

BioFlora

growth in organic floriculture



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IMAGES OF



ORGANIC FLORICULTURE

May we tempt you to leaf through these pages? As you do so, the possibilities of organic floriculture will appear before you. Is it something new to you? Many renowned companies have already taken this step. Feel free to make contact, see page 20.

This booklet presents developments from the BioFlora project. It has been a pleasure for us to work on it on behalf of the initiators, Florganic (wholesaler of organic floricultural products) and Natuur en Milieu (Dutch N.G.O.).

BioFlora Project Team

Arend Zeelenberg, BioFlora Project Leader
Jolanda Robinson-Kuilboer, BioFlora Chain Manager
Jorien Brand, Florganic
Maarten Vrensen, Florganic
Yvonne Lassooy, Natuur en Milieu





Since 2004, Shell has been very successfully selling organic flowers at many of its own points of sale in The Netherlands, making it the country's largest seller of organic flowers.

'We started the test to support organic flower growers, but one-and-a-half years later, we're still selling organic flowers because of the great commercial results', says Rutger Vermast, Local Implementer Non Food at Shell.

The sales figures and loss percentages that determine profits are the same as for conventional flowers. Organic flowers also have the same turnover speed as conventional bouquets.

“SHELL'S SUCCESS”

[Rutger Vermast]

Local Implementer CR - Non Food
SHELL NEDERLAND VERKOOPMAATSCHAPPIJ
www.shell.nl

The flowers are supplied to Shell stations by the organic wholesaler Florganic, working closely with its affiliated company, conventional flower supplier Intergreen, in matters relating to the price/quality ratio and appearance. Organic flowers are included in Shell's conventional flower presentation and sold at the same prices as the rest of the product range.

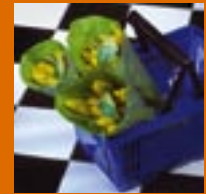
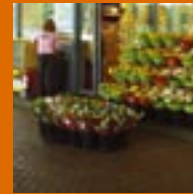
“TO TEMPT OR TO CONVINC?”



[prof. dr. ir. Kitty Koelemeijer]

Manager and Owner, ADFONTES MARKETING;
professor of retailing and marketing channels
at Nyenrode Business University
www.adfontes.nl

Marketing organic flowers through unconventional channels such as supermarkets and petrol stations offers surprising opportunities. Kitty Koelemeijer of Adfontes Marketing investigated the possibilities.



‘Supermarkets and petrol stations rely on casual and impulse purchases of flowers. Consumers take little time to decide. It should be clear in a fraction of a second what the product’s direct advantage is. Is it a large bouquet? Does it look good? Is it well packaged? The ‘organic’ label does not offer consumers a direct advantage. It’s too remote a consideration for many people, so don’t focus too much on the environment with these sales channels but give organic products an added value that does appeal to consumers in these locations. Offer a nice and attractive product. The fact that people discover once they’re home that it happens to be organic too is a nice coincidence. Who knows, they may deliberately buy an organic bouquet next time.’



“PACKAGE IT

'Organic flowers or bulbs can best be positioned as gift items. You could compare it to chocolates or perfume. When a gift is for someone else it's OK if it costs a bit more, so position it where consumers buy gifts and on the gift shelves. The organic aspect is proof of good behaviour by the grower and the retailer.'

[Paul Turken]

Retired advertising executive,
FHV BBDO advertising agency



AS A GIFT!"





[François Guichard]

Direction Executive Hypermarchés France
CARREFOUR FRANCE

Why has Carrefour decided to start selling organic flowers?

'Carrefour is a socially engaged company that takes the environment into consideration and develops products within the framework of sustainable development. Carrefour was the first company in France to sell organic fruit and vegetables. In terms of growth in our sales and our image among customers, I thought it was a good idea to offer organic flowers as well. It also helps me distinguish myself from my competitors who do not sell them.'

Do you believe in organic flowers in general?

'At the moment, organic flowers provide only marginal sales. I think this will develop in a positive way in the near future and so we have to position ourselves on the market now.'



