com), [@pinecreekfarms](https://www.instagram.com/pinecreekfarms)

### Events at Pine Creek Nursery

[eventsatpinecreeknursery.com](http://eventsatpinecreeknursery.com)

[@eventsatpcn](https://www.instagram.com/eventsatpcn)

### Scattered Seeds, a flower farm

[scatteredseedsflowerfarm.com](http://scatteredseedsflowerfarm.com)

[@scatteredseedsflowerfarm](https://www.instagram.com/scatteredseedsflowerfarm)



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