

22 Students Recognized with Scholarships

The American Floral Endowment (AFE) provides more scholarships in floriculture than any other organization to help attract, retain, and support young professionals in our industry. AFE scholarships act as a powerful catalyst for the next generation of floral industry leaders. Financial constraints can deter many students, but with the help of these scholarships, future industry leaders and innovators can access quality education and training, paving the way for a promising future in the floral industry.

Congratulations to our Scholarship Class of 2023! This year, we have awarded 22 students from 13 universities with scholarships, totaling \$58,100. In 2023, we received 86 applications from colleges and universities nationwide. We would like to give a special thank you to the 52 industry members who reviewed and scored the applications!

Please join us in congratulating these future industry leaders! Learn more about these students and what these scholarships mean to them.



Cherise Hunt - *Mt. San Antonio College, Horticulture*
American Florists' Exchange Scholarship - \$3,000

"I am so thankful and feel very fortunate to receive this scholarship. This will allow me to continue to reach for and achieve my goals and dreams. It will help me to get the certifications needed to further advance myself in my career field, and it shows my children that hard work and dedication can pay off and to never stop striving to be the best you can be."

About the American Florists' Exchange Scholarships:

The Original Los Angeles Flower Market was established in 1921, and the flower market is now part of the largest wholesale flower district in the U.S. Eligible recipients are juniors or seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, majoring in agriculture with an emphasis on a future in floriculture. This scholarship provides tuition assistance to students attending a college/university in California or student residents of California attending a college/university in other areas of the U.S.



Sophia LeBard - *Washington State University, Horticulture and Music*
Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship - \$3,200

"This scholarship will help my financial stability while I work my way through my final year before receiving my degree. Knowing that I am able to feel secure will allow me more time to pursue opportunities that will benefit my academic future."

About the Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarships:

Julio "Toots" Armellini was the founder of Armellini Express Lines, the largest flower carrier service in the U.S. Armellini enlisted in the Navy as a "Seabee" and was stationed all around the globe as a mechanic, where he learned the skills he used to modernize refrigerated trucking. [Armellini Logistics](#) was started in 1945. When he began expanding his lines in the early 1950s, refrigeration was new and underdeveloped, so he established a more effective way of cooling his supplies using a system of constant airflow. ThermoKing eventually made his

contributions to refrigeration systems standards. Today, Armellini Logistics encompasses many businesses: Armellini Express Lines, Inc., J.A. Flower Service, Armellini Freight Brokerage, Armellini Air Express, and Dash Mobile Storage. Established by Julio and Sarah before their passing, the **Julio and Sarah Armellini Scholarship** is intended for sophomore, junior or senior students with a career interest in the marketing or distribution of floral products.



Benjamin Stickland - Colorado State University, Horticulture with a concentration in Floriculture, Environmental Horticulture with a concentration in Landscape Design & Contracting, Minor in Spanish
Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship and Suntory Flowers “Dream Big” Scholarship - \$2,900

“I am so honored to be receiving this scholarship because it means that I will be able to continue to explore all of the fascinating and diverse fields in the horticulture industry, and focus all of my time into pursuing the career I have always dreamed of.”

About the Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship:

Ball Horticultural Company is a leading international breeder, producer, and wholesale distributor of floriculture products. Ball brings the beginnings of color, foliage, fruit, and form to professional growers around the world for the retail and landscape markets. The **Ball Horticultural Company Scholarship** is intended for junior or senior students pursuing a career in commercial floriculture.

About the Suntory Flowers “Dream Big” Scholarships:

Based in Japan, **Suntory Flowers** is a world-class breeding company dedicated to innovation and enriching people’s lives by creating a world that’s alive with flowers. Suntory’s guiding philosophy and passion is “Yatte Minahare” – the spirit of bold ambition to dream big, take challenges and never give up. This means challenging conventional methods and striving to make the impossible possible, like creating the first blue rose or revolutionary new crops, such as Surfinia petunias, Sun Parasol mandevillas, and Million Bells calibrachos. Let’s inspire the next generation to dream big and go for it with the “Yatte Minahare” spirit while contributing to the growth of our industry. **Suntory Flowers Scholarship** is intended for junior or senior undergraduate students attending a two- or four-year institution, with a demonstrated focus on a career in floriculture or ornamental horticulture breeding or production, with a passion for exploration in developing new and innovative floral products.