“SOCIALY ENGAGED”



“A NICE BUNCH AND A GOOD MESSAGE”

'There's a split proposition: on the one hand, you just want to sell a nice bunch of flowers that looks good and has the right price/quality ratio for a broad audience. But on the other hand, you also want to send a more socially engaged message about the sustainable nature of your product. The answer lies in the right mix of values from both sides of the spectrum. Such as the appearance and packaging on one side and the organic message on the other, which we've translated into the Naturally Pure concept.'

[Marianne Robben]

Strategy Director
ARA DIRECT COMMUNICATION



“NATURALLY PURE”



[Frans Termorshuizen]

Organic Flower Grower
Wouwse Plantage
www.ottermeerhoeve.nl

Frans Termorshuizen is an outdoor flower grower. His farm, Ottermeerhoeve, is in the middle of an estate in progress.

'I want to manage these 20 hectares of land organically, bring it back to its original state and pass it on to the next generation. Organic flower growing in this natural environment contributes to achieving this sustainable goal.'

'It's nice to see how nature works and how inventive the organic environment is. When I had just started growing organically, the area was bare and the soil was unstable. The natural equilibrium was restored by creating nature and managing it. It had been clear to me for some time that investing in a good subsoil yields nice healthy flowers above ground.'

'By buying an organic bouquet, you support sustainable clean agriculture and help manage a natural area.'





[Helmut Vleugels]

Creative Director
ARA DIRECT COMMUNICATION

'Corporate Social Responsibility is, of course, primarily a trend among retailers and (brand-name) manufacturers because consumers want it. Retailers follow the market. They are always working to improve their competitive position and their brand values. Of course, some entrepreneurs do have noble intentions but ultimately, business decisions play a part.

Consumers would like to do something good. The question is what consumers are prepared to pay for doing so. This is not always easy in practice. The direct advantage of the total product must be attractive to the consumer, and you should also be able to get the responsible message across, of course. What does buying organic flowers get you? A gift with a story!

Above all, things have to be made easy for consumers. You can change the world by giving away a bunch of organic flowers, for example.'

“CONVENIENCE FOR CONSUMERS”





“ORGANIC FLOWER BULBS

Since 2004, the garden centre Intratuin has been selling organic flower bulbs in addition to conventionally grown bulbs. The reason for expanding the range is that 'Intratuin is the market leader in large-scale sales of greenery, so **we see it as our duty to fulfil our role as a socially responsible corporation as well.**'

For 2005, a more suitable concept for selling organic flower bulbs has been sought. Siersema has found inspiration in the words of advertising executive Paul Turken, who believes that it is not the organic factor that should be distinctive, but good presentation and exclusive appearance. Present organic flowers and bulbs as a gift, is Turken's credo.

Using this information, Intratuin devoted even more attention in 2005 to the appearance of the organic bulbs and their position in the store. The bulbs were sold in attractively designed boxes and crates.

AS GIFTS"



[Ronald Siersema]

Greenery Product Manager
INTRATUIN NEDERLAND BV
www.intratuin.nl





[Marco van Zijverden]

CEO

DUTCH FLOWER GROUP

www.dfg.nl

www.florganic.nl

Florganic bv is a wholesaler of organic floricultural products. Florganic is part of Intergreen B.V. at Honselersdijk, Holland. As a member of the Dutch Flower Group, Intergreen is a trendsetter in supplying flowers and plants to retail chains in Europe. Why is a giant like the Dutch Flower Group interested in having a small company like Florganic under its umbrella? Marco van Zijverden doesn't beat around the bush. 'We were initially neutral towards the organic alternative in floriculture', he says, 'until we noticed a need in the market. There was an express demand from supermarket chains in the UK, France and Switzerland. So our motives are not entirely noble. We are flower providers and we see supplying organic cut flowers as an additional service to our customers. Within the Dutch Flower Group, we highly value corporate social responsibility and this is an excellent fit'

'The product still has to prove itself commercially, but we're taking our time and we're prepared to invest. It shouldn't only be a question of ideals for growers either – they have to make a living too. Now that we're past the pioneer stage, more or less, we have to look at the commercial value of organic flowers. The first task, especially for expansion on the Dutch market, is to reduce the price difference between conventional and organic', says Van Zijverden.

