

Cut Flower Survey Results

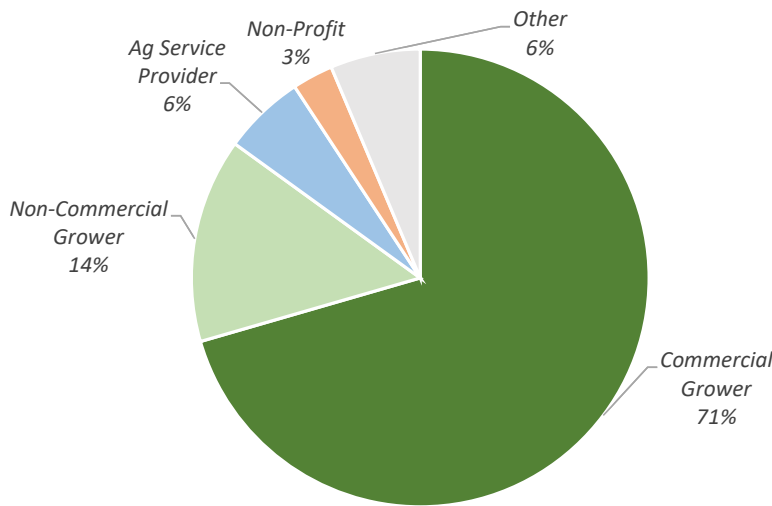
SUMMARY

- The survey was distributed **December 2022-January 2023**.
- It was sent out through veg notes, as well as the other extension teams, UNH extension and VT extension. It was also distributed at the NEVBGA conference. The survey is available for viewing [HERE](#).

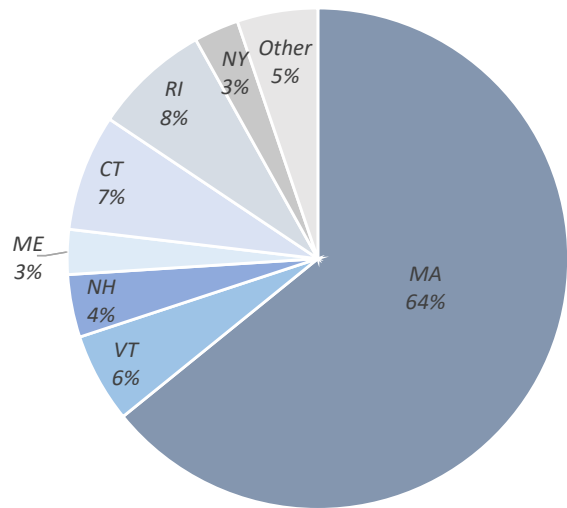
GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

- **173 total responses**
- Nearly **three quarters of respondents were commercial growers** (71% or 122 responses) **(A)**
- 64% of respondents were from MA (65% of commercial growers) **(B)**
- MA commercial growers were distributed around the state, with most in central and northeast MA **(C)**

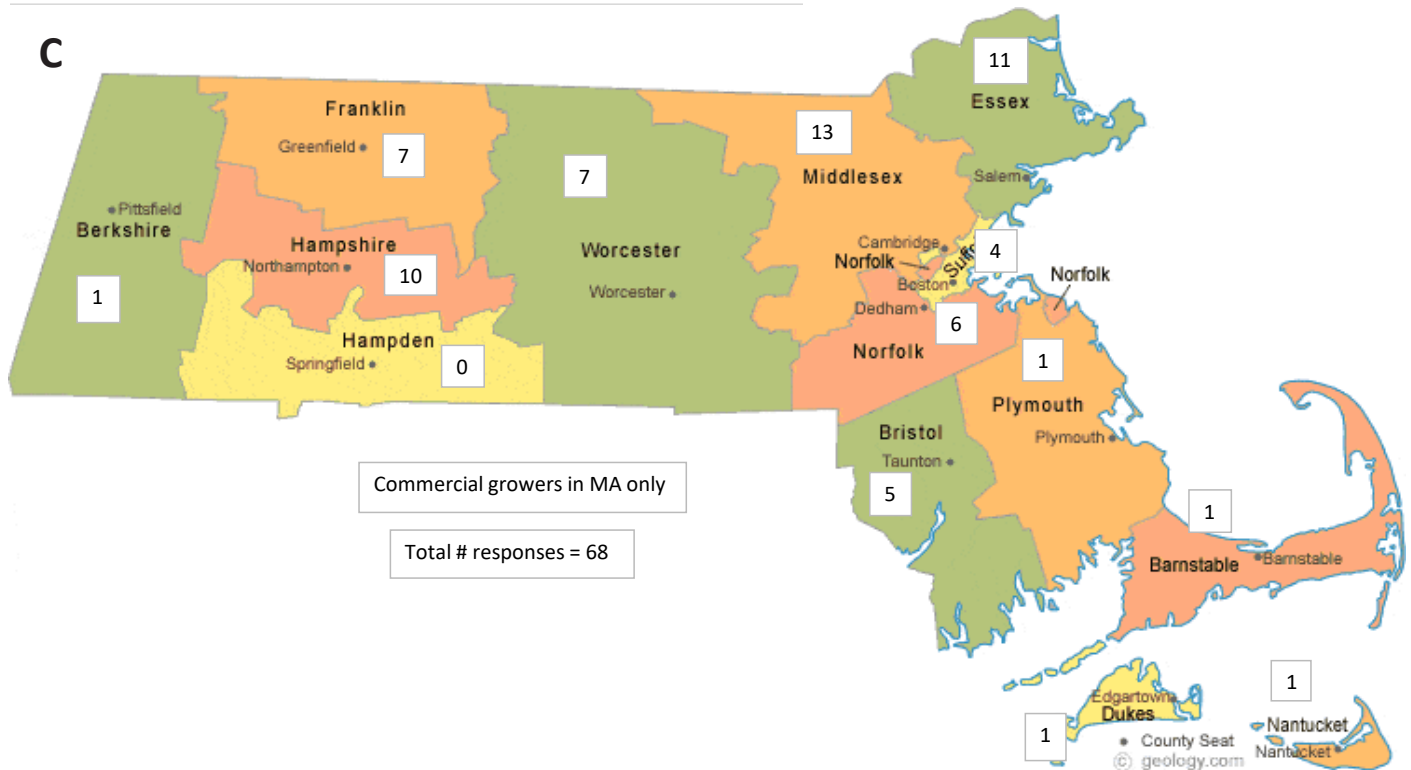
A Which of the following best describes you? (n=173)



