

Flowers bring joy, not pesticides

May 15, 2015

I take issue with Jennifer Grayson's May 10 Outlook commentary, "[Save those roses for Mother Earth.](#)"

I have been to dozens of flower farms in Colombia, Ecuador, the Netherlands and the United States. Flower-growers work hard to make environmental and social responsibility a priority.

Where are the facts? For instance, Ms. Grayson's claim that flowers "are saturated with a toxic cocktail of chemicals" is inaccurate. Not only are pesticides costly, but their overuse would harm the product. Pesticide use in the floral industry has decreased dramatically over the past 15 years, as growers implement natural ways to control bugs — such as good bugs eating bad bugs.

It was good to see a mention of certification programs such as [Florverde](#). The majority of Colombian flower growers who export flowers to the United States are certified by Florverde, which has strict regulations on environmental and

social responsibility. Furthermore, Florverde does not work with agricultural chemicals prohibited or restricted by the Colombian Agricultural Authority, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the European Union, among others. Colombia bans use of methyl parathion — one of the two pesticides Ms. Grayson mentioned — and effectively bans use of the other, aldicarb, on flowers, as well.

I hope all of the mothers who were fortunate enough to receive flowers for Mother's Day are enjoying the powerful mood-enhancing effects on happiness and well-being that these beautiful products bring.

Peter J. Moran, Alexandria

The writer is chief executive of the Society of American Florists.