

FAQ: Plants, Cut Flowers, Starts, Seeds

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Does PCC have a standard for the plants and flowers it sells?

Yes, PCC has a standard for cut flowers, ornamental plants, plant starts, and seeds. For all categories, PCC prioritizes local producers and seasonal options whenever possible. We also seek to partner with producers that are transparent about their growing, harvesting, and other production practices. Beyond these general goals, for cut flowers, PCC requires all roses to be certified by [Veriflora Sustainably Grown](#), edible plant starts must be certified organic (unless commercially unavailable), starts of all kinds cannot be species invasive to the Pacific Northwest, and all food crop seeds must be certified organic. Because PCC also recognizes that the industry in general has a lot of work to do in terms of advancing sustainability in some of these areas, we continue to look for opportunities to support producers that share in our goals and values. Read the standard [here](#).

Why doesn't PCC source local cut flowers only?

Not all species of flowers can grow in the climate of the Pacific Northwest, so caution is needed for any tropical or hot-climate flowers that are grown locally. Often non-native flowers are grown in greenhouses, sometimes hydroponically. Such operations could have a larger carbon footprint than simply transporting flowers grown in their natural climate.¹ Additionally, PCC strives to offer flowers that are customary for certain celebrations and holidays, many of those being species not native to the Pacific Northwest or difficult to grow in this region during certain times of the year such as the roses shoppers want for Valentine's Day.

Why aren't all your cut flowers organic?

The supply of organic flowers is small, and they can be very expensive. PCC strongly supports organic certification, but also wants to provide shoppers with a reasonable selection of more modestly priced floral and ornamental plant options. We continue to look for opportunities to expand the supply of organic flowers and those grown without harmful chemicals, to ensure accessible pricing and a wider selection.

Why aren't all of your edible garden starts certified organic?

Unfortunately, even some commercially certified organic fruits and vegetables lack sufficient supplies of organically grown starts. A primary example is strawberries. (PCC and its organic advocacy allies have [been calling attention to this issue](#) and pressing for expanded organic options for many years.) While there has been some significant progress for some commercial producers, it can still be challenging to find organic strawberry starts for retail and personal garden use. That said, they do exist, and PCC always prioritizes organic options when available.

¹ Carolyn Whelan, "Blooms Away: The Real Price of Flowers," *Scientific American*, February 12, 2009, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/environmental-price-of-flowers/>.