B What state do you live in? (n=173)



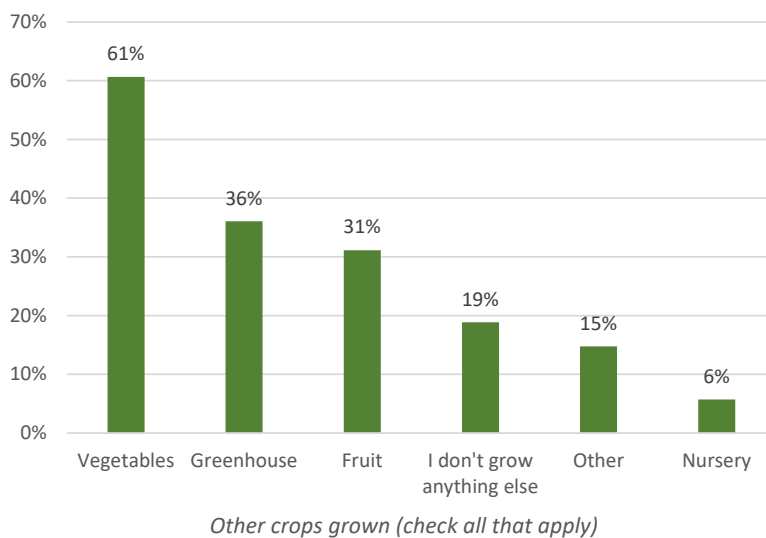
C



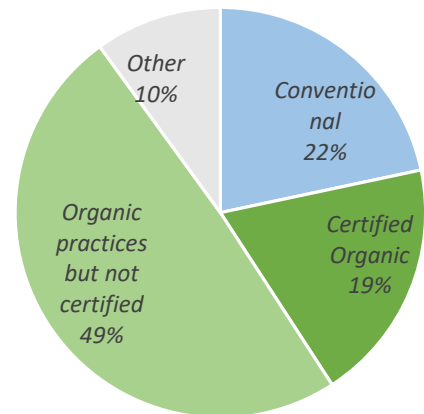
COMMERCIAL GROWER DEMOGRAPHICS (n = 122)

- **92% of commercial respondents (111 growers) currently grow cut flowers.** 10 more commercial respondents are interested in growing cut flowers in the future.
- **Most also grow vegetables. About a third grow greenhouse crops or fruit. About a fifth are exclusively cut flower growers. (A)**
 - (Other = mushrooms, herbs, hay, eggs, poultry, beef, honey, tobacco, dairy, pasture)
- **About half of farm respondents use organic practices but are not certified.** About a fifth are certified organic, and another fifth are conventional **(B)**
- This group has a fair amount of farming experience (**average = 19 years**). **(C)**
- **About half of respondents run small farms, < 5 acres, though there were 23 farms >50 acres.** (Average = 33, max = 542, min = 0.125). **(D)**

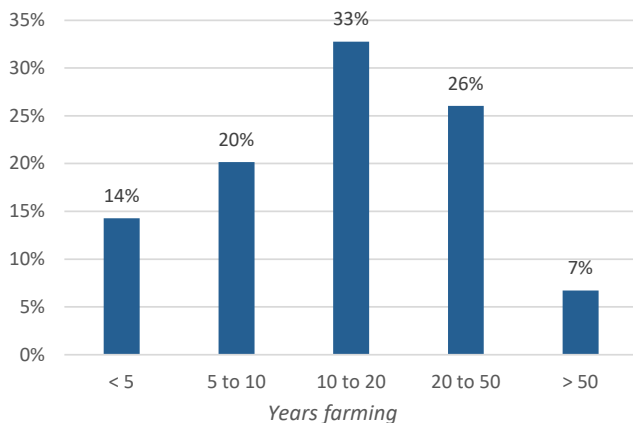
A What other crops do you grow?
(commercial growers only, n = 122)



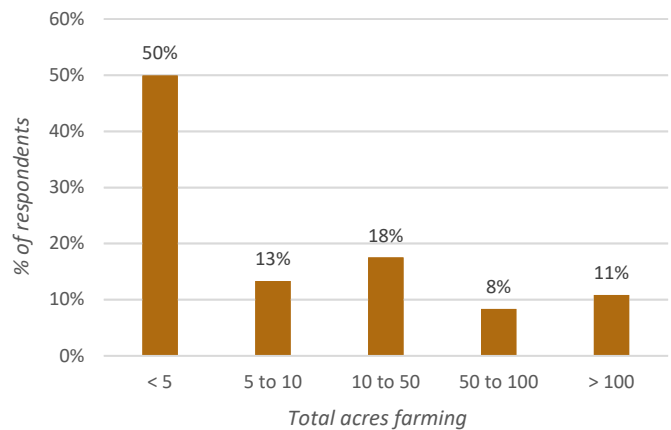
B How would you describe your growing practices?
(commercial growers only, n = 120)



