



NEWS

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Contact: Jennifer Sparks

800-336-4743

jsparks@safnow.org

New Behavioral Research Demonstrates Flowers in the Home Make a Positive Impact on Our Lives

Collective Effort Proves A Win for the Industry

Sept. 29, 2006 – Can the mere presence of flowers in the home change people’s moods or state of mind? Can the effects carry over into our daily lives? New research, a result of a collective effort and strategic alliance by the Society of American Florists (SAF) and the Flower Promotion Organization (FPO), says yes.

A behavioral study conducted at Harvard University shows people feel more compassionate toward others, have less worry and anxiety, and feel less depressed when flowers are present in the home.

Throughout 2006, the SAF/FPO Alliance partnered with Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School to explore the effects of flowers in the home environment on our well being. After six months of development, data collection and analysis by the Harvard research team, the results of the Home Ecology of Flowers Study was unveiled to the industry on September 29 during the Consumer Marketing Breakfast at SAF’s 122nd Annual Convention in Naples, Fla.

In a presentation by Dr. Etcoff, convention attendees heard first-hand the exciting research findings:

1. Flowers feed compassion.

Study participants who lived with flowers for less than a week felt an increase in feelings of compassion for others.

2. Flowers chase away anxieties, worries and the blues at home.

- Overall, people in the study simply felt less negative after being around flowers at home for just a few days.
- People can feel the power of flowers: Participants most frequently placed the flowers in their kitchens, dining rooms and living rooms, where they spend a lot of time at home. They reported wanting to see the blooms first thing in the morning.

3. Living with flowers can provide a boost of energy, happiness and enthusiasm at work.

- Having flowers at home can have a positive carry-over impact on our mood at work, too.
- The study found that people are more likely to feel happier and have more enthusiasm and energy at work when flowers are in their home living environments.

“We know that flowers make people happy when they receive them. What we didn’t know is that spending a few days with flowers in the home can affect a wide variety of feelings – from compassion to worry,” said Etcoff. “As a psychologist, I’m particularly intrigued to find that people who live with flowers report fewer episodes of anxiety and depressed feelings. In all, our results suggest that flowers have a positive impact on well being,” she added.

Promotion of the News to Consumers

The SAF/FPO Alliance is publicizing the positive findings to consumers through an ongoing strategic public relations campaign set to launch in October 2006. Utilizing Dr. Etcoff as spokesperson, the findings will be distributed via a press kit to print media, a satellite television tour to secure interviews in cities nationwide, and through targeted pitching to national consumer magazines.

To help industry members capitalize on the nationwide PR program, FPO is developing retail collateral materials that will be available this fall. In addition, SAF’s 2007 local marketing kit will feature marketing materials, advice and ideas to help florists promote the research in their local efforts.

Researcher Bio

Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., is a psychologist and faculty member of the Harvard Medical School and of Harvard University’s Mind-Brain-Behavior Initiative. She directs the Program in Aesthetics and Well Being at the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Etcoff is author of the book *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, and has conducted research on the perception of beauty, emotion and the brain for over fifteen years.

The Home Ecology of Flowers Research Methodology

Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D. of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School and her research team investigated the effects of flowers in the home environment on well being. The project goal was to determine flowers' impact on positive and negative mood, energy and feelings of competency, using a fine-grained analysis of emotions over the course of a day.

Fifty-four people ages 25-60 were studied using a series of self-report measures allowing the research team to know where the person was, with whom and what they were doing when they experienced an emotion, both when flowers were and were not present. Half of the participants received a "control" home décor item, other than flowers, to ensure study validity.

Before and after living with either flowers or the control intervention for approximately one week, participants rated their feelings during specific periods of the day, recording emotions during each episode. The research team also took photographs before and after flowers were delivered to determine any changes in use or appearance of the room.

Dr. Etcoff and her team then analyzed the data to determine the effects of flowers when spending a few days with them at home.

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The Flower Promotion Organization, an alliance of American and Colombian fresh cut flower growers and importers, was created to expand consumer demand for fresh cut flowers and expand the U.S. market for the entire industry.

The SAF Fund for Nationwide Public Relations is an industry-wide, voluntary promotion effort that supports the development of innovative public relations programs to reach millions of consumers with positive floral messages in the context of everyday news.