

plant house

DAY IN THE LIFE:

Arranging Blossoms With **A FLORAL DESIGNER**

The significance of flowers in Thai Buddhist culture has allowed Mya Manooporn's flower-arranging business to bloom. **Barbara Woolsey** follows the boss around her modern botanical boutique in Bangkok



In *Scout's* "Day in the Life", we ask a writer to spend a day with a local whose job plays a significant role in the city's cultural identity.

he shop opens at 8:30 a.m. Mya Manooporn and her two shopkeepers go over the arrangements for the day. In today's orders, there are several specific requests: "Doesn't like roses", "Likes bright colours", and "Surprise me".

While discussing the orders, they refer to colour charts taped to the wall. Created by Manooporn, these palettes with names like "Spellbound" (blood red, magenta, and deep purple) and "Daydreams" (pastel yellow, pink, and lilac) provide guidance and inspiration for arranging the season's blooms.

In the current season, Bangkok florist shop Plant House uses lots of peonies and dahlias in bouquets because of their delicate quality. Both flowers only bloom for a limited time every year.



"It's summer now, so coral is one of the main colour choices," Manooporn explains. "That means lots of peaches, pinks, pale yellows, and wines. But towards the end of the year, the colours tend to lean more towards white, silver, and green."

Manooporn provides minimal direction. She prefers to trust the staff to express their creativity.

"To work here, it doesn't matter if you don't have experience designing flowers," she says. "We get our employees to create mood boards during the job interview. Our team has its own talents in specific areas, such as textile, paper crafts, and photography. It's more about being artistic. Everyone has to exercise their own creativity, but of course, the bouquets must still be up to Plant House's standard."

The shopkeepers get busy on budding masterpieces. Each takes around half an hour, from arranging to wrapping, before being picked up by a messenger for delivery.

BOUQUET BOSS

Manooporn is more than just a self-taught floral designer – she's blossomed into a businesswoman.

After graduating from university, Manooporn made full use of her aptitude for arts and creativity and started Plant House in 2013 with her then-boyfriend (now husband) Non Wisitnorapatt. With him handling finances, she was free to experiment with dreamy flower arrangements: spilling over in colour and shape, using unusual flowers imported from the Netherlands.

LEFT:
Married couple and
Plant House owners
Mya Manooporn and
Non Wisitnorapatt.

FLOWER POWER

Mya Manooporn shows us what it's like to be a florist and female entrepreneur.



8 a.m.

Arrive at the studio and prepare for the day.

8:30 a.m.

Shop opens.

9 a.m.

Go over the day's arrangements with the staff.

10:30 a.m.

Meet with the design team.

12 p.m.

Lunch break.

1 p.m.

Meet with the marketing team to create social media content.

2:30 p.m.

Work on new ideas.

3 p.m.

Flower shipment arrives. Time to sort through these beautiful babies!

6 p.m.

Head home.



LEFT:
Plant House imports
and uses flowers from
the Netherlands.

BELOW:
Manooporn works
diligently inside her
workshop.

shrines and worn in weddings. The lotus flower is particularly sacred; legend says that when Lord Buddha took his first steps, lotus blooms cushioned his feet.

Plant House tries to capitalise on the nation's built-in passion, selling items like phone cases and greeting cards made out of pressed, dried flowers, as well as paraphernalia for gardening, camping, and outdoor fun-in-the-sun.

"Our goal is to make people feel more relaxed with flowers," explains Wisitnorapatt. "In Thai culture, people consume a small number of flowers. It's considered a big thing to get a bouquet, [it usually happens] only for special moments or accomplishments. We want to show people that giving flowers can be a nice, everyday thing to do."

Today, Manooporn has a meeting with a graphic designer. All around the studio are products created from past design meetings: notebooks covered in floral patterns and sketches of a moth's life cycle, peace symbols made out of pressed flowers

Since 2014, Plant House has had a studio in The Commons, a downtown community mall, and is perennially popular for its exotic, unique designs.

These days, Manooporn works behind the scenes as opposed to behind the counter. Since flowers are such a seasonal business – doled out mostly during holidays and at special occasions like graduation and Valentine's Day – Manooporn and Wisitnorapatt have put their hearts into developing other products which can be sold year-round.

