



Kent Anderson brings flowers into the cooler Tuesday at Kent's Floral Gallery in Columbia. Anderson has been running the floral shop for 24 years.

## Flowers sales bloom ahead of Valentine's Day

PHOTOS & STORY BY GRACIE SMITH • Missourian

*My Secret Garden and Kent's Floral Gallery employees prepared flowers for Valentine's Day on Tuesday in downtown Columbia. The florists plan for months for Valentine's Day. It is the busiest day of the year for these shops.*

"It is also when we sell the most flowers," Ruth LaHue, owner of My Secret Garden, said. "Sales made on Valentine's Day are equivalent to the whole month of March."

Valentine's Day is on a Sunday this year, which in the past has been less busy for floral shops.

"People don't usually buy flowers on a Sunday," Kent Anderson, the owner of Kent's Floral Gallery, said. "When Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, people will take their spouses out for dinner rather than getting them flowers."

However, since many people are choosing to stay home this year due to the pandemic, flower shops are expecting more orders.

"This might be our busiest year," LaHue said. Both shops have had downtown locations for years.

"Flowers bring joy to people," Anderson said. "And people need something to get them through hard times."



Flower bouquets are on display around Kent's Floral Gallery on Tuesday in downtown Columbia. The store acquires flowers from California, Florida, Ecuador, Israel, Hawaii and the local area during the spring and summer.



An array of discarded plant stems litter the ground Tuesday at Kent's Floral Gallery in Columbia. "I've been doing this for a long time," Lora Schnurbusch, an employee at the shop, said. "Over time, you'll learn where to cut the stem at."



Ruth LaHue picks out flowers in the cooler Tuesday in downtown Columbia. Flowers are put into the cooler to keep them fresh.