

'Green' flowers for Valentine's Day

By Mark Collins
 For the Camera

Elegant lilies, delicate orchids, big splashy daisies, sensual red roses. We love our flowers, in whatever form.

Worldwide, the flower industry creates \$40 billion a year in revenue, according to Amy Stewart, author of "Flower Confidential: The Good, The Bad and the Beautiful." And roughly 75 percent of the flowers bought in the United States are grown elsewhere and imported.

Curiously, while concern about organic origins or sustainable-living practices is common when it comes to so many aspects of our lifestyles — what we eat, what we drive, what we wear — that's not necessarily the case when it comes to the flowers we put in the vase on our table.

Flowers can be a source of unwanted chemicals entering your home. That's good to know when choosing volup-

tuous blossoms for your loved one on Valentine's Day.

"Everybody thinks that flowers are pure and sweet, but when they come in from out of the country, they're often dipped in fungicide to make sure that no pests or bugs are crossing borders," says Cherie Silverman AIFD, who's been in the flower business for 27 years.

Silverman became one of the first florists to offer organically grown flowers in the Denver-metro area, when she started carrying them at her store, Cherry Blossoms, in Westminster, last year. Among the organic flowers she sells are lilies, gerberas and roses.

An official designer for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., Silverman decided to bring organic flowers to the Front Range after encountering them in California in recent years.

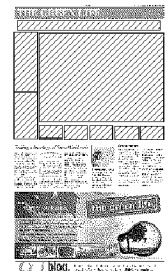
"I don't know if it's because

of the different fertilizers they use, I don't know if it's because they're not sprayed, but the foliage is beautiful and the roses are beautiful," Silverman says of the organic flowers. "They look happier."

Cherry Blossoms' organic flowers come from farms in Central America and California that are certified by VeriFlora, an organization that ensures growers adhere to sustainable-living and fair-labor practices. In addition, Silverman has recently begun talks with organic farmers in Boulder County about the possibility of growing organic flowers for her store in the future.

For more information on Cherry Blossoms organic flowers, visit www.cherryblossomsflorist.net.

Contact Mark Collins at 303-473-1369 or BDCTheater@comcast.net.





Kasia Broussalian | Camera

Florist Cherrie Silverman, owner of Cherry Blossoms, arranges a bouquet of organic roses in her Westminster store. The store offers sustainable and organic Valentine's Day gifts, such as lilies as well as roses.