

FLOWERS BY DUSTIN

By Chris Malette *Intell Apr 3/92*
The Intelligencer

It seems when Sheila Harris got her green thumb, she discovered a green consciousness.

The Front Street florist, who operates Flowers by Dustin, has turned her business into a working experiment for the three Rs of responsible waste disposal.

Reduce, reuse and recycle are three words that are as important to Harris as the word profit.

Look around her store. Dried flowers, potpourri, fire-starter bundles and ground stems turned to mulch and destined for the composter. They're all part of doing business "as we try to be more environmentally conscious."

Harris says Flowers by Dustin used to produce "eight to 10 big boxes of garbage each week.

"Now, we're down to a single bag for the same period."

Flowers traditionally come in bundles in plastic sleeves. Harris' suppliers send

them to her in that fashion, as well.

"We just take the sleeves and place them in a separate container for the blue box. Same with paper — all the paper we get in here. It goes to a shredder and we give it to a friend of mine who is a potter, who uses it for packing."

A florist generates a heap of dead or

'It just seems to be the right thing to do,' says Sheila Harris

dying flower petals in a week. They are spared a trip to the trash and are reborn in the form of potpourri.

"We have a system where we quality-date our flowers so they aren't kept and sold past a minimum half their expected lifespan. When they reach that point, we nip the heads off, dry them and they make it into our potpourri."

Likewise, dried rose petals are transformed into "our natural confetti. It's a new idea and we're not sure how success-

ful it's going to be, but it sure smells nice."

If you spot newspaper in the trash at Flowers by Dustin, it's not because someone slipped up in the recycling drive.

"That was used to clean windows," remarks Harris.

Behind Dustin's are two bulging compost bins.

"We turn out a lot of stuff for the composter and I've been spreading it around the ground whenever we get a good batch of compost. All of that would have gone to the dump before."

Dried herbs become small bundles of fire starter and even daffodils in Harris' window display will "be used, for their bulbs, in the garden."

It's all part of the store's green plan.

"Everyone knows what we do with these things, here, and it's just become second nature to place things in their separate bins. It's no extra effort and really doesn't make us any more money.

"It just seems to be the right thing to do."



Sheila Harris displays her dried flowers which, in the past, would have gone out with the trash.