

# Frequent flower buyers seek product variety

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Florists and other retailers who sell flowers and plants can now add another tool to their marketing kit. A recent study of "consumption values" may help them understand what influences consumers' choices in regard to floral purchases, and how to better design marketing efforts and purchase stock that can increase customers and sales.

Li-Chun Huang from National Taiwan University and Tzu-Fang Yeh from Da-Yeh University headed a research project that evaluated the differences in floral consumption values across consumer groups (the full study appears in a recent issue of *HortTechnology*).

A consumer survey was conducted in cities and rural areas in Taiwan in 2006 where 677 participants were surveyed. According to responses to a survey question that asked whether they purchased flowers, participants were divided into two categories: "users" and "nonusers" of flowers.

The majority of survey participants indicated that the following values (in descending order) influenced their floral purchases: showing care to others, emotion conditioning, and "sensory hedonics", a phenomenon in which [consumers](#) perceive the value of flowers based on touching, smelling, or tasting them. Interestingly, those participants identified as "heavy users" of flowers revealed different priorities, rating "emotion conditioning" as more important than "showing care to others". The researchers note that this implies that "heavy users" make more frequent floral purchase flowers partly because they are more emotionally stimulated by flowers. Heavy users also rated "curiosity fulfillment" higher, leading to them to look for more novelty and variety when

purchasing flowers.

Nonusers and light users of flowers, or consumers who prefer to buy cut flowers, have lower degrees of curiosity fulfillment value, so tend to be less likely to seek product variety when purchasing flowers. These groups are also less likely to be influenced by florists' advertising, revealing a distinct marketing challenge for retailers.

"The results of this study indicate that the consumer groups who made different purchase choices in relation to the floral products possessed different floral [consumption](#) values", noted Huang and Yeh. "However, their perceptions of the flowers' social value, as in presenting flowers to show care to others, were very common and consistent, regardless of what their choice was for the purchases of flowers".

The researchers admit that their study results present specific challenges to floral retailers—how to convert recalcitrant consumers into frequent floral buyers. "Due to the inner lack of curiosity about flowers, the task of transforming the nonusers and light users of flowers into the users and heavy users of [flowers](#), respectively, becomes very challenging for the practitioners in the floral market", they concluded.

More information: The complete study and abstract are available on the ASHS HortTechnology electronic journal web site:  
[horttech.ashspublications.org/...nt/abstract/19/3/563](http://horttech.ashspublications.org/...nt/abstract/19/3/563)

Source: American Society for Horticultural Science

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