

(This article taken from the members only **SAF Wednesday E-Brief** dated March 18, 2009)

Boulder Shop Competes for Nothing but Green

Boulder Blooms is good for [nothing](#) — and wants you to be, too. The florist in Boulder, Colo., is getting its trash output as close to nada as possible and winning accolades for its efforts.

The shop's environmentally and economically friendly practices earned it a place as a finalist in [EcoCycle's Zero-Waste Business Awards](#).

The regional Eco-Cycle group annually recognizes the businesses, schools, volunteers, local governments, community event planners and individuals "who are setting examples both locally and globally with their Zero Waste effort."

"We've been working on this for so long, so it is finally good to get some recognition," said Jerrica Park, who runs [Boulder Blooms](#) with co-owner Teresa Henry Niebauer. Parks admits to not yet knowing what the prize is, beyond good PR in progressive Boulder, but says the true reward would be more company in the floral industry. "As more people realize that eco-friendly can mean environmentally friendly as well as economically friendly, we're hoping the entire supply chain can work together," Park said.

The [video](#) accompanying the shop's contest entry praises its commitment to the environment, noting that reducing, recycling and composting are built into the business model. As part of EcoCycle's composting pilot program; the shop's approximately 256 gallons of compost are picked up weekly, keeping their trash expense low. After a long and exhaustive search, Park recently found a company that will take and recycle the plastic strapping used to bind boxes. Once those are recycled, the normal trash will consist mostly of plastic sleeves.

Well-marked bins give employees and customers a place to toss their single-stream recyclables. The video also shows Boulder Blooms' thrift-store appointed offices, full of second-hand desks, printers, pens and assorted necessities. The staff uses washable rags instead of paper towels. After a recent renovation, the owners donated leftover materials to ReSource, a local program that accepts and resells reusable building materials.

Customers receive biodegradable gift cards that contain blooming seeds. Each vase comes with a card that reads, "Reduce. Reuse. Re-vase." Customers who bring vases back in get \$5 worth of fresh flowers. The shop sources fresh product from local growers and seeks out local artisans for ceramic and glass containers, candy, cards and other add-ons.

Still saving for a hybrid vehicle, Park said they recently bought a Honda Element to save on gas mileage and are working on a bike-delivery system for the dorms across the street.

Try this:

- Reduce your trash haul and return those plant clippings back to Mother Nature with composting. To find out more about composting, including your local government's services, visit the Environmental Protection Agency's compost [page](#).

- Be thrifty. Get thee to a second-hand store the next time you need a piece of furniture, interesting merchandising piece (old bicycles make the cutest outdoor displays) or basic office supplies.
- Get customers on your green team. Use recycled paper to tag your born-again vases, CFL light bulbs and locally grown products. Encourage customers to buy locally. Offer to rescue plants from office buildings and compost the dirt and trimmings.
- Recycle your ideas. Share resources and inspiration in SAF's [Sustainability](#) discussion forum.

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