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Pandemic shutdown may boost Mother's Day supermarket floral sales

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As almost everyone across the U.S. continues to shelter in place amid the coronavirus pandemic, supermarkets remain the go-to place for essentials. Meanwhile, flower growers continue to struggle with too much supply and not enough demand since the COVID-19 crisis has shutdown many wholesalers and retailers. As one farmer put it, “The world needs more flowers in homes and not in dumpsters right now.”

With Mother’s Day swiftly approaching, supermarket floral departments are poised to capitalize on one of the biggest American flower holidays. Mother’s Day commands 25 percent of the floral holiday market share, with close to \$1.9 billion worth of cut flowers sold in the lead-up to the big day.

In 2019, there were 85.4 million moms in the U.S. and 69 percent of all Mother’s Day gifts were flowers, making them the single most popular choice for mom. This means out of the average \$61.56 spent per American adult on Mother’s Day gifts last year, \$42.48 was spent on flowers.

Since many brick-and-mortar retail flower shops are closed or offering only limited business, supermarket floral departments are expected to see increased sales. The growers of Certified American Grown flowers are even calling on consumers to add flowers to their grocery lists when they make a vital run to the store or have necessities delivered to their homes.

Potted flowers and plants are also popular supermarket floral department gift options. “A smile is an emotion that an orchid is capable of generating time and time again,” Marcella Lucio, vice president of marketing at Silver Vase Orchids, based in Homestead, FL, told The Produce News. “We need more smiles, we need more cheer, and hopefully we at Silver Vase can generate joy with our orchids this Mother’s Day.”

Kitayama Bros. Farms has come up with its own campaign to help support everyone still able to operate in the floral supply chain: “Stay home. Stay safe. Send flowers.” According to a company

blog post, KB Farms believes that “the world must take its time to heal right now and flowers should be a powerful and essential part of that healing. Flowers can express joy, care and understanding in an instant.”

Koehler and Dramm Wholesale Florist in Minneapolis recently sent out this message to all of its customers: “Mother’s Day is going to look quite a bit different for a whole lot of people this year, and flowers are likely to be one of the top gift choices during a time when many folks may not be able to see their moms. Flowers send the message, ‘I love you, I miss you, and I’m thinking of you’ best.”

Ron Crittenden, executive vice president at the Great Lakes Floral Association, said, “Flowers and plants play an important role in emotional wellbeing. Our society needs the ability to have a safe and effective way to say Happy Mother’s Day to millions of moms. We understand the positive impact flowers make on a person’s life. We see it every day. Flowers are needed now more than ever.”

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