Flowers already have special meaning in Thai Buddhist culture – they are offerings to show gratitude and bolster good luck. *Phuang malai* (intricate floral garlands) are placed around statues in temples and



in frames, enamel pins of Venus flytraps, corpse flowers, and other rare plant species.

Manooporn draws inspiration from natural science, astrology, and encyclopedias. A team of artists, illustrators, and graphic designers bring her ideas to life.

Hands gesturing madly, she explains to her colleague about her latest brainwave after a recent museum visit.

Soon, owner and staff take their lunch breaks. Afterwards, the team



ABOVE:
Plant House's studio
in Bangkok
community mall
The Commons.

LEFT:
Manooporn holds
her finished bouquet
of blooms.



gets down to cleaning and arranging the refrigerator to make space for the flower delivery arriving later.

Manooporn's next meeting is with her marketing assistant on social media content.

Instagram has been a big part of Plant House's success. Shortly after starting, Manooporn's hippie-inspired flower crowns went viral with bohemian brides. It helped her and her business partner-husband move the thriving business out of their home. Now, Plant House has over 40,000 Instagram followers (@plant_house).

Manooporn spends a few minutes every day managing the social media account herself. She instructs her assistant to take a few photos to post online in the coming weeks.

"From day one, we have always been thoughtful when selecting photos and captions," explains the lady boss. "Having love and support from the audience on Instagram plays a crucial part in growing our business. It allows us to reach people who love the things we do nationwide, or even worldwide. These days, we even get many orders from international customers. So, big applause goes to social media."

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Manooporn's favourite part of the day is brainstorming and conceptualisation – whenever she can fit it in, that is. One of her rituals is to grab coffee inside The

Commons's breezy open-air seating and spreading out her creative arsenal: notebook, laptop, pens, printed mood boards, and colour charts.

Brainstorming is a constant process. Plant House already creates corsages, boutonnieres, and rings, but what else could they do? She flits around online and fervently scribbles notes, rustling her bob haircut whenever imagination strikes.

"Most of the time, I find my inspiration the traditional way – offline," she says. "I search for ideas from books, music, poetry, and film. I don't want us to remain the same, but rather, to keep becoming more interesting. We want to think about Plant House as not just as a flower shop, but as a retail shop – inspired by fashion, with new colours, sizes, and styles always coming in."

One of Manooporn's current priorities is working on making the business as sustainable as possible. She is currently searching for ways to reduce plastic packaging and to improve the studio's recycling process.

NATURE'S SPOILS



Like Plant House, the **COMO Metropolitan Bangkok Hotel** is committed to sustainability and inspired by nature in its design. The minimalist-style rooms are decorated with warm wood and oxidised-brass panelling to inspire serenity. The hotel offers free yoga classes, natural toiletries without icky additives, and healthy organic breakfasts and smoothies at its restaurant Glow. Walk a little further from the hotel and you'll find Bangkok's famous green lung Lumpini Park, where a little lake and shady grass stretches encourage oneness with Mother Nature – even amidst a concrete jungle.

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RIGHT:
Signature postcards
and bespoke greeting
cards on display at
Plant House.



That's something she would like to do before the end of the year, when Plant House opens a second location in Bangkok's financial district Silom.

"It is fun and challenging to retain the beautiful design and, at the same time, merge responsibly-sourced materials into our products and packaging," she says of the big task. "When you love something – in our case we adore and respect nature so much – it is very important for us all to be fully aware of our actions that would affect what we care about."

COMING UP ROSES

At 3 p.m., the flower shipment arrives. It gets delivered every Wednesday, early afternoon. Manooporn orders the imported flowers from online suppliers every Monday, painstakingly selecting the blossoms over long hours to match with colour themes and customer requests.

Suddenly, Plant House's tiny backroom is a flurry of vivid hues and stem trimmings. The aroma of fresh flowers wafts through the air.

The shopkeepers duck in and out to help customers who wander in looking for a spontaneous bouquet or other curios.

Manooporn pops her head in, taking in a big whiff of the action between scheduling client meetings and planning an upcoming photoshoot for their website. Over the next few hours, the atmosphere stays bright and cheery.

At around 6 p.m., Manooporn gets ready to leave. The shopkeepers will close up at 9 p.m.

It's been a long day with thousands of petals – and thoughts – still swirling around in the designer's head, evident by a faraway expression as she packs up. But a big grin as she bids farewell to the staff makes it clear: Manooporn truly loves her work. [planthouse.co](#) 📍



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