



## Let Justice Bloom

### Order Fair Trade Flowers for Valentine's Day

U.S. consumers will buy more than 189 million stems of roses this Valentine's Day. The majority of these roses will travel all the way from Ecuador and Colombia before they're sold to shops in our communities. This year we can ensure that our long-stemmed symbols of love positively impact the lives of farm workers (many of whom are women) by looking for bouquets bearing the Fair Trade Certified logo. By adding this choice to our Valentine's Day traditions, we can help create new realities on the ground for those who nurture and pick flowers for us around the world.

In Colombia and Ecuador, over half of female flower workers have been sexually harassed or assaulted on the job. Mandatory 70 to 80 hour work weeks without overtime pay are common. Exploitation and abuse of workers in the cut flower industry is rampant.

The cut flowers delivered to our door most likely began their journey from countries in Central and South America and Africa -- where beautiful blossoms grow year round, but workers' rights aren't always respected. On Kenyan flower plantations, workers reported being forced to work 8-12 hour days for less than a dollar a day, handling dangerous chemicals without protective gear, and living in cramped, unsafe conditions.

Joana Quitiaquez, a 22-year-old single mother and flower worker at the Hoja Verde flower farm in Cayambe, Ecuador, was born into a sharecropping family with five brothers and sisters and an elderly mother. Her mother, Maria, works on a non-Fair Trade rose farm. There Maria makes much less money, is often forced to work seven days a week, never receives overtime and has developed asthma from working around greenhouse fumes and pesticides.



For Joana, Fair Trade flowers changed everything. At Hoja Verde, workers not only receive higher wages and overtime pay. They also have access to free eye exams, routine medical screenings, and free child care. Routine exams and quality care ensured that Joana's cervical cancer was detected and treated early. With her health restored and a loan from Hoja Verde's Fair Trade premium, Joana was able to buy a small plot of land where she is building her own home.



Last February at the urging of conscientious consumers, 1-800 Flowers, the world largest florist, agreed to begin offering a certified Fair Trade collection. One way to acknowledge this decision is to purchase Valentine's Day flowers this year from 1-800 Flowers or smaller florists who offer Fair Trade cut flowers. FTD also has responded to consumer pressure and now offers a selection of Fair Trade flowers. One World Flowers, a whole sale distributor, has decided to become a 100% Fair Trade company, and has entered the retail market for the first time. In Bloom Group also offers Fair Trade selections. We can order flowers on line from these four Fair Trade retailers (see links in box below).

This Valentine's Day Fair Trade roses are also available at **Whole Foods Markets** nationwide Fair Trade Certified roses can also be found at various **Jewel, Stop & Shop, Food Emporium, ShopRite and Giant Food Stores** locations and at **Samsclub.com**. Be sure to look for the Certified Fair Trade Label.

#### 1-800 Flowers:

<http://ww11.1800flowers.com/collection.do?dataset=11664>

#### FTD:

[www.ftd.com/eco-friendly-ctg/product-gogreen/?noparent\\_bread=1](http://www.ftd.com/eco-friendly-ctg/product-gogreen/?noparent_bread=1)

#### One World Flowers:

[www.oneworldflowers.org/index.html](http://www.oneworldflowers.org/index.html)

#### In Bloom Group:

<http://www.inbloomgroup.com/>

