

Breeze through **Erin Benzakein's** Instagram account, and you'll see gorgeous shots of colorful *Dahlias*, pretty ladies in fields picking flowers and beautiful sunsets at Erin's Washington flower farm, **Floret**. But there are also behind-the-scenes images from the farm: scenes of sawed plywood, roughed-up terra-cotta pots and stacks of cardboard boxes filled with calendars and seeds and other garden goods awaiting shipment.

Such a well-rounded mix of images, along with Erin's endearing, often personal captions, paint an almost complete picture not just of the business and the farm but the lives behind it, too.

INSTAGRAMMER OF THE MONTH

Erin Benzakein of Floret

TEXT BY JON BELL

WHO: Erin Benzakein, founder of Floret, a flower farm in Mount Vernon, Washington.

WHY WE LIKE IT: Erin mixes beautiful flower pictures with day-to-day images and anecdotes to give an intriguing glimpse into life on the farm.

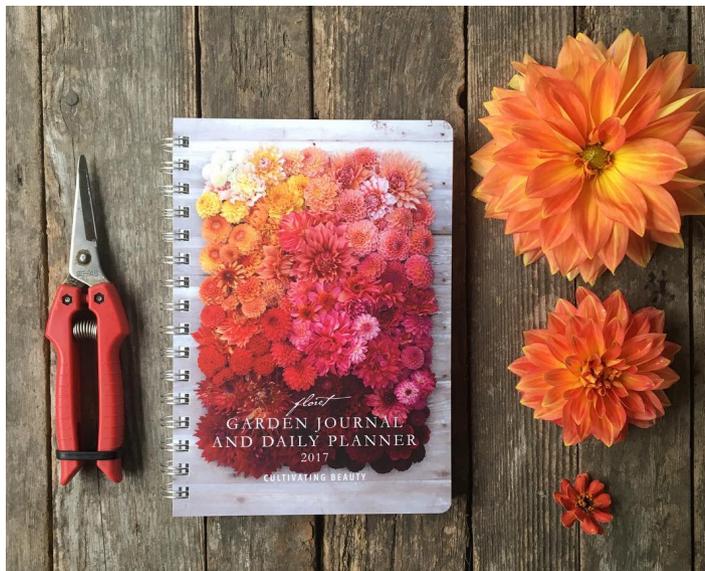
HOW THEY USE IT: If she's not posting five or six times a week, followers start getting concerned for Erin, so she tries to keep up with consistent posts. Many of her posts feature the seasonal flowers of the farm, but there are occasional glances of Erin, her family and staff and general news, including previews of her upcoming book, *Floret Farm's Cut Flower Garden: Grow, Harvest and Arrange Stunning Seasonal Blooms*, which is available from the Florists' Review Bookstore at shop.floristsreview.com.

THE PAYOFF: "For me, the biggest benefit has been introducing a global audience to the beauty of local seasonal flowers and to inspire more than a few to try their hand at growing some of their own flowers and cultivate beauty in their own backyards."

WILDFIRE POST: Erin once filled the back of the farm's beat-up pickup truck with colorful *Dahlias*. She snapped a shot, wrote a backstory about how the old truck had become a family favorite and hit share. "Within minutes of posting it, my phone blew up," she says. "The photo went viral in a way I never knew possible." The post got nearly 32,000 likes, its own article on BuzzFeed and celebrity shares from Britney Spears, Drew Barrymore and Reese Witherspoon.

TIP TO TRY: Erin suggests posting only the best photos, those that do a good job of representing you and your products, designs and company. She also says to get engaged with followers by liking and commenting on their posts, and for the best results, use relevant hashtags whenever possible.

SEE FOR YOURSELF: @floretflower ■



Jon Bell is a freelance writer based in Portland, Ore. Reach him by email at editors@floristsreview.com or jontbell@comcast.net.