Ethan Jenkins - North Carolina State University, Horticultural Sciences
Harold Bettinger Scholarship - \$2,200

“Financials are always an added stress in the life of every college student, but, thankfully, there are gracious people out there willing to support students. This scholarship has helped me during the final year of my graduate studies, allowing me to finish out strong and prepare for my career in horticulture.”

About the Harold Bettinger Scholarship:

Harold Bettinger was a partner in [Bettinger Farms](#) of Swanton, Ohio. In the mid-'50s, he was one of the first progressive growers to convert his bedding plant production from wooden to plastic flats. Bettinger Farms now grows greenhouse and field vegetables. The **Bettinger Scholarship** is intended for horticulture students, sophomore through graduate levels, who have a major or minor in business and/or marketing with the intent to apply their education to a horticulture-related career business.



Luis Mazariegos - College of DuPage, Sustainable Urban Agriculture, Horticulture, Greenhouse Management
BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship - \$1,700

“I am honored to have been selected as the recipient of this Scholarship. Thank you for your generosity which will allow me to buy the remainder of books for my graduating year. As I gear up to graduate, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to achieve my goals.”

About the BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship:

The **BioWorks IPM/Sustainable Practices Scholarship** is intended for sophomore, junior or senior students pursuing a career in floriculture. Students will be selected on the basis of sound academic performance and a grade point average of 3.0 or higher. While not mandatory, it is strongly desired that the student be interested in furthering the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or sustainable practices, and preference will be given in this area. [BioWorks](#) helps customers in the horticulture and specialty agriculture markets successfully deliver crops to market with biologically based solutions and support.



Francisco Lorenzo Garcia - College of DuPage, Horticulture, Floral Shop Management
James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship and Vocational (Bettinger, Holden, & Perry) Scholarship - \$2,100

“Receiving this scholarship is extremely helpful because it will help lessen the financial burden of college and allow me to focus on my courses, volunteering, and my extracurricular roles. This help is much appreciated and I'm grateful for organizations like AFE and the donors who make these scholarships possible.”

About the James Bridenbaugh Memorial Scholarship:

Jim Bridenbaugh was a specialist in fresh flowers and plants, designing and commentating at design shows and seminars. His floral industry knowledge, comedic storytelling, and audience rapport made him a favorite. Jim served as OFA president from 1989 to 1991. The **Bridenbaugh Scholarship** is for sophomore, junior, or senior students who are pursuing a career in floral design and marketing of fresh flowers and plants.

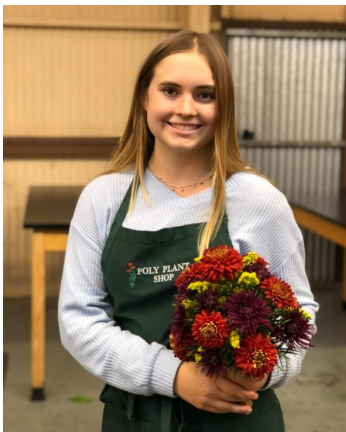
About the Vocational (Bettinger, Holden & Perry) Scholarship:

The **Vocational (Bettinger, Holden & Perry) Scholarship** requires students to be in a one or two-year program with the intent to become a grower or greenhouse manager. The vocational scholarship awards a scholarship in honor of: LEONARD BETTINGER, who was a successful greenhouse grower in the [Bettinger Farms](#) family business in Toledo, Ohio, and was president of the Bedding Plants International (BPI) trade association from 1974-76; JOHN HOLDEN, who had a long, helpful career at [Ball Seed Co.](#) and was active in the BPI trade association since its inception, attending the very first “pre-BPI” conference in 1968; JIM PERRY, who was a respected wholesale nurseryman, who grew Perry’s Plants of La Puente, Calif., into one of the largest bedding plant operations in the U.S and was president of BPI from 1972-1974.



Carla Quimson - Cal Poly Pomona, Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning
CalFlowers Scholarship - \$4,250

“This scholarship means that I can focus on my education and not worry about finances. Most importantly, it means that there are people like you who support and stand behind every student like me to succeed and to help better our future.”



