

2026 ISFA Lotus Cup Contest

The contest will be held on Friday, March 13, 2026

2026 Lotus Cup Competition March 13, 2026, from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. The entry fee is \$150.00 Competitors must be attendance at the Awards Banquet Dinner. Registration must be received by March 1, 2026. NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE PERMITTED.

Contest Description:

Contestants will be given 3 hours to complete 3 designs on-site. The three design categories will be: Wedding, Sympathy, and Surprise Package. The designer with the top combined score will become the 2026 Lotus Cup Winner.

Prizes:

Certificates and ribbons will be given to first place in each category.

Lotus Cup Winners:

First Place Overall Winner receives a certificate and the beautiful Lotus Cup trophy to keep. In addition, the winner will receive \$500.00 toward registration to represent Illinois State at the 2026 Sylvia Cup at the Society of American Florists Annual Convention. Travel, hotel and any remaining registration fees will be at the designer's expense.

First Runner-Up Overall receives a certificate and second place ribbon.

Second Runner-Up Overall receives a certificate and a third place ribbon.

If the Lotus Cup winner is unable to fulfill their responsibilities, the responsibilities will be fulfilled by the first runner-up or second runner-up, in that order.

Rules:

1. **ENTRY:** Contest is open to any active florist within the floral industry. Employees or family members of the Lotus Cup Chairperson are ineligible to compete. **Individuals are not eligible to compete within 1 year of winning the Lotus Cup.**
2. Contestants must preregister for the competition by March 1, 2026.
3. **Contestants must report to the Lotus Cup Chairperson 30 MINUTES BEFORE the start of the contest for a required briefing and instructions.** At this briefing, each contestant will draw a sealed envelope containing a random table number assignment and 3 category cards. At 8:30 AM, the designers will be allowed into the design room and will have 30 minutes to check the materials provided and prepare. The competition will begin at 9:00 AM and will conclude at 12:00 PM. The Lotus Cup Chairperson will retain a master sheet containing each contestant's name and identification numbers. No one other than the Designer of the Year Chairperson will have access to this document.
4. Contestants may only bring tools and listed materials on the approved tool list. All fresh

flowers, foliage, and additional supplies will be provided by ISFA. Any of the supplies may be used in any or all designs. No background or display items may be used on any design, unless provided by ISFA. **ANY CONTESTANT USING ANY PRODUCT OR SUPPLIES NOT ON THE TOOL LIST OR PROVIDED BY ISFA WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.** Once your paid registration is received, you will receive the tool list and rules via email.

5. DESIGN CATEGORY DETAILS: Each contestant will be given identical flowers, greens, accessories, and containers to work with. Contestants may use any of the materials provided to complete their designs. Contestants may use as little or as much as they choose. The bridal piece must be designed to be carried by a model and be detachable from the stand for final judging. Additional details for each category may be provided during the Lotus Cup briefing.

6. JUDGING: Prior to judging, the judges will be given an envelope containing the rules and score sheet. The judges will consist of qualified professional floral designers. The judges will only have access to their own tally sheets and will judge each design for its individual merit. Upon completion of judging, each judge will place all his/her tally sheets in an envelope and give it to the Lotus Cup Chairman.

A points system will be used with a possible 100 total points given to each design by each judge. Designs will be judged based on twenty categories. A maximum of 5 points may be given for each category. Point scale: 1 Poor, 2 Fair, 3 Average, 4 Good, and 5 Excellent. If a tie-breaker is needed, points awarded for the Sympathy category will be eliminated. **A score sheet will be sent out to all competitors one week prior to the competition.**

6. Results will be announced at the Banquet/Awards Dinner on Saturday evening. Designer's must be present to receive their award.

7. DISPLAY: The designs will remain in place to be viewed throughout the weekend. **Contestants must remove their designs no earlier than Sunday morning.**

8. DESIGNS WILL BE DISPLAYED IN A PUBLIC VIEWING AREA. ISFA OR THE HOST VENUE WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOSS, DAMAGE, OR THEFT.

9. THERE WILL BE NO REFUND IF A CONTESTANT DOES NOT SHOW UP FOR COMPETITION

For more information, please contact illinoisflorists@gmail.com

Lotus Cup Registration

Registration must be accompanied by \$150.00 registration fee. All entries must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2026

ALL DEADLINES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. NO REFUNDS.

Name:

Email Address:

Physical Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Shop Name

(if applicable): _____

Years in Floral Industry:

I certify that according to requirements listed above I am eligible to compete in the Designer of the Year competition.

Signature:

Date:

Registration payment can be made on the website at www.isfaeducation.org and registration form can be emailed to ISFA, Attn: Competition Chair at illinoisflorists@gmail.com

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