C How many years have you been farming?
(commercial growers only, n = 119)



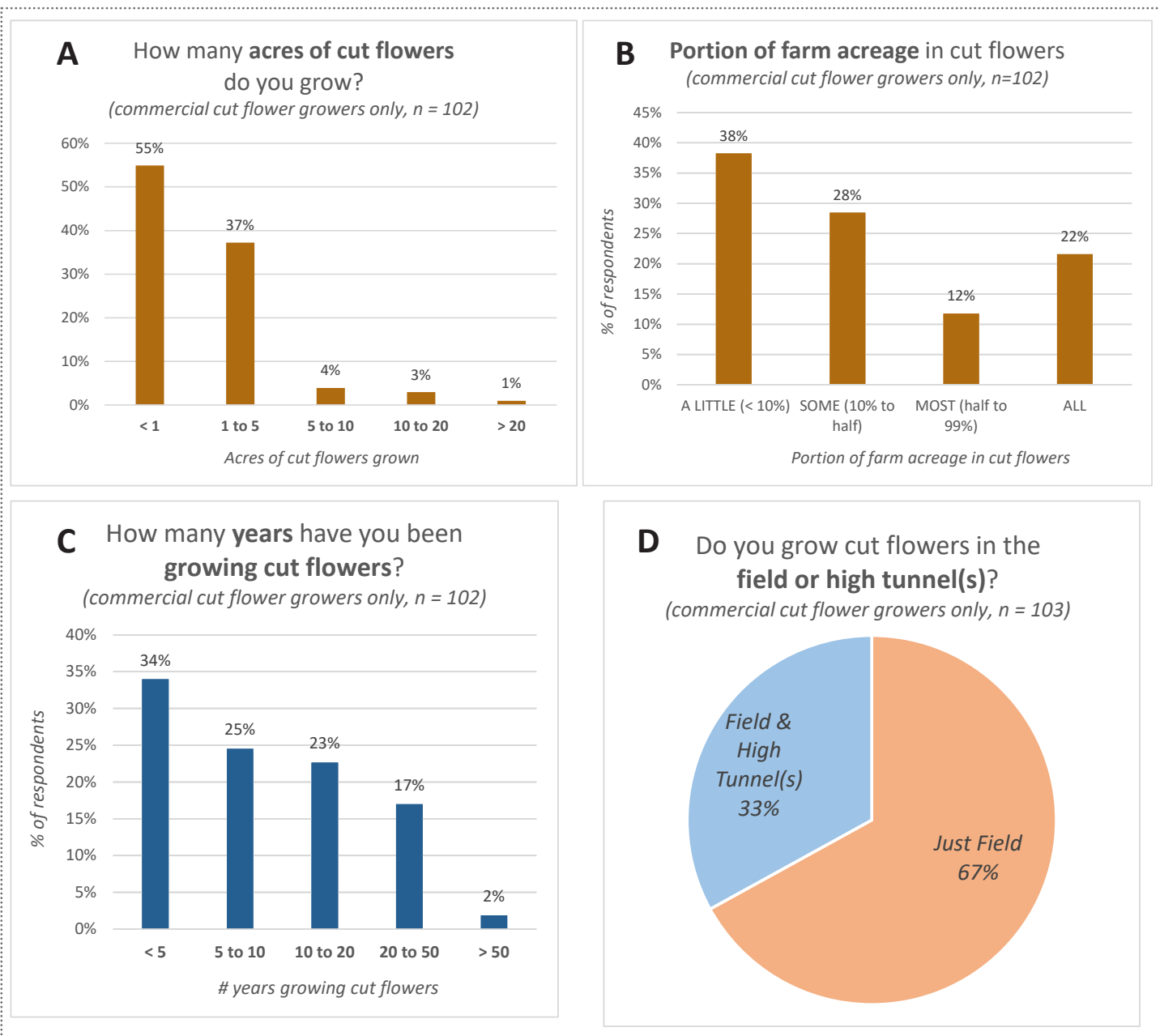
D How many total acres do you farm?
(commercial growers only, n = 120)



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO GROW CUT FLOWERS (n = 111)

-GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

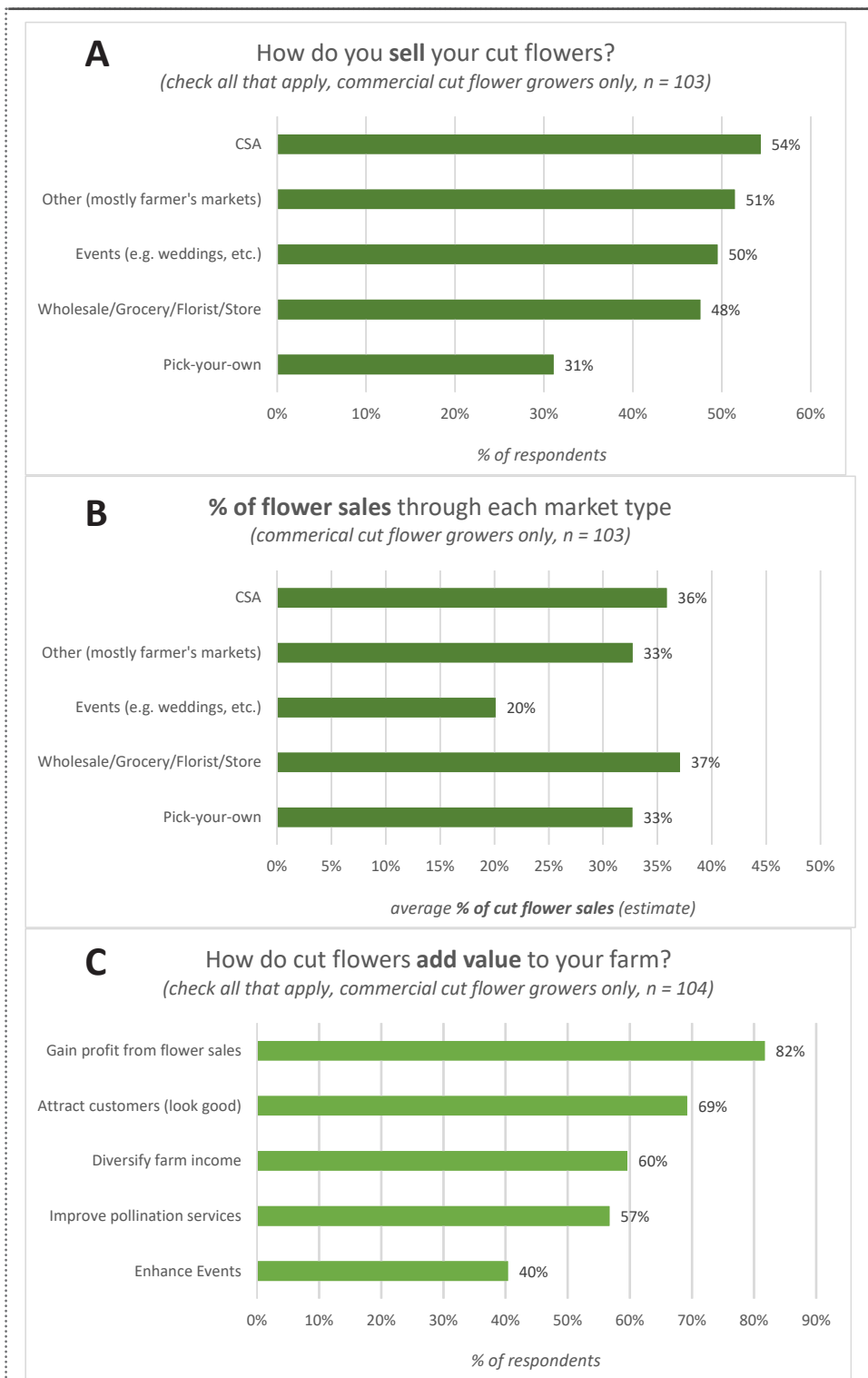
- **Most (92%) grow less than 5 acres of flowers.** About half grow under 1 acre. (Average = 3, max = 127, min = 0.01) **(A)**
- **For most grower respondents (66%), flowers comprise less than half of their growing acreage** (for 38%, it's under 10% of growing acreage). About a fifth grow exclusively cut flowers. (Average = 35%) **(B)**
- **Most (59%) have been growing cut flowers for under 10 years.** About a third have been growing cut flowers for less than 5 years. (Average = 11, max = 55, min = 1). **(C)**
- **Two-thirds grow cut flowers exclusively in the field.** The rest grow in a combination of field and high tunnels. **(D)**



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO GROW CUT FLOWERS, cont.

-SALES, MARKETING, ETC.

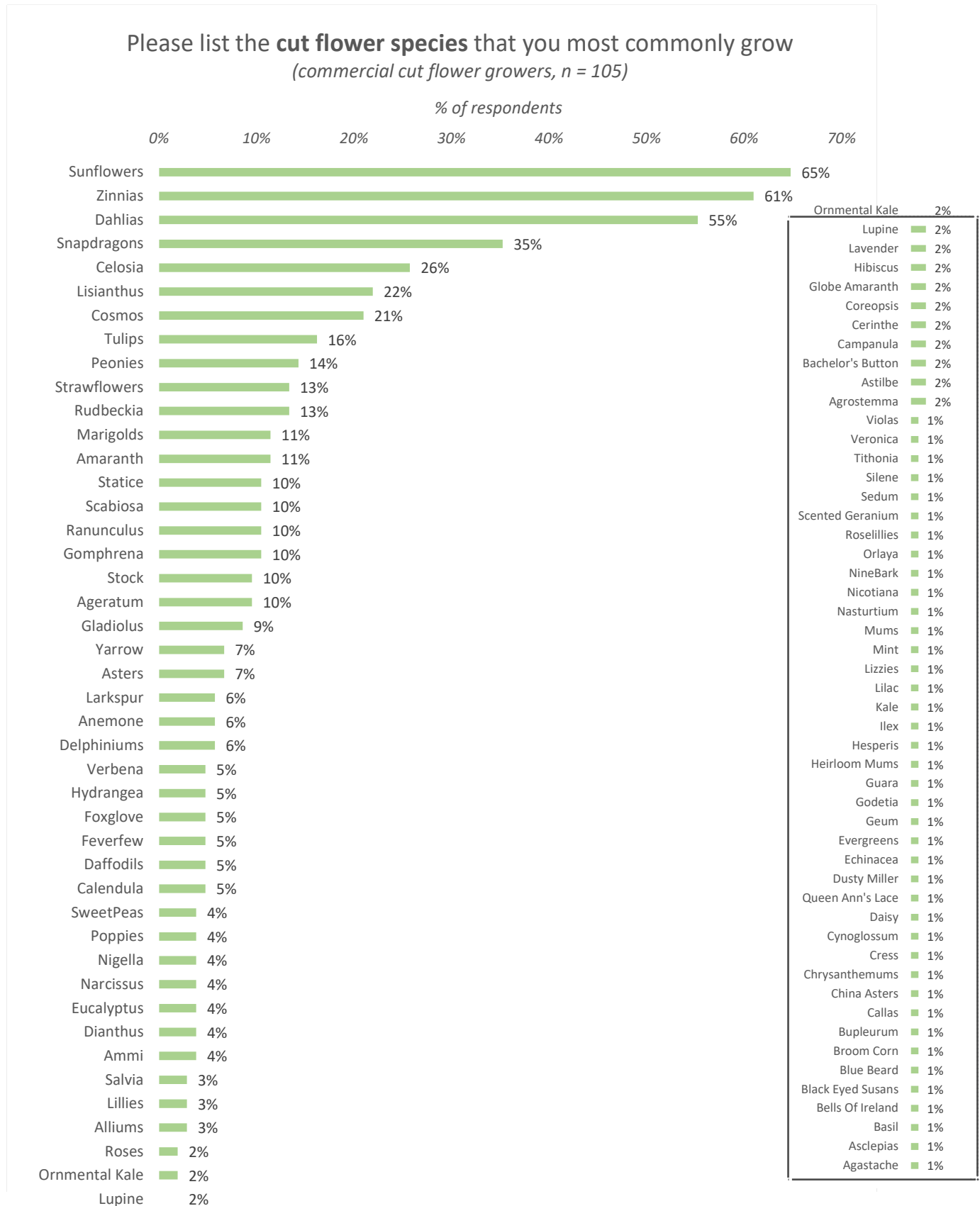
- These growers sell their flowers through a variety of channels. About half sell through CSAs, events, and wholesale/grocery/Florist. “Farmer’s markets” was the most common write-in answer for “other”. **(A)**
- In terms of the volume of flower sales, growers report that they sell about a third of their flowers through CSAs, wholesale/grocery/Florist/store and pick-your-own, and about a fifth through events. **(B)**
- **Most (82%) of growers, say that cut flowers add value to their farm through profits from sales.** About two thirds (69%), say that the flowers attract customers, 60% like that cut flowers diversify farm income, 57% like that they improve pollination services, and 40% like that they enhance farm-related events (by improving aesthetics). **(C)**



