

# LOCAL *Blooms*

Modern West Floral Company gives new meaning to fresh-cut floral arrangements.

By Tess Strokes



As professional landscape designers, Carbondale's Tara Abbatichio and Vanessa Gilbert saw a booming floral industry in the Roaring Fork Valley, but no local flowers to support it. "When you visit a traditional flower shop or grocery store, the flowers look so foreign," says Abbatichio. "People come to this valley because they love the natural beauty of the landscape. The flowers growing here seasonally are beautiful, and they can connect people with the land versus flowers imported from far away."

Those flowers, says Abbatichio, are usually grown at large-scale farms using unsustainable farming practices and pesticides. Plus, flowers are fumigated and hosed down with chemicals to cross borders. "No flower shipped across the country or even the state can compare to a flower grown organically with care and attention, harvested just in time, and conditioned just right," she says.

Abbatichio and Gilbert started Modern West Floral Company ([modernwestfloral.com](http://modernwestfloral.com)) in 2016 and have since grown their Carbondale garden by four times and tested more than 100 new flower varieties (think lisianthus, snap dragons, zinnias, peonies, castor beans, poppies and more) using organic farming techniques that promote healthy microbes in the soil.

Aspen floral and event design company Flower + Vine ([flowerandvinedesign.com](http://flowerandvinedesign.com)) sources local flowers from Modern West and Zephyros Farm and Garden in Paonia, one of the few organic certified flower farms in Colorado. "My absolute favorite are dahlias," says Flower + Vine owner Alexandra Leydecker. "They are stunning, full-bodied flowers that come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes."

Modern West sells directly from its space at the Studio for Arts + Works in Carbondale on Thursdays and Fridays, and delivers locally to Aspen. For valley residents, it gives new meaning to fresh flowers.