

Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Is That “Hometown” Florist Out of State?

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MADISON - The Mother’s Day flower shopping extravaganza is underway! For shoppers with a favorite local store, the choice is simple for placing an order. 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.

“Be cautious when using online listings or phone book ads to pick a florist,” said Michelle Reinen, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. “You may think you are selecting a local florist but are actually contacting a business located in another state that just coordinates the purchase and delivery of goods.”

If you want to hire a “local” florist from the phone book or using 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 florist. Also, if the business 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 datcphotline@wi.gov) to learn about complaints that have been filed against a business.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at <https://datcp.wi.gov>.

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