Chelsea Flood - Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Nutrition, Agriculture Education
CalFlowers Scholarship - \$4,250

“This scholarship will significantly fund my education at Cal Poly and allow me to keep working at the Poly Plant shop. Without this scholarship I would be much more stressed out about working to pay for my college, but I can instead enjoy the job I have while still being a full-time student. “

About the CalFlowers Scholarship:

The CalFlowers Scholarship is for undergraduate students attending an accredited California college or university (first priority) or an undergraduate California resident attending an accredited college or university elsewhere in the U.S. (second priority). Students applying for this scholarship do not need to be majoring in an agricultural program, but must demonstrate a commitment to seeking employment in the floriculture industry after graduation. A work history or a meaningful internship experience in floriculture is necessary if the applicant is not obtaining an agricultural degree. Students should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

The California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers (CalFlowers) was founded in 1941 by a small group of flower shipping companies to foster the success of the California floral industry. Today, CalFlowers is the leading floral trade association in California serving growers and the entire supply chain in the state and in 47 states across the U.S.



Manjot Sidhu - Michigan State University, Horticulture

John Carew Memorial Scholarship - \$2,100

“My enthusiasm and motivation to achieve my goals have increased since the time I have been notified of this award. This award will lighten my financial burden, allowing me to focus on the most important aspects of graduate school by selectively utilizing my time.”

About the John Carew Memorial Scholarship:

John Carew, former head of the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University, dedicated his career to encouraging and guiding young horticulturists. He was instrumental in establishing Bedding Plants International (BPI) in 1969. The **Carew Scholarship** is open to graduate students in horticulture with an interest in greenhouse crops.



Alexandria Kruger - Mt San Antonio College, Ornamental Horticulture, Landscape Design, Horticulture Science

Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Non-Traditional Students - \$1,300

“This scholarship means the world to me. After 17 years of interruption this generous gift allows me to continue my Horticulture degree at Mt. San Antonio College. “

About the Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Non-Traditional Students:

Barbara Carlson, along with her husband Will, were instrumental in the establishment of Bedding Plant International (BPI) trade association, which served hundreds of growers. Fran Johnson enjoyed a long, productive career with the John Henry Co., a horticultural printing firm in Lansing, Mich. Fran also made many significant and practical contributions of time and talent through BPI to advance the greenhouse industry. The **Carlson-Johnson Scholarship for Nontraditional Students** is awarded to students re-entering school after a minimum three-year absence who have an interest in bedding and/or floral crops.



Olivia DeWolf - Kansas State University, Horticulture, Minor in Entomology

Earl Dedman Scholarship - \$2,200

“I am incredibly thankful for this scholarship and for the generous donors who allowed it to be possible. It will help me as I continue to pursue my education and reach my goals.”

About the Earl Dedman Scholarship:

Earl Dedman owned and operated Mountainview Greenhouses in Woodinville, Wash., and was a former president of Bedding Plants International (BPI)'s Foundation. In addition to his participation with BPI, Earl was involved with the

Montana State Flower Growers, the Puget Sound Flower Growers, and the Washington Floricultural Association. Educated in rural Montana in a one room schoolhouse, Earl had a strong commitment to education, believing it was a great way better yourself. Earl considered education and hard work to be the keys to success in life. The **Earl Dedman Scholarship** is awarded to junior or senior students who are interested in becoming greenhouse growers.



Jane Godfrey - Colorado State University, Horticulture, Controlled Environment Production, Music Performance with a Piano Concentration
Dewar Family Scholarship - \$2,900

“This scholarship helps me to pursue my passions without having to leave either of my majors behind.”

About the Dewar Family Scholarship:

The newly established **Dewar Family Scholarship** is awarded to an undergraduate student in their junior or senior year, studying environmental horticulture with an emphasis and focus on a career in floriculture. The fund is established by the Dewar Family of Dewar Nurseries. Dewar Nurseries was established in 1963 by founder Alex Dewar, with the vision of providing premier plants and exemplary customer service. The Dewar Family appreciates the value of a quality education and is excited to encourage young professionals to enter floriculture production and business with this scholarship.



Emily Larsen - University of Wisconsin River Falls, Horticulture, Crop Science
Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship - \$2,100

“This scholarship, as a student of UWRF, fills me with pride for our horticulture faculty, past and present. It illustrates the commitment that the industry and educational institutions have for the future of horticulture.”

About the Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship:

The **Ferriss Horticulture Scholarship** will be awarded annually to an undergraduate student entering their junior or senior year who is majoring in Horticulture or Plant Sciences, with a career interest in herbaceous ornamental plants and floriculture industry. Preference will be given to students who have a demonstrated interest in commercial greenhouse production of herbaceous ornamental or floriculture crops (i.e., non-edible, non-medicinal crops), research related to the production, physiology, or breeding of herbaceous ornamental and floriculture crops, and/or the sales and marketing of herbaceous ornamental and floriculture crops.

