

## Italian floriculture finds international platform

It is a common problem; finding a successor for your family business. Also in Italy, the floriculture sector has decreased in attractiveness among the younger generation. Many farms that are currently in business are still family companies, but this is about to change as most of the companies lack a child that is willing to take over the business. It is important to keep the sector attractive and - just as important - profitable. Flora Toscana, a cooperative of growers based in Pescia in Tuscany, for example is working for years to keep their growers up to date and move along with all changes.



*Elisa Baccioni, Luca Quilici and Simona Di Fidi of Flora Toscana at MyPlant & Garden 2018 in Milan, Italy.*

Flora Toscana's core business activities are the supply of technical facilities for professionals and the marketing of cut flowers, foliage and pot plants produced by the member grower companies, explains Luca Quilici, Export Sales Manager at Flora Toscana. On top of that, they are traveling all over the world to find new varieties to grow in Italy and are currently working on their new webshop that will enable them to increase their international sales. And they will be ready to handle the increased orders as they will double their warehouse space in October.

### **Webshop**

Amongst others, the finalization of their web shop is something that will be a huge new step into the right international direction. Flora Toscana's growers produce flowers and plants (70% flowers/foilage and 30% plants) spread over five sites in Tuscany. The flowers are mainly sold in Italy (around 85%) and plants are mainly exported. And about 50 percent of these plants are sold via their current webshop. They are eager to increase the number and include their biggest article; cut flowers and foliage. According to Quilici, the new restyled webshop will enable them to increase the international sales as the webshop will be available in five languages. In November, at the [IFTF](#) in Vijfhuizen, The Netherlands, they are planning to show their new webshop.

**Weather**

You might have heard that the Northern part of Italy has suffered from severe weather with rain and hail storms over the last few days, the rest of Italy is having sunny weather with a clear sky. Growers in Tuscany are enjoying the weather as they have been bothered by rain from Christmas till mid April. Fortunately, they were able to make up lost ground.

Due to the rainy weather, the demand dropped drastically this year, especially from the end of December till Mid-April. "All these months, we had like 90 percent rain", says Quilici. The weather improved and it has been good afterwards. As a result, the demand and therefore sales increased. "The flower sales are more or less the same compared to last year and the plant sales are even a bit up."