



# A PICTURE PERFECT EASTERN IOWA OASIS

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**S**ince becoming a Quad-Citizen nearly seven years ago, some of my favorite local moments have had to do with Miss Effie's Flower Farm and Garden Stuff, a charming one-acre oasis of color and character northwest of Davenport.

I'm not sure which makes me the happiest: the acre of beautiful flowers, the farm-fresh eggs that add a certain confidence to my kitchen, or the wonderful woman behind the enterprise. Likely, it's a combination of all three that add up to a place I've grown to treasure and feel lucky to have found down a scenic stretch of country road just outside of town.

Cathy and Cliff Lafrenz established the you-pick flower farm in 2002 when they planted a small area for cutting flowers. Since

---

Leslie Klipsch

Cathy and Cliff Lafrenz sitting on a bed in the middle of a garden at Miss Effie's Flower Farm.



**Choose Fast, Secure, Local Banking on the Go.**



**Mobile Text**



**Mobile Web**



**Mobile App**



**www.ChoosetheChief.com**



**Blackhawk Bank & Trust**  
We're Not For Sale.

then, the business has grown and today the farm is filled with nearly 8,000 annuals meant to be admired and taken home by customers.

When you arrive at the farm — which has been featured in *Midwest Living Magazine* — you can help yourself to a bucket and clippers and create your own bouquets of blooms, or you can purchase a pre-made bouquet of fresh-cut flowers at the small Summer Kitchen located on the property.

In the Summer Kitchen, which is open year-round, you will also find a wealth of handmade items that includes everything from jams and jellies to hand-spun yarn to decorative tea towels to soap — all made by local artisans, producers and Ms. Lafrenz herself.

In addition to what you can take home from Miss Effie's, the farm is also a pleasant place to simply relax outdoors. Miss Effie's provides a delightful backdrop for picnics and parties, and Mr. and Ms. Lafrenz are happy to host farm tours.

Among the many groups that will tour Miss Effie's this summer, the Illinois Master Gardeners will enjoy a visit as part of their annual convention. Also at Miss Effie's this summer are extended Thursday evening hours.

"I think evenings are magical on the farm. We are thrilled with the idea of sharing the sunsets with our customers," Ms. Lafrenz

---

Each month in *The Gold Standard*, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for *Gold Book* readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.



Leslie Klipsch

said, adding that certain evenings may feature live music.

The endlessly energetic Ms. Lafrenz spends an incredible amount of time tending her herbicide- and pesticide-free gardens, canning the fruits of her labor, and teaching classes that instruct others on how to follow suit. She is also an advocate of the Quad-Cities Buy Fresh, Buy Local and volunteers her time to countless friends and community causes. Despite her schedule, she still maintains hope that she'll someday enjoy another bit of whimsy that can be found on the farm:

a bed in the middle of a garden.

“I love my bed in the garden,” Ms. Lafrenz beams. “Even though I have never ever taken a nap on it ... I will. I will absolutely do that.”

## My favorites

What’s not to love about a flower farm? The colors, the scent, the invitation to wander and enjoy ... it all adds up to a wonderful place to spend time. My children enjoy Miss Effie’s because of the chickens, ducks, and cats that inhabit the farm (Ms. Lafrenz has a spectacular variety of interesting-looking birds and sells their farm-fresh, cage-free, all-natural eggs to adoring customers) and the whole family enjoys the quiet of the quaint “corn-zebo,” which is a corn crib built in 1948 re-fashioned and rented out by the Mr. and Ms. Lafrenz for picnics and gatherings.

Perhaps one of the most interesting things about the farm is the teacup tree. Dainty, old-fashioned cups, which have been secured to a tree, can be seen swinging in the wind producing a sight that adds the perfect dose of quirkiness to the farm.

## Miss Effie’s favorites

“I love the sound of the birds chirping early in the morning, and I love the sound of the frogs in the evening,” Ms. Lafrenz said. “I like the barn swallows swooping down on us as we weed and mow. And I love the swing in the tree.”

Ms. Lafrenz also enjoys her customers. “I like the hugs I have been lucky enough to be given day-in and day-out,” she said, noting how much she enjoys connecting with customers.

## Why you should visit

The very idea of a flower farm is pleasing and knowing that such a peaceful place exists within our own area must be welcome to a beauty-seeking Quad-Cities dweller. Not only is Miss Effie’s a great place to cut fresh flowers and do a bit of relaxing, but you might find that the flower farm is an especially agreeable place to entertain out-of-town summer guests.

## When you should visit

You’ll find Miss Effie’s at 27387 130th Ave, Donahue, Iowa. Flower hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays (open until 8 p.m. Thursdays through Aug. 15); 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays; and noon to 3 p.m. Sundays. Hours are weather permitting. Visit [misseffiesflowers.com](http://misseffiesflowers.com) or follow Miss Effie on Facebook.

DAINTY, OLD-  
FASHIONED CUPS,  
WHICH HAVE BEEN  
SECURED TO A  
TREE, CAN BE SEEN  
SWINGING IN THE  
WIND PRODUCING  
A SIGHT THAT  
ADDS THE  
PERFECT DOSE OF  
QUIRKINESS TO  
THE FARM.