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO GROW CUT FLOWERS, cont.

-FLOWER VARIETIES

- We asked growers to list the flower types that they commonly grow. Many said that they grow too many to list. They also mentioned grasses, greenery, filler, herbs, perennials, annuals, natives, wildflowers, woody perennials.
- Among the varieties that they did list, **the most common were sunflowers, zinnias, dahlias, and snapdragons.**



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO GROW CUT FLOWERS, cont.

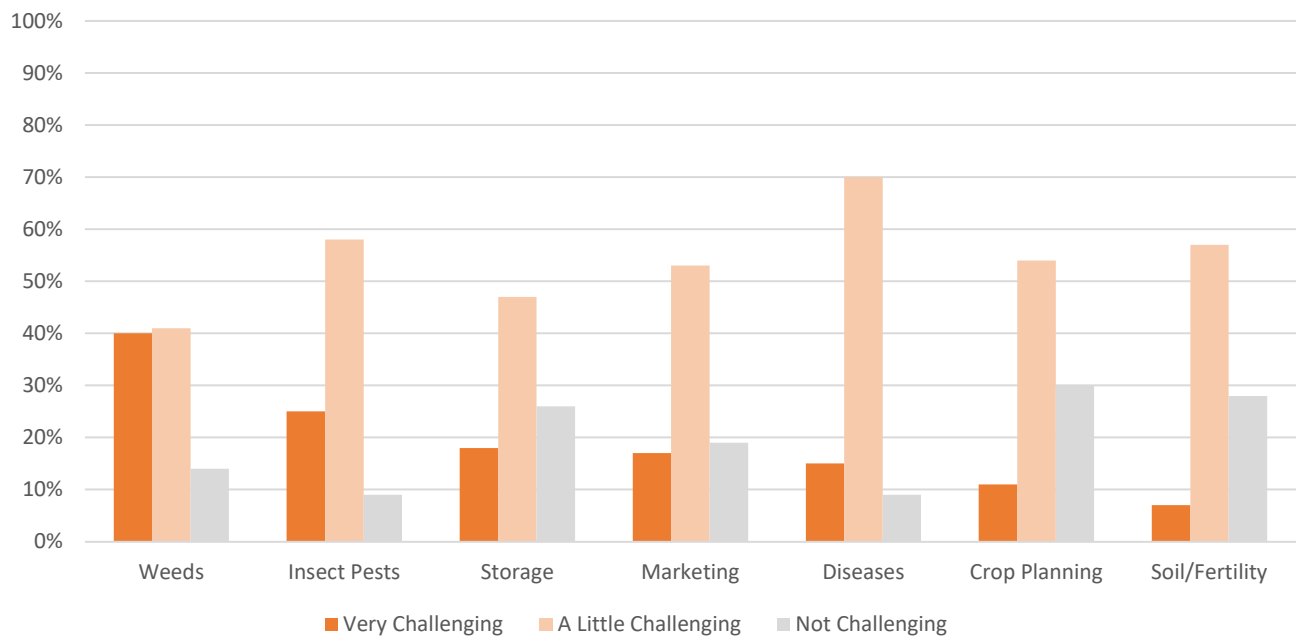
-CHALLENGES AND DESIRED SUPPORT

- Biggest challenges are weeds and insect pests (A)
- They want support from extension on a variety of topics (B)
- See **Appendix A** for a list of “Other Challenges”
- See **Appendix B** for a list of “Desired Research”

A

What are your biggest challenges as a cut flower producer?

