

# *1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Human's Response to Flowers – Keynote Speakers*

## **Dr Martin Hůla**

Martin Hůla is an evolutionary psychologist and human ethologist focusing on human–plant interactions, particularly phytophilia—the evolutionary origins and expressions of human aesthetic responses to flowers. His research examines how people perceive and evaluate different floral shapes and colours, and whether flower preferences reflect shared, species-typical patterns expressed across infancy, childhood, and adulthood and across cultures. Another line of his research investigates how real and virtual plant-rich environments, such as forests, influence human well-being.



ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2796-1226>

Website: <https://psych.ucsb.edu/people/visitors/martin-hula>

# Dr Melinda J Knuth

Dr. Knuth's research priorities are on business management and consumer behavior research. Historically, Dr. Knuth has evaluated trade flows of horticulture products in the United States, estimated the economic impact of the North Carolina and United States green industries and national compost industry, assessed the benefits plants provide to human health, and estimated consumer acceptance of retail garden center messaging. She currently is an Assistant Professor in Horticultural Science at North Carolina State University. Dr. Knuth teaches Greenhouse Management, Floriculture Production, Horticulture Business Development, and Horticulture Marketing. Dr. Knuth received her PhD from Texas A&M University in Horticultural Science with a certificate in Applied Statistics. From there, she was a postdoctoral research associate at University of Florida in the Food & Resource Economics Department. She currently serves as the International Society for Horticulture Science Division Chair of Horticulture for Development and as a GenNext Lead with AmericanHort. Her poster 'Exploring Artificial Intelligence Literacy Amount Two-Year Horticulture Students' was voted Outstanding Poster at the 2025 NCSU Conference of Faculty Excellence. Dr. Knuth received the 2025-26 Goodnight Early Career Faculty Award at NCSU and GPN Magazine's 40 under 40 award in 2021.



The image features a portrait of Dr. Melinda J Knuth on the left, smiling, with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a light green top with white trim. To the right is a poster for the '1st Workshop on Humans' Response to Flowers'. The poster has a green background and features four colorful illustrations of vases with flowers in a 2x2 grid. The text on the poster reads: '1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Humans' Response to Flowers', 'Guildford, UK', '24 - 26 June 2026', 'Dr Melinda J Knuth', and 'Keynote speaker'.

ORCID: 0000-0001-5406-1595

Website: <https://cognitivebehaviorallab.cals.ncsu.edu/>

# Professor Sylvie Baudino

Sylvie Baudino is an emeritus professor at the University of Saint-Etienne (France) and researcher at the Laboratory of Plant Biotechnology applied to aromatic and medicinal plants (LBVpam). She study the production of scent compounds in plants, in particular the biosynthesis pathways of terpenes. She want to know why some plants are heavily fragrant while others are not. My favorite plant model is the rose. She discovered a new pathway for terpene biosynthesis in this plant (Magnard et al. Science 2015 DOI: [10.1126/science.aab0696](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aab0696)).



ORCID: 0000-0002-3367-172X

Lab website: <https://lbvpam.univ-st-etienne.fr/en/index.html>

Lab linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lbvpam/>

# Dr Jill Timms

Jill is a sociologist of work and the environment. She is an Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Surrey, a founding Fellow in the Institute for Sustainability and Co-Lead of the [Sustainable Flowers Research Project](#). Jill has been researching the flower industry for over two decades, since her PhD from London School of Economics. Her interests focus particularly on the role of collaboration; responsibilities to workers and the planet in complex global supply chains; the rise of private standards and certification schemes; and the role of different groups, such as consultants, campaigners, governments and consumers, in changing policy and practice towards net-zero. Jill works with key industry stakeholders to improve sustainable practice in horticulture, has been funded by the British Academy/Leverhulme Trust, ESRC, AIPH, IDH, DEFRA and UKIR. Jill is an Academic Advisor to the Sustainable Floristry Network and on the national committee of Sustainable Church Flowers (SCF) movement, with the SCF motion recently voted for by the Church of England for its use of sustainable flowers. Other recent work includes research with David Bek and the Flower Growing Collective to promote routes to market for seasonal flower growers through a national system of Hubs organised on a cooperative basis, and the piloting of a new agroecological standard for flower growers. Jill is also currently Editor in Chief of the journal *Sociology*, and has regularly delivered presentations at events for the British Florist Association, Flowers from the Farm, the Fairtrade Foundation, the Big Green Week and other public engagement events. She is Co-Organiser of our Human Response to Flowers Workshop too!

A composite image featuring a portrait of Dr Jill Timms on the left and a workshop poster on the right. The portrait shows her with curly brown hair, glasses, and a black top, smiling. The poster has a green background and features four colorful vases with flowers in a 2x2 grid. Below the grid, it reads '1st Workshop on Humans' Response to Flowers', 'Guildford, UK', and '24 - 26 June 2026'. At the bottom of the poster, it says 'Dr Jill Timms' and 'Keynote speaker' in white text.

