



Be Wary of Dishonest Dupes, Consider Something Special *from* Wisconsin for Mother's Day

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MADISON, Wis. – Whether for Mother's Day, an upcoming wedding, birthday, or any other special occasion, many consumers do their gift shopping completely online. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) cautions consumers to pay attention and confirm websites are legitimate before ordering.

The internet has made it easy for deceptive sellers to misrepresent who, what, and where they are. For example, consumers searching or viewing ads online for a florist commonly find professional-looking websites for businesses that claim to be local but have no physical presence in town and are actually from another community or state. These businesses may ship flowers from far away that wilt by the time they arrive, secretly order from a real local florist on your behalf while raising prices and pocketing the difference, or not provide the agreed-upon services at all.

Sometimes, real businesses are impersonated by scammers who build near-identical copies of their websites and lure consumers with claims of great deals and massive discounts. Their goal is to trick consumers into making fake purchases that provide them with personal and payment information. These imposter websites can be difficult to identify and have been known to mimic large and small businesses. By the time consumers realize what has happened, their credit cards or bank accounts may already be compromised.

To avoid a fake or dishonest business when gift shopping online, DATCP recommends consumers take the time to verify everything is in order prior to entering information on any website – even familiar ones. Pay close attention to website addresses to identify typos or other irregularities that could indicate an imposter scam. Check a company's verified social media accounts for direct links to their website and confirm the address is the same. If it is a small business, find its street address and conduct an internet search to confirm it really exists there. Call them to ask questions like their location, hours of operation, and availability for weekend or holiday deliveries so you can confirm the business is legitimate and their services fit your needs.

For high-quality gift products you can guarantee are real and local, consider purchasing Something Special *from* Wisconsin™ (SSfW). The Something Special *from* Wisconsin program has helped consumers connect with genuine Wisconsin products since 1983. The program's nearly 500 members are local businesses certifying that at least 50% of a product's ingredients, production, or processing is from or completed in Wisconsin. Members offer products such as gorgeous floral arrangements, sweet treats, handmade pieces, and delectable dining options. Something Special *from* Wisconsin products are easily recognizable on the shelves with the red and yellow program logo. Consumers can also visit somethingspecialwi.com to search for products or learn more.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP's Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

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