



## Questionable Flower Vendors Petal Their Wares

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MADISON – Buying flowers for Mom? Most people know the best flower shops in their mother’s town and place an order directly with that business. But for those who need to seek out a florist: the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) asks shoppers to do their research before placing an order this Mother’s Day.

“The vast majority of flower shops are trustworthy. But some disreputable companies place ads listing local street addresses and phone numbers when they are actually just coordinating the purchase and delivery of goods from someplace else – even out of state,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “If you are looking for a trusted local business for your Mother’s Day needs, seek recommendations from friends and family. The local chamber of commerce may also be able to assist you with your search.”

If you plan to hire a “local” company from the phone book or an online search, ask the business:

- Where is the business specifically located?
- Can you visit that location to see their selection?
- How long have they operated at that location?
- How long have they been in business?

If the salesperson refuses to provide that information, consider calling another shop. Also, if the company answers the phone with a generic phrase like “flower shop,” (instead of a specific name) ask for its legal name. Again, you should be able to expect a straight answer.

Other considerations when choosing a florist include:

- Beware of offers for multiple discounts, claims of lowest prices, “A+” self-ratings and other puffery (exaggerated praise in advertising or publicity).
- Get an itemized price quote (written, if possible) for the product and delivery before you make a payment and ask about any additional fees that could potentially arise. Ask for the terms of any satisfaction guarantees that the business may offer.
- Ask specifics about the flowers that will be used in the arrangement: how many roses vs carnations will be used, how many “filler” flowers and accents vs. focal flowers, etc.
- Understand if a portion of your payment is used to purchase the vase and any accessories with the bouquet. Ask for alternatives if you want to spend less on accessories and more on flowers.

As part of your research, you may also wish to contact DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline (800-422-7128 or [datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov)) to learn about complaints that have been filed against the business.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov).

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