



Flower Farming School Online

With Dave Dowling

How Much Should I Plant?

How Much Can I Sell?

These are the Million Dollar Questions that both new, and seasoned growers ask themselves each year. Because every farm is different, there is no “One Size Fits All” answer. Here are some things to help you decide how much to plant, and figure how much you can sell.

New growers should plan on growing more than they expect to sell. You don’t want to find out in mid-July that you should have planted 500 sunflowers in early May, instead of 100. (Don’t forget, you’ll be succession planting sunflowers *every* week.)

Guestimate what is the most you could sell. If selling at a farmers’ market, you can figure that about 10% of the people that walk by your space might buy from you. If you know that 1,000 people attend the market on a good day, about 100 people *might* be interested in your flowers. Figure 75 actual customers. If you’re selling \$15.00 bouquets, or the average sale is \$15.00, you can figure what your total sales may be, $75 \times \$15.00 = \1125.00 .

How many flowers will it take to make 75 bouquets per week, for the 17 weeks that the market is open from June through September? And how much might total sales be?

This is a very basic example to get you thinking about what you might need to grow.

Stems Needed For:	Each Bouquet	75 Bouquets per Week	17 Weekly Markets
Sunflower	3	225	3825
Snapdragon	3	225	3825
Celosia	3	225	3825
Ageratum/Eucalyptus/filler	6	450	7650
Bouquet Price	\$15.00	\$1,125.00	\$19,125.00
To Get:	Plant:		
225 Sunflowers	300 each week		
225 Snapdragons	750 every three weeks		
225 Celosia	500 every two weeks		
450 Stems Filler (branching plants)	300 every four weeks		

How much more to grow this year, compared to last year? Always plan on at least a 20% increase in production to cover a 20% increase in sales from your existing customer base. Markets, florists, subscription, etc. If adding a new sales outlet, add enough new production to cover a generous estimate of what that new sales channel may need. It’s better to grow too much and need to work harder to sell the extra, than to run short each week because you didn’t plant enough.

A few things to remember:

- Selling/Marketing is just as important to the success of your farm as growing the best flowers possible. You make all your money *selling* flowers. Not growing them.
- Greens, fillers, and other “non-flower” crops are just as important as your flowers.
- If you run out of flowers, you didn’t grow enough.
- If you run out of customers, you may need to do some more marketing.