1<sup>st</sup> Workshop on Humans' Response to Flowers

Guildford, UK  
24 - 26 June 2026

**Dr Jill Timms**  
*Keynote speaker*

Orcid: [0000-0002-4155-6481](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4155-6481)

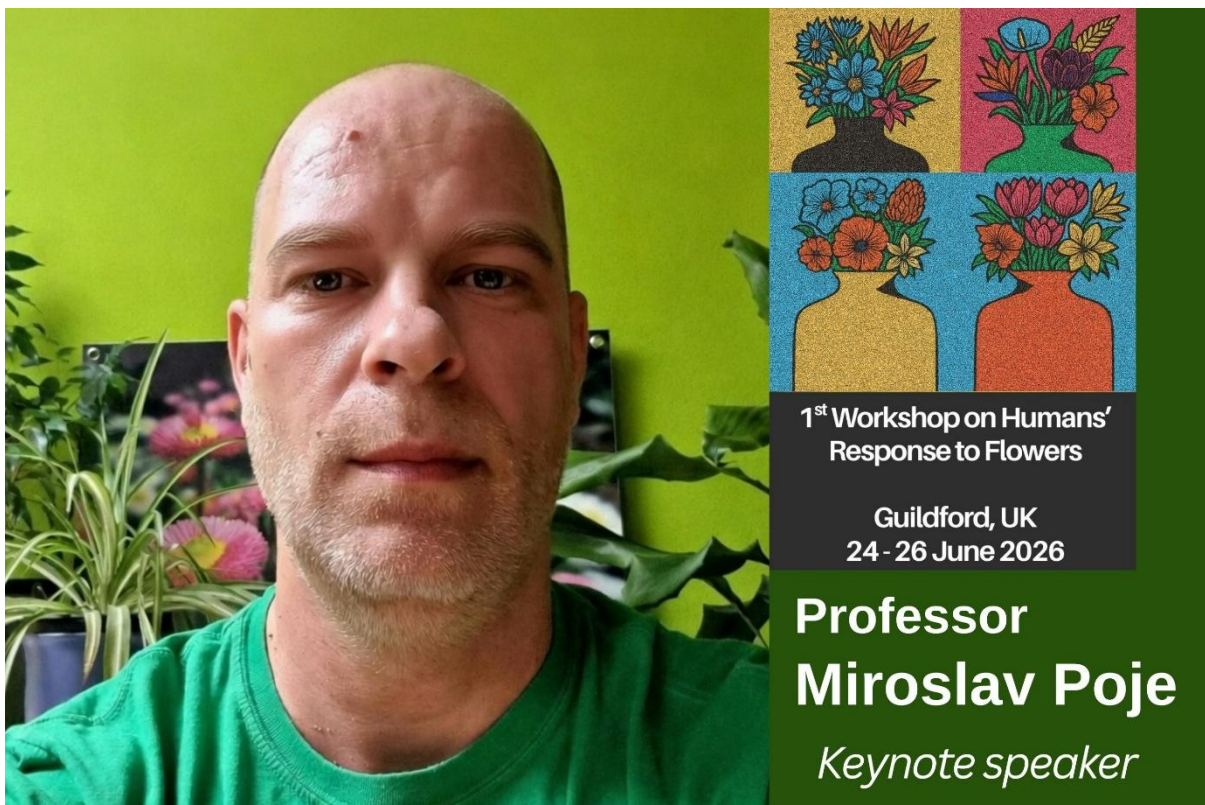
Webpage: <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/people/jill-timms>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jill-timms-sociologist/>

Project Website: <https://sustainableflowersresearch.org/>

# Professor Miroslav Poje

Miroslav Poje is employed at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Ornamental Plants, Landscape Architecture, and Garden Art. His scientific research and professional work focus on the perception and evaluation of vegetation elements in public green spaces, with particular emphasis on the functional and visual characteristics of flower beds. He studies the use of ornamental plants in public spaces, with a specific research focus on perennials as fundamental components of sustainable design and maintenance of public green areas. His additional research interests include analyzing the positive effects of plants on human health in the context of horticultural therapy, as well as the negative impacts associated with the use of toxic, allergenic, and invasive plant species in public spaces.