The scholarship honors and recognizes Dr. Terry Ferriss, who retired in 2015 from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF), after 36 years of teaching. She was the first tenured female faculty member in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at UWRF; the first woman to serve as the Plant and Earth Sciences Department chair, and the first woman to serve as an associate dean for the college.



Landon Erbrick - Auburn University, Horticulture (Nursery and Greenhouse Science), Minor in Stewardship-Based Agriculture
Garcia Family Scholarship - \$2,800

“This scholarship puts me one step closer to my goal of graduating debt free, allowing me to focus on the rest of my education, gaining more knowledge and skills. After Auburn, I will be pursuing a career in the nursery and greenhouse industry.”

About the Garcia Family Scholarship:

The **Garcia Family Scholarship** is intended for students attending a two-year college, or Junior or Seniors attending a four-year institution with a career focus on the marketing or distribution of floral products, including retail, wholesale, manufacturing, and/or floral business ownership/operations. The Garcia Family has proudly served the floral industry since 1965. Owned by the Garcia family, Garcia Group, Inc. operates six different divisions: Floral-Pak® Company; Plus One Imports™; Garcia Group Glass—Floraglas® and G3® brand products; Vase D’Lite® and Premium Wood Picks. All are represented exclusively by the Pete Garcia Company™ THE BEST LINES IN THE WORLD®.



Jamie Sykes - SUNY Farmingdale, Horticulture Technology Management, Landscape Development

LIFGA and Long Island Flower Growers Association - Bob Gunter Scholarship - \$2,800

“This scholarship allows me to prioritize my time and focus on my horticulture experience. I am thankful for your support.”

About the LIFGA Scholarship:

The **LIFGA scholarship** was established in 2010. LIFGA members represent growers and retailers promoting research, education, and sales of ornamentals in the local market. The LIFGA scholarship is intended for students in the Long Island/New York area studying ornamental horticulture at a community college or a four-year institution.

About the Long Island Flower Growers Association - Bob Gunter Scholarship:

The **Long Island Flower Growers Association – Bob Gunther Scholarship** was established in memory of the late Bob Gunther, owner of Gunther’s Greenhouses & Florist in Oceanside, New York. It is intended for students from Long Island and New York who are studying ornamental horticulture at a community college or four-year institution in New York. This includes floriculture, landscape maintenance, landscape design, turf, and any other courses of study related to ornamental horticulture. One student will be awarded this scholarship annually. Robert Edward “Bob” Gunther was treasurer for LIFGA for many years and instrumental in the establishment of LIFGA’s first scholarship. Gunther received the Lifetime Achievement Award from LIFGA, where he also served as a board member. He and his brother Fred took over the family business after his father passed away in 1969. Bob ran the business up until the time of his passing in 2015 at the age of 85.



Jenny Ryals - Mississippi State University, Horticulture, Minor in Plant Pathology

Richard T. Meister Scholarship - \$4,300

“This scholarship means that I will be able to continue working towards my dream of one day being a faculty member promoting all things floral design and ornamental horticulture related. This scholarship will also help ensure that I am able to continue my job and studies knowing that my educational expenses are being taken care of and not causing a financial burden on my family.”

About the Richard T. Meister Scholarship:

Richard “Dick” T. Meister built a family business in publishing for specialized growers in commercial horticulture. He was a strong supporter of the land-grant college system and, through the years, worked closely with many horticultural and floricultural leaders. He passed in 2020, but this scholarship continues to honor his memory. This scholarship is dedicated to the outstanding accomplishments of those in university extension and especially to Will Carlson in floriculture. The **Meister Scholarship** is open to graduate students in floriculture intending to pursue their career in the land-grant university system with an interest in research, extension, or teaching.



Lauren Staley - North Carolina State University, Horticulture Science, Propagation Systems and Entrepreneurship

National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (NGMA) Scholarship - \$600

“Receiving this scholarship from the association will significantly enhance my academic pursuits, enabling me to achieve my aspirations of earning a horticulture degree and excelling in the industry. I am sincerely grateful for the support of the dedicated individuals who are generously contributing to the advancement of the skills and knowledge of future professionals in this field.”