“ORGANIC FLOWERS
AS AN ADDITIONAL SERVICE”



“AUTHENTIC”

'Working with organic flowers is fun because they lend themselves very well to flower arrangements that express the seasons. It's inspiring and encourages creativity. A natural packaging that works with the seasonal trends reinforces the concept. Not organic brown paper, but playful stripes as they're being used now.'

'Flowers are authentic and responsible in themselves. Unfortunately, that image is overshadowed by the use of pollutants that are involved in conventional growing. Organic flowers help keep this image intact.'

[Florian Seyd]

Flower Arranger
www.sw-connection.nl





“EXCLUSIVE

[Franck van Graas]

STARO B.V.
www.staro.nl

Staro bv, the European market leader in developing and supplying natural business gifts, started supplying organic flower bulbs this year. The reason is that organic flower bulbs have escaped from the Birkenstock ghetto. and companies wishing to distinguish themselves in terms of corporate social responsibility are asking for them. It has become a product with a clear added value for us. It makes it easier for us to gain entry with retailers.

'Flower bulbs are often viewed as frumpy, but nothing could be further from the truth. Give it a good packaging concept and flower bulbs will have an elegant, exclusive appearance. The gift segment is an excellent fit for organic bulbs. The organic label adds even more value, but the important thing is that it looks good, robust and fresh.'

APPEARANCE"

'Less but better is where the organic world's opportunities are.'





“I CHOOSE

ORGANIC FLORICULTURE”

[Rob de Wit]

Greenhouse Grower
Andijk



Rob de Wit has been a greenhouse grower for 25 years. His business has been making the transition to organic growing since April 2004. Starting next year, he can sell his flowers under the EKO label.

‘Conventional growing is increasingly using principles from organic growing. I kept getting the impression that switching to organic growing wasn’t such a big step anymore. I was also dealing with the future: what do I want for my business? To keep getting bigger and bigger? Or will I aim to be distinctive? I feel more affinity with content, so I chose the latter.’

‘Every day, I’m amazed at how well it’s going. You start by not spraying for a month, then not spraying for six months ... I’ve also noticed that I’m dealing with things much more creatively.’

‘I’m proud that the losses are under control, that my flowers are getting median prices at the auction and there have been no comments about quality so far. It’s just a good product. Next year I’ll be able to use the EKO label: my efforts will be rewarded and that’ll be more reassuring.’

'The Netherlands really is a country of flowers. We produce, export and auction huge quantities of roses, chrysanthemums, carnations, sunflowers and much more every year. Most people in The Netherlands keep a bunch of flowers on their table. The other side of floriculture is pollution of nature and the environment. Growing flowers involves the use of large amounts of pesticides that end up in the soil and water. Organic flowers are a good alternative to this and it was with this idea in mind that Natuur en Milieu began the BioFlora project in 2003. This involved working with the flower sector (Florganic) to cultivate the growth of the organic floriculture sector. This is important not only for the organic sector itself. **The organic sector is often a good breeding ground for environmental innovations that trickle down to the conventional sector.**

'This brochure shows the results of more than two years of activity in organic flowers. Many companies have presented a positive image of the potential of organic floriculture and sales. In doing so, they indicate that organic flowers and bulbs should be positioned as products with added value, not just for the environment but particularly because of the attractiveness of a bunch of flowers or a box of bulbs. BioFlora has ensured that supply and demand for organic floriculture products have increased, but more growth is needed, so that more consumers can enjoy a purely natural bouquet all year round and more growers can switch to organic floriculture. That's good for nature and the environment.'

“FLOWERS WITH A STORY



[Mirjam de Rijk]

General Director
NATUUR EN MILIEU
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TO TELL”

[contact]

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