

Fresh Cut Flowers

Why we care

We use fresh cut flowers to celebrate an occasion, brighten up our homes, and give as gifts. But where do the flowers come from? Imported cut flowers are often flown thousands of miles in refrigerated airplane holds. Most cut flowers we buy are grown in countries like Colombia and Ecuador where weak environmental and worker safety laws allow the use of chemicals that would not be allowed in the U.S. Exposure to these chemicals is particularly dangerous to the health of workers, and the toxic runoff can contaminate groundwater. Non-organic flowers grown in the U.S. may also use chemicals that are harmful to people and fish since flowers are not subject to the same regulatory conditions imposed on growers of edible crops.

Simple, positive steps

- Look for flowers at farmer's markets during the growing season (May – October).
- Purchase sustainably grown flowers locally from retailers such as Botanica Floral Design, Petal Passion, Emerald Petals, and [Whole Foods](#). Or ask for [Oregon Flowers](#) at New Seasons, Market of Choice, or Zupan's.
- Ask the vendor whether it has flowers grown organically, certified by [Rain Forest Alliance](#), which has standards to protect the environment and workers, or certified by [Fair Trade](#), which assures that workers have a way to improve their wages and working conditions.
- Grow your own. Roses, tulips, gladiolas, lilies, and zinnias make great cut flowers.
- Purchase potted plants instead.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org.