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Yellowstone Flooding Devastates Greenhouses

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Flooding from the Yellowstone River in Montana in June hit hard and without much warning for both Montana Roots and Heather's Garden Service & Flower Farm.

In the case of Montana Roots, a micro greens grower, owner Sam Mascari was busy sandbagging his own home and honestly wasn't too worried about his own business flooding, he told the local TV station. But 3 ft. of water overtook the facility, damaging seeds, equipment, electrical and a few structures.

Pictured: Flooding from the Yellowstone River left plants covered in thick mud at Heather's Garden Service, a flower farm, retail garden center and custom container producer.

At neighboring Heather's Garden Service—a flower farm, retail garden center and custom container producer—the flood surge brought not just water, but 6 in. of mud onto the 12-acre property that Heather Muldoon leases. Friends and neighbors heroically helped rescue many of the plants and containers in her greenhouse, but the losses were still high, from plants and equipment to inputs she'd ordered early in the season.

I talked to Heather in late June. She's still reeling from the event, overwhelmed at how to proceed. Heather spent the last four years cleaning up the run-down property and creating a beautiful location. She had a cut flower CSA up and running, and both her cut flower and custom container business was exploding, in addition to her garden center sales.

"Mother Nature can be brutal and beautiful, and you're kind of at her whim," she says. "There's so much I'm finding that's gone or damaged or lost."

First up is financially surviving the year: paying the debts on the inputs and the plant orders that were lost, and taking on new landscape maintenance clients in order to keep the staff she'd hired for the flower farm employed. She held

an emergency plant sale of the rescued plants in a friend's yard the weekend after the flood. There's cleanup. Her brand new greenhouse, though flooded, remained intact, but her outdoor gardens are another story.

Nearby at Montana Roots, cleanup has begun, and Sam hoped to be back to normal operations for the microgreens within a month.

The idea of a GoFundMe page makes Heather uncomfortable, but a friend set up a campaign for her, and I'm writing all this to say that if you feel generous, these fellow plant lovers could use a little help. It's a small community, and they've had lots of muscle on the ground scraping away mud and hauling plants, but now it's time to rebuild their businesses.

You're all also a great beehive of knowledge and resources, so if you have any expertise or resources you'd like to offer, you can reach Heather at hgsmontana@gmail.com. **GP**