

# NOTEBOOK

## Local Colors

Flower-buying tips for the footprint-conscious

BUYING LOCAL has become an overarching mind-set, not just a way to shop for groceries. In her book, *The 50 Mile Bouquet: Seasonal, Local and Sustainable Flowers* (St. Lynn's Press), outdoor living expert Debra Prinzing, with photographer David Perry, documents farmers and "eco-designers" around the United States who work with local, sustainable flowers. We asked Prinzing to preview some of the book's big ideas.

### What is the slow flower movement?

While the culinary world is exploding with farm-to-table chefs, similarly, there is an exciting revolution among floral designers who care about the field-to-vase journey. When florists make the important connection with a flower farmer, the resulting designs are highly seasonal and incredibly beautiful — and, of course, sustainable.

**Are you seeing a rise in green techniques among florists?** Yes. Most eco-designers refuse to work with floral foam since it's not biodegradable. Instead, these designers stabilize flower stems with greener methods, like intricate twig armatures or bunched-up chicken wire. Recycled vases are popular, too.

### How can consumers make better decisions when purchasing flowers?

Ask where the flowers were grown. Seek out growers at farmers' markets. In the off-season, learn to identify floral ingredients in your own backyard! — Anna Watson Carl



For *The 50 Mile Bouquet*, Debra Prinzing and David Perry spent three years touring the country documenting the true allies of green floral design: small flower farmers.

DAVID PERRY