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Cut flower imports for Valentine's could top past three years

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Just days away from Valentine's Day, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists have inspected nearly 850 million cut flowers for insects, pests and diseases that could harm the agricultural and floral industries of the United States.



As shipments continue, the 2023 numbers of cut flowers could exceed those of the previous three years, each topping 1 billion stems by the end of the season. Colombia remains the top importer at more than 550 million stems, most going to Miami International Airport. The most popular flowers are roses, mixed bouquets and chrysanthemums.

CBP agriculture specialists are the last line in the fight against the introduction of insects, pests and diseases into the United States. As of Feb. 1, CBP agriculture specialists intercepted 1,235 insects and pests. In 2022, agriculture specialists inspected more than 1.23 billion cut flowers, intercepting more than 1,975 pests.

“Every year in the lead-up to the Valentine’s Day holiday, our CBP agriculture specialists are tasked with inspecting tens of millions of flowers every day, ensuring that floral shops across the U.S. are well supplied for the demand, while also safeguarding our Nation’s agriculture,” said Dina Amato, acting executive director of CBP’s agriculture programs and trade liaison. “I am proud that our frontline men and women are able to step up to the challenge and accomplish our mission.”

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