

Whether selling blooms and bouquets at farmers markets, for weddings and events, or through CSA shares, farm stands, or online businesses, flower farmers and farmer-florists work in a dynamic and creative marketplace. In Washington State, different regulations apply for selling cut flowers, edible flowers, flower seeds, and flowers that are considered nursery products (i.e., rooted plants, bulbs, and starts).

This fact sheet includes information on:

- Selling cut flowers.
- Selling edible flowers.
- Selling flower seeds and nursery products.

Selling Cut Flowers

Cut flowers are generally sold for aesthetic enjoyment purposes and are not intended to be ingested. Cut flowers do not have roots attached and are not considered nursery products. As such, no specific regulations or licenses are needed to sell cut flowers.

Many resources are available to help flower farmers and farmer-florists anticipate and meet consumer and design trends and to promote their flowers. For example, “Slow Flowers,” slowflowers.com, is an online directory of flower farmers, florists, studio designers, wedding and event planners, and supermarket flower departments committed to using American-grown flowers. WSDA and the Washington Farm Bureau developed materials that flower farmers and retailers can use to promote Washington cut flowers. Contact WSDA Regional Markets for information at smallfarms@agr.wa.gov or agr.wa.gov.

Selling Edible Flowers

Flowers that are sold as edible (e.g., for use as ingredients in salads or baked goods) are considered “produce” by the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. Depending on the scale of the farm and the type of customers, farms that grow and sell edible flowers may have requirements for on-farm produce safety practices as part of FSMA regulation. Please see the “FAQ’s on the Food Safety Modernization Act” fact sheet for information about that new regulation for produce growers, to determine if any of the requirements apply to your farm business. The American Herbal Products Association, ahpa.org, provides useful recommendations about food safety practices for edible flower growers in their free publication online “Good Agricultural Collection Practices and Good Manufacturing Practices (GACP-GMP) for botanical materials.”

Beyond any applicable FSMA requirements, no special inspections or licenses are needed to sell edible flowers as a raw agricultural commodity that has not been processed. Edible flowers may be sold to end consumers in a variety of container types and sizes, including clamshells, without a WSDA Food Processor license or retail food permit—as long as the package includes a statement to “wash before eating” to make sure customers understand that it is not ready to eat, and the product is not otherwise processed. Please see the “WSDA Food Processor License” fact sheet for details.

Selling Flower Seeds and Nursery Products

Requirements for selling seeds and nursery products aim to reduce the spread of invasive plant material in Washington that can negatively affect the agricultural industry. These requirements also ensure that high quality seed reaches the marketplace in compliance with laws.

To sell flower seeds, whether selling directly to consumers or to seed companies, there are a variety of requirements. Please see the “Selling Seeds” fact sheet.

REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PRODUCTS

Farms or other businesses selling flower bulbs, plant starts, and potted plants, including flowering annuals and perennials, as well as all other ornamental plants, require a nursery license. There are two exceptions:

1. Selling less than \$100 per year.
2. Garden clubs, charitable non-profit associations, educational organizations and conservation districts, under certain conditions, are exempted from the licensing requirements (RCW 15.13.270), but they are required to have a plant sale permit.

Please see the “Selling Nursery Products” fact sheet.



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