

## Maura Sheehy

### *Maura's Cottage Flowers*



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Maura Sheehy had always dreamed of having a cottage garden, but instead she devoted the outdoor space to her seven children. As her children grew older, Maura completed a horticulture course to reclaim her garden.

In 2013, Maura put a polytunnel in her garden in Ballyroe, Tralee, Co. Kerry and started to grow a variety of colourful wild flowers. One year later, she had so many beautiful flowers that she started to think about selling them.

In June 2015, she set up Maura's Cottage Flowers. Her wild flowers proved popular and word of mouth helped her gain many local clients.

Setting up a business for the first time doesn't come without its difficulties. Maura had many questions and fears, but meeting like-minded entrepreneurs at ACORNS gave her a huge confidence boost, which helped accelerate her business.

Since establishing Maura's Cottage Flowers, she has seen much success including securing a column called 'Start your own Wild Flower Garden' for Country Living Magazine in February 2016. In June of the same year, she won the Connect Kerry Women in Business Craft Award.

Most recently, Maura has hired part-time gardeners and florists to increase the variety of flowers available. This change has also helped her wedding business increase eightfold since its establishment three years ago and it also earned her the title of Florist of the Year South West in The 2018 Irish Wedding Awards.

The next step for Maura is to work as a host farmer for a Social Farming Project this summer and early next year she will study Social Farming in UCC.