

Front Lines

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Ed Knapton Passes

Ellen C. Wells & Jennifer Polanz

We recently received word that Ed Knapton of Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, passed away on November 6 after a prolonged cancer diagnosis. Ed and his wife Carol owned and ran America's Best Flowers, a Madison-area must on the garden center circuit.

He loved his business and horticulture unquestioningly, and shared his knowledge of the industry through his frequent responses to our quips and queries. He was also a frequent attendee on garden center-related bus tours, often driving to the tour destination so they could stop at still more garden centers before and after—his presence and comments will be missed.

On another sad note, as of press time America's Best Flowers was set to close the doors to both locations for good on Christmas Eve. Ed and Carol started the business as a pick-your-own vegetable business in 1978, and evolved over the years into a two-location garden center and growing operation, according to a local news story in The Herald-Independent. The garden center posted a good year this year, but Marketing Manager Michele Westphall told the newspaper the hurdles to continuing the operation were just too great.

Our sincerest condolences to Carol and the rest of the team at America's Best Flowers. **GP**