Website: <https://www.agr.unizg.hr/en/member/147>

# Dr Hélder Oliveira

Hélder Oliveira is a Principal Researcher at LAQV/REQUIMTE, University of Porto, whose scientific career has been dedicated to understanding phenolic compounds and their impact on human health. After completing a PhD in Sustainable Chemistry, he established a multidisciplinary research profile that integrates food chemistry, biochemistry, and cellular biology. His early work shed light on anthocyanin absorption mechanisms, uncovering the involvement of glucose transporters using an innovative nanotechnology-driven gene-silencing approach. Since 2022, Hélder has been building a distinctive scientific identity through research on anthocyanin-rich edible flowers, supported by a Junior CEEC contract and two funded projects for which he serves as Principal Investigator: AnthoE.Flos and FLORA.MED. These projects explore edible flowers as sustainable dietary sources and investigate the fate, bioaccessibility, and health potential of their bioactive compounds, particularly in relation to metabolic disease. His studies have already provided foundational insights into flower-derived anthocyanins, including their gastrointestinal stability and incorporation into innovative food products, establishing a new research line within LAQV. Throughout his career, Hélder has published extensively in top-tier journals, contributed to major international collaborations across Europe and China, and co-authored a patent on pyranoanthocyanins. He has supervised multiple MSc and PhD students, contributed to science management and communication, and has been invited to deliver plenary lectures internationally. Hélder is also the editor of an upcoming CRC Press book on acylated anthocyanins. By merging fundamental chemistry, cellular models, and sustainable food innovation, Hélder Oliveira is trying to position edible flowers as a promising frontier for nutrition and health research.



Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8256-2968>

Website: <https://www.foodphenolab.com/helder-oliveira>

# Professor Matt Jones

Professor Matt Jones is a Professor of Sensory Biology in the School of Molecular Biosciences at the University of Glasgow, where he leads an interdisciplinary research group focused on understanding how plants sense and respond to environmental cues via biological timing systems. Professor Jones's research explores how light, temperature, and daily environmental cycles are integrated at the molecular and cellular levels to regulate biological function. His lab combines molecular biology, genomics, imaging, and systems-level approaches to uncover how circadian mechanisms influence stress responses, development, and physiological performance. A central aim of this work is to translate fundamental discoveries into strategies that improve robustness and predictability in biological systems, including applications relevant to agriculture and controlled-environment growth systems.



Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3943-3968>

Website: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/molecularbiosciences/staff/mattjones/>

# Erika Oberholzer

Erika Oberholzer is an agribusiness entrepreneur, applied ethics scholar, and PhD candidate in botany whose work sits at the intersection of plant science, aesthetics, food, and human experience. As founder and owner of Pico-Gro, a high-tech horticultural enterprise in South Africa, she has built a career spanning plant propagation, agricultural exports, young farmer training, and innovation in edible flowers, herbs, and other specialty crops. Her current doctoral research explores the scientific, socioeconomic, and aesthetic dimensions of developing edible flowers for international culinary markets, with particular attention to how flowers are perceived, valued, and experienced by people across cultural and commercial contexts. With academic training in biochemistry, botany, project management, and environmental ethics, Oberholzer brings a uniquely multidisciplinary perspective to the study of flowers: as biological structures, sensory signals, cultural objects, and carriers of meaning. Her work bridges horticulture, ethics, food systems, and public engagement, making her especially well placed to contribute to an emerging research field concerned with humans' responses to flowers. In addition to her research and entrepreneurial leadership, she has served in national agricultural policy and export structures and is a regular speaker on environment, natural living, and nutrition.



Website <https://picogro.com>

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4479-1740>

## Michal Kowalski

Michal is a Master Florist and co-founder of Blooming Haus, trained in Switzerland and Austria at the Academy of Flower Design. He is one of a small number of florists in the United Kingdom to hold this distinguished qualification. With over a decade of experience designing botanical environments for some of the world's most celebrated spaces, Michal's work is rooted in a rigorous, craft-led methodology that treats floral design as an intrinsic extension of architecture, heritage, and season.

## Michael Dariane

Michael Dariane is co-founder and operations director of Blooming Haus, bringing a science-led approach to the business of luxury floral design. He holds a MSc in Environmental Management and is a chartered environmentalist, with a professional background rooted in sustainability strategy and business operations. Under his stewardship, Blooming Haus has achieved both B Corp and Planet Mark certifications, and measures its carbon footprint annually — embedding environmental accountability into every aspect of the studio's practice.

## Jay Thorneycroft

Jay is Creative Strategist at Blooming Haus, exploring the importance of flowers through the intersecting lenses of artistry, science, culture, and sustainability. Drawing on a background in natural sciences and social impact research, Jay sits at the crossroads of the studio's creative floristry team, its marketing, communications and sustainability practices — translating the deeper significance of botanical work into compelling narratives and strategic direction.



# About Blooming Haus

Founded in 2014, Blooming Haus is a London-based luxury floral studio designing botanical environments for some of the world's most celebrated spaces. A team of twelve works across weddings, events, contract installations, and editorial — locally and internationally — with a practice rooted in craft, culture, and place. Our commissions span across luxury weddings, international events, and contract installations, with clients including Cartier, British Vogue, Burberry, and Raffles London.

Design with intention. Sustainability by principle. Every commission tells a story.

Website: <https://bloominghaus.com/>