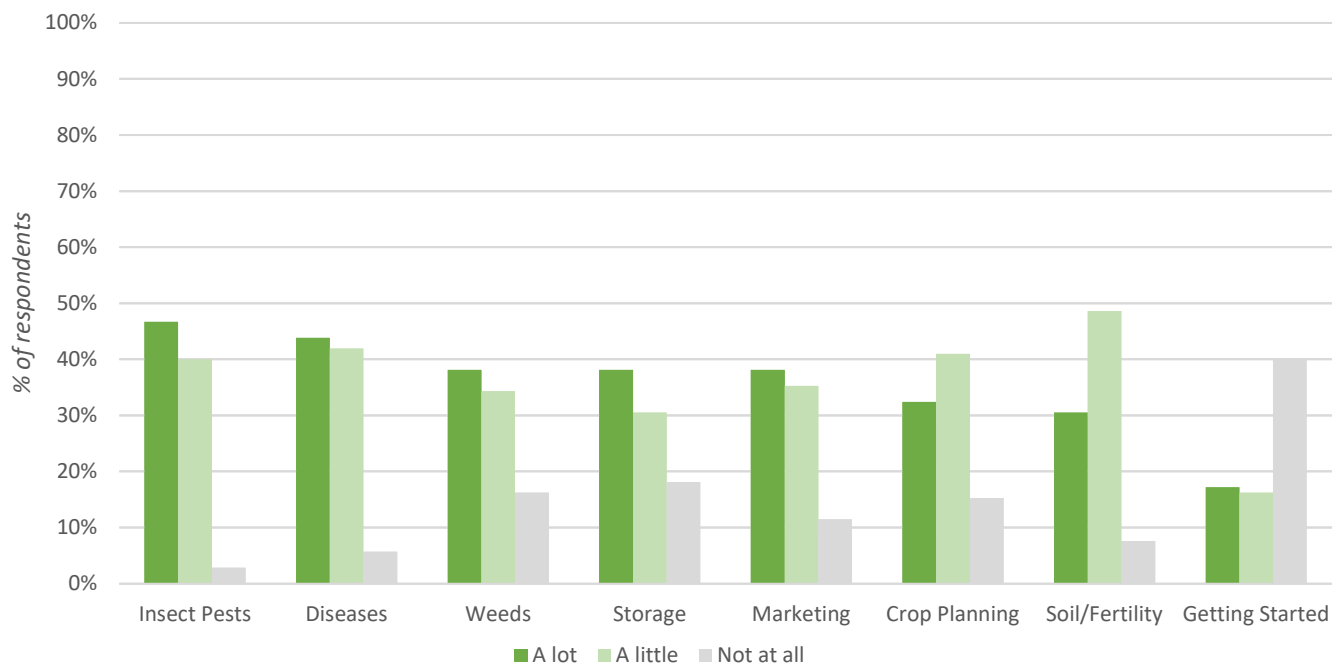
(commercial cut flower producers, n = 100)



B

On which cut flower topics would you most like support from extension?

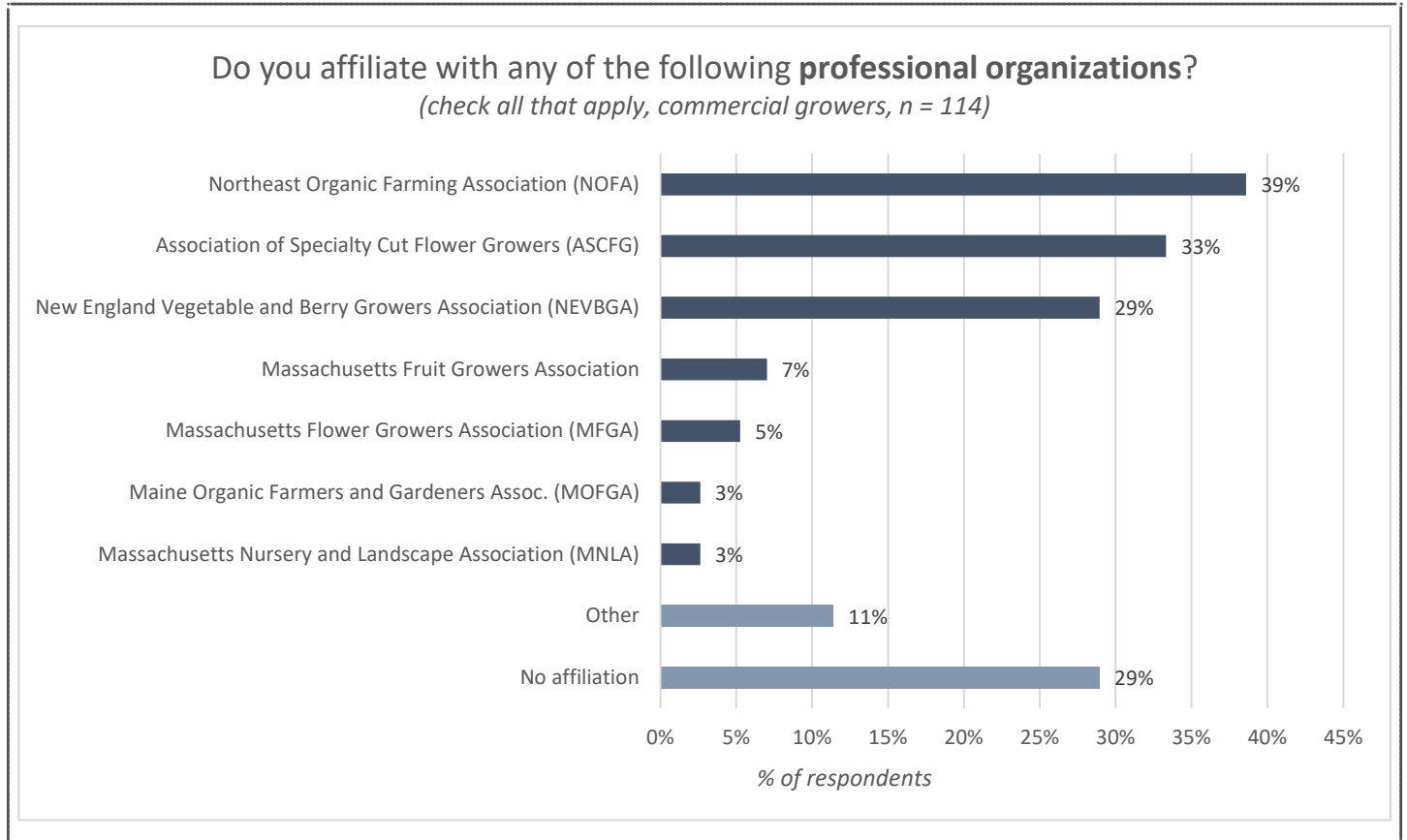
(commercial growers, n = 105)