About the National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (NGMA) Scholarship:

The [National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association \(NGMA\)](#) is a professional trade organization for the manufacturers and suppliers of greenhouses and greenhouse components built to codes designed for a grower’s needs. The **National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association Scholarship** targets students majoring in horticulture and bioengineering or the equivalent and are at least a junior at an accredited four-year college.



Jennifer Suszek - College of DuPage, Horticulture

Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship - \$3,000

“I am honored to have received this scholarship. It will allow me to return to school for Horticulture while still raising my family.”

About the Mike and Flo Novovesky Scholarship:

Mike and Flo Novovesky have enjoyed more than 30 years of active participation in the floriculture industry. The Novoveskys know first-hand the hardships a young couple must overcome when balancing a career and a family. The **Novovesky Scholarship** aims to help young married students who are working to put themselves through college. Depending on the availability of married applicants, the scholarship may also go to an undergraduate working his or her way through

school with financial need and family obligations. The keys are strong interest in horticulture and financial need.



Greta Berg - Kansas State University, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Entomology

James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study Abroad - \$4,100

“I would like to thank the donors to the James K. Rathmell memorial scholarship for supporting students like myself to reach their goals of studying and working abroad. This opportunity will allow me to explore my options in Public horticulture outside of the US and follow my dream of working at Great Dixter Gardens.”

About the James K. Rathmell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship for Horticultural Work/Study Abroad:

Jim Rathmell was a horticulture extension specialist at Penn State University who promoted communication and cooperation with horticulturists in other countries. A widely published author, he worked with commercial growers to implement many outstanding educational programs. The **Rathmell Scholarship** is awarded to junior or senior-level undergraduates or graduate students who have a specific plan for horticulture work/study outside of the U.S.



Haley Jacobs - Oklahoma State University, Plant and Soil Sciences, Biotechnology and Crop Improvement

Seed Companies Scholarship - \$2,600

“To me, this scholarship not only provides financial support but also reinforces my self-belief, unlocks possibilities, and brings me closer to my dreams. In the future, this scholarship will allow me to pursue educational opportunities that would otherwise be financially out of reach.”

About the Seed Companies Scholarship:

The seed companies Ball, Pan-American, Goldsmith, and Syngenta are leaders in the seed production and breeding industry, providing new, improved varieties. These seed companies cooperatively sponsor this scholarship. The **Seed Companies Scholarship** requires students to have a career goal within the seed industry and be junior or senior level undergraduates or graduate students.



Nadia Phillips - University of Minnesota, Plant Science, Horticulture, Urban and Community Forestry

John L. Tomasovic, Sr. Scholarship - \$1,600

“Being a first generation college student, financing college would be impossible without the gracious support of scholarships like the American Floral Endowment. Receiving this scholarship is not only an honor, it is also allowing me to keep pursuing my degree in Plant Science.”

About the John L. Tomasovic, Sr. Scholarship:

John Tomasovic, past president of Bedding Plants International (BPI)’s Foundation, grew his family business, [Tomasovic Greenhouses and Nursery, Inc.](#), in St. Louis, which includes a greenhouse from the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. They produce bedding plants, along with nursery stock, mums, poinsettias, and bulbs. Established before his passing in 2018, the **Tomasovic Scholarship** honors John Tomasovic and offers special consideration for sophomore, junior, or senior undergraduate students with financial need.



Ammiela Elias - University of Rhode Island, Plant Sciences

Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship - \$2,100

“I am beyond grateful to receive this scholarship. My college experience has been eye-opening and amazing, but the cost is always looming. This scholarship is bringing me one step closer to my dreams of being a professional horticulturist and plant shop owner. Thank you!”

About the Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship:

The **Jacob and Rita Van Namen Marketing Scholarship** was established in January 1997. Jacob Van Namen was a true entrepreneur who built a multimillion-dollar business in wholesale floriculture. Both Jacob and Rita Van Namen have passed after establishing this scholarship; this scholarship continues to honor and recognize their impact on the industry. This award is intended to develop knowledgeable, creative individuals who will improve the floriculture industry. The Van Namen Scholarship requires students to have a career interest in agribusiness marketing and distribution of floral products and be of sophomore, junior, or senior standing.

AFE awards more than 30 scholarships annually – thanks to industry donors and organizations. If you or your organization would like to discuss establishing a scholarship through AFE, please reach out. There are more students applying than funding available, and these scholarships make a real difference to these students. More details on AFE scholarships are available at endowment.org/scholarships. AFE awards these scholarships annually, and all applications are due by May 1 of each year.