



## NW ILLINOIS

Economic Development

SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN  
CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES

## Clara Joyce Flowers - A Blooming Business

Meet one of Jo Daviess County's best kept secrets: Clara Joyce Flowers and 20 acres of a horticulturist's dream come true. For Drew Groezinger it is just that and more. Hidden out in the lush farmland of Stockton, Illinois, he spent a childhood growing and selling his homegrown flowers which bled into a very successful 4-H project. Nurtured by a rich family history in agriculture, his love of plants literally took root and bloomed into a full scale flower producing operation in 2016.

As unique as the name is, it also reflects the innovations of a very non-traditional "flower shop." You can buy fresh flowers via their "Petals on the Porch" program - they literally sell themselves - but what Clara Joyce Flowers is mostly about is the thousands of specialty wholesale cut flowers they grow, sell and deliver weekly to Chicago, Madison and Milwaukee florists, in addition to shipping fresh



seasonal product across the country. Specific targeted small wedding and event floral design is another area of their expertise, as well as young plant propagation throughout their off season.

The property sports numerous large scale greenhouses and 13 acres of field produced annuals and perennials alone, all grown from seed secured from providers across the globe such as Japan,

Indonesia, and Australia to name a few.

The farm doesn't come without a warehouse and shipping location, a design studio and numerous storage facilities. All can be viewed from the property's "mother" house, which overlooks it all. It is the estate's family home, which Drew purchased from his parents to continue the family growing legacy.

The operation has grown in leaps and bounds, now offering over 130 varieties of flowers, but not without good help, which can be a challenge given where the farm is located in Jo Daviess County and the same staffing shortage many employers suffer from.

With a summer staff of eight, and a trimmed back crew of four in the winter, Clara Joyce Flowers has successfully solved their staffing problem through the U.S. Department of Labor's H-2A Visa Program that helps employers

with a lack of available domestic workers to bring foreign workers to the U.S. to perform temporary or seasonal work. The program allows these foreign workers to work in the U.S. for 10 months and then return to their homeland for two months. For Clara Joyce Flowers the program has been a gift to helping keep their production running smoothly and progressively with the help of a consultant they use that specializes in the H-2A program. Clara Joyce Flowers has even gone so far as to buy a house in





Stockton and renovated it to house the international workers.

The Clara Joyce Flowers website, [www.clarajoyceflowers.com](http://www.clarajoyceflowers.com), is a tremendous part of their sales and marketing efforts that has assisted in expanding the business and taking them forward to their future. And that future includes continuously utilizing every existing space on the property for all their seasonal product, as well as introducing long term crops such as foliage and woody types of plant offerings. Most recently a stream-bed was cleared and adjoining acreage of trees, freeing up an additional four acres for the farm's expansion goals.

While the farm is not open to the public per say, pre-arranged tours are available and planned special events are part of their agenda throughout the summer.

And the "dirt" behind the name? Again the name has roots. Drew collaborated with his best friend on the name choice with the simple question based on special women in their lives. For both it was the great-grandmothers they had never had a chance to meet, but whose legacies included what incredible mothers, gardeners, crafters and influential family personas they were: . . Clara and Joyce.

## Open Events and More at Clara Joyce Flowers

The "Petals on the Porch" Program is a self-serve, seasonal flower stand, located on the front porch of the design studio as you drive onto the property. It offers a wide variety of mixed bouquets, mason jar arrangements, potted plants and seasonal creations. It's open seasonally and weather permitting, Friday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Special events at the farm include an annual **Garden Party** for guests to tour the gardens, build a bouquet and enjoy dinner as the sun sets in the flower fields, hosted by Drew and his staff, and organized by Sara McGovern, an outside consultant from Upland Creative in Dubuque.

"Pick Your Own Flowers" are events scheduled throughout the growing season, with dates posted on the website.

Clara Joyce Flowers also offers three seasonal fundraisers for school and community organizations: spring hanging baskets, fall planting bulb and holiday and evergreens.

All these programs and details can be found the website at [www.clarajoyceflowers.com](http://www.clarajoyceflowers.com)



Above, Drew addresses a group of visitors about flower arranging. His favorite flowers are Dahlias, and one of the farm's top two sellers, with the other being peonies. In particular he grows multiple varieties and hues of all his best selling flowers, which add contrast, interest and artistry to floral designs.



## Contact Details

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