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO GROW CUT FLOWERS, cont.

-PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- These growers are part of a wide range of professional organizations, most commonly NOFA, NEVBGA and the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers.
- *Write-in answers included Real Organic (2), VT NOFA, Slow flowers (2), Flower Collective CT (2), SEMAP, RINLA, US Lavender Growers Assoc.*



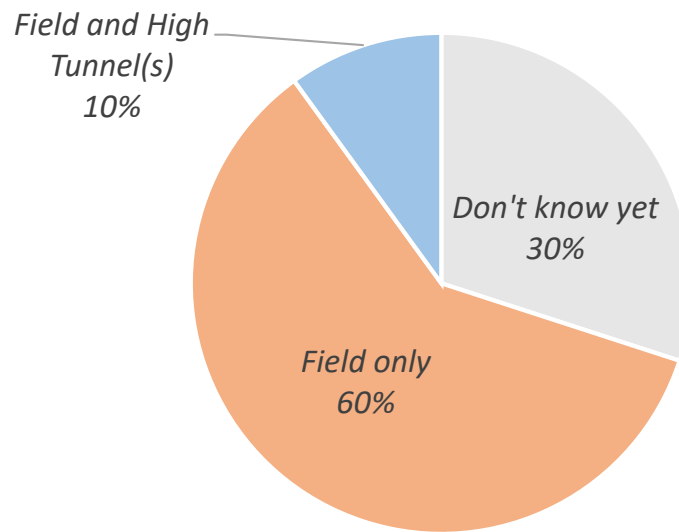
COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO HOPE TO GROW CUT FLOWERS (n = 10)

-GENERAL INFO

- Aspiring cut flower growers **expect to grow on average about an acre of cut flowers**, and most expect to grow exclusively in the field. **(A)**
- Growers are hoping to grow cut flowers for increased/diversified income. **(B)**

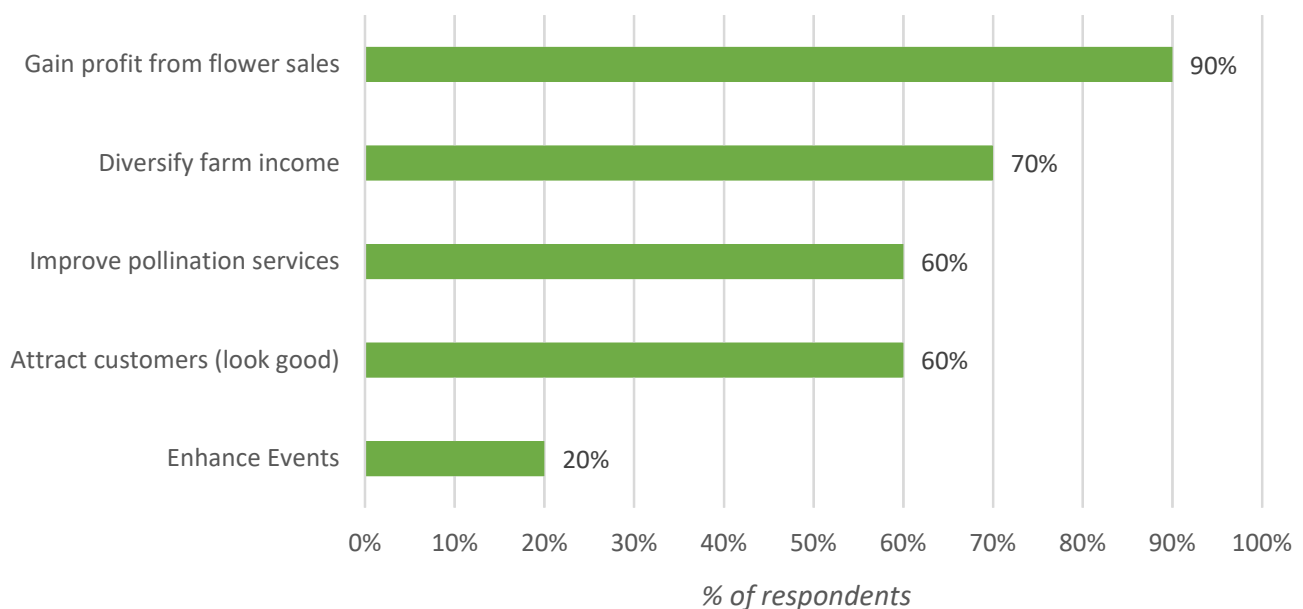
A Do you **intend** to grow cut flowers in the **field or high tunnel(s)**?

(check all that apply, aspiring commercial flower growers, n = 10)



B How are you **hoping** cut flowers will **add value** to your farm?

(check all that apply, aspiring commercial flower growers, n = 10)



COMMERCIAL GROWERS WHO HOPE TO GROW CUT FLOWERS, cont.

