

Florists can reduce the risk of spreading invasive plants by checking local advice before selecting flowers and by containing seeds, roots, and cuttings. A careful final sweep is equally important, since even a small amount of living plant material may take hold somewhere new.

Research plants before choosing them

Begin by finding out where the arrangement will be installed. A species that causes problems in one area may be harmless in another, so consult local government information, a botanical garden, or an agricultural extension service. Ask the venue about its own requirements, especially if the site is close to a natural habitat or a body of water.

Check plants by their scientific names. Common names are sometimes shared by different species, and a supplier's description may leave important details unclear. If you cannot confirm what a plant is, select an alternative you can identify reliably.

Native plants from the area can be a sensible place to begin, but they are not automatically right for every display. Make sure they suit the particular site and have been grown or collected responsibly. Ask suppliers about the source of their plant material instead of assuming that a local seller has sourced it locally.

Plan the design to keep plants contained

Consider what could be blown, dropped, or carried away by water during the event. Wind may scatter loose seed heads, and rain can move small pieces of foliage or soil into drains and waterways. If ripe seeds or berries cannot be kept securely in place, leave those plants out of the design.

A few practical choices can help keep an outdoor display under control:

- Select plants you can identify and that local guidance does not list as invasive.
- Where possible, use flowers and foliage before their seeds have matured.
- Leave potted plants in their containers and take care not to spill their soil.
- Fasten stems and other decorative pieces so they remain part of the display.
- Keep loose plant matter away from drains, water, and nearby natural growth.

Shape the arrangement around the site's conditions as well as its appearance. A protected spot may suit a fuller design in a gentle breeze, while an open, exposed location may call for something simpler. During the event, look over the display and pick up anything that has come loose.

Clear the site after the gathering

Set aside enough time to clean the area properly. Collect stems, petals, berries, soil, and all other plant debris from both the display and the ground around it. Before taking containers or transport materials elsewhere, inspect them for stray plant matter.

Use local instructions to dispose of the material, with particular care if it came from a plant known to be invasive. Do not leave it in a garden, field, or waterway. If you are uncertain about the correct disposal method, ask the local authority before composting; seeds and plant pieces may remain capable of growing.

Common questions from florists

Are cut flowers always suitable for an outdoor event?

No. A cut stem may still carry seeds or plant parts that can root, so check both the species and the condition of the material.

Are dried grasses an option?

First identify the grasses and check for seeds. If their identity is uncertain, choose a known alternative without seeds.

What should I do if a supplier cannot name a plant?

Do not use it outdoors. Choose plant material that comes with a dependable scientific name.

Where can I find advice about local restrictions?

Contact your local government or agricultural extension service for guidance that applies to the event location.

A good companion read: long-distance gift ideas