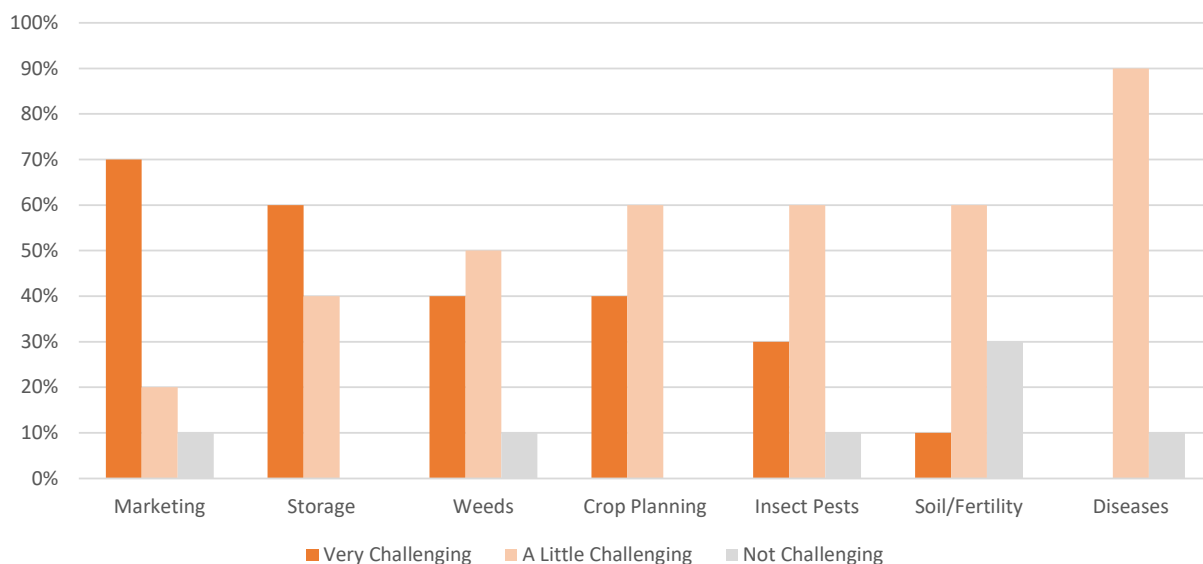
-CHALLENGES AND DESIRED SUPPORT

- These growers think that marketing and storage will be the biggest challenges **(A)**
- They want help from extension on a variety of topics **(B)**

A

What are the biggest **challenges** that you **forsee**?

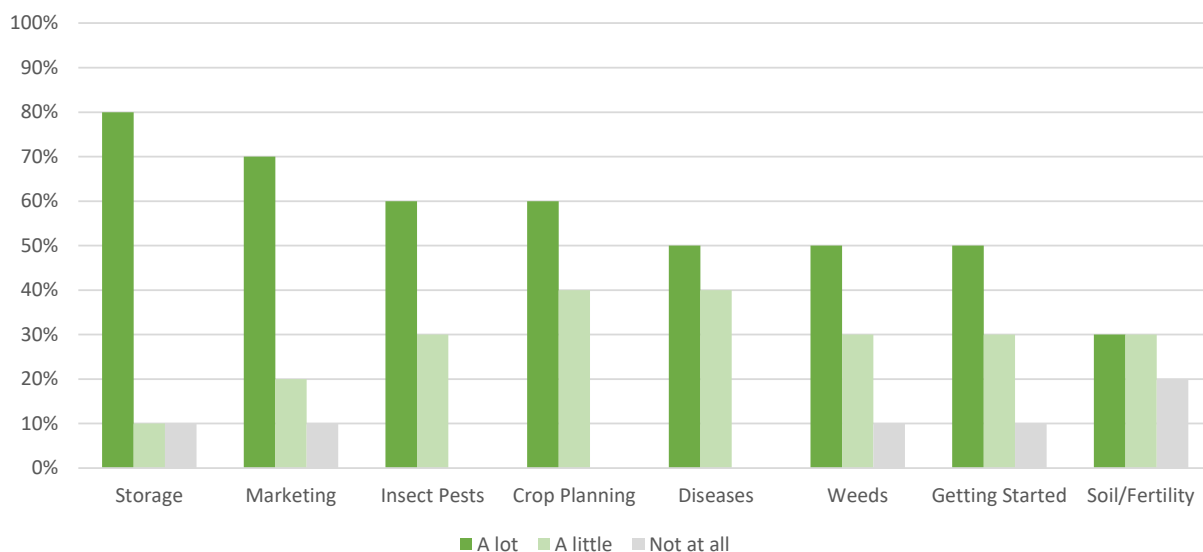
(aspiring commercial cut flower growers, n = 10)



B

On which cut flower topics would you most like **support from extension**?

(aspiring commercial cut flower growers, n = 10)



Are there any other obstacles you face as you try to start growing cut flowers?

- Time
- Don't know how to properly get set up. I have a brand-new greenhouse and need ideas
- \$ trying to get veggies to take off before more enterprises
- handling packing etc. of flowers
- Cost of seed and fear of not getting the seed to grow!

OTHER RESPONDENTS (non-commercial growers, non-profit, ag service providers, students, etc., n = 34)

-GENERAL INFO AND DESIRED SUPPORT

Why are you interested in learning more about cut flower production?
• Increase knowledge base for my job and personal interest.
• Grower requests for technical assistance
• Improve quality and yield
• to improve our systems and bring in more income for the org.
• Good crops to venture in, for small growers
• lack of specialist
• Grow the business
• I'd like to have flowers peak Mid-August through as late in October as possible.

