

Manatee Fresh Makes Floral History & Greener Carbon Footprint, Shipping 500k Sustainably-Grown Blooms into Port Manatee

2.5 years in the making, ethical-sourcing & sustainability-focused floral importer demonstrates "Choices Matter" with more environmentally-friendly shipping.

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Just in time to

celebrate the start of summer, on

Tuesday, June 29, [Manatee Fresh](#), the

direct importer, national distributor,

and grower of ethically sourced, sustainably grown cut flowers, potted plants and greenery, will welcome from Mexico into Port Manatee its first-ever ocean-shipped delivery of nearly 500,000 blooms. A highly perishable product customarily transported by air freight, Manatee Fresh spent two and a half years working to establish a way to ocean-ship these fragile stems in order to yield a smaller, greener carbon footprint while establishing a distribution hub on the West Coast of Florida.

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*Robert McLaughlin, President,
Manatee Fresh*

A clear demonstration of its “Choices Matter” ethos, the Manatee County, Florida-based company had a vision to bring ethically sourced flowers to the port in a more sustainable way, and become a major distributor to supermarkets and retailers nationwide. Shipping by ocean freighter represents the first time this highly perishable cargo has made the trip from Mexico to the West Coast of Florida, and is a greener option than air freight.

“This was a journey two and a half years in the making and

the first of many to come,” said Robert McLaughlin, Founder/CEO of Manatee Fresh. “As a sustainability-focused company, we believe it’s our responsibility to play a role in helping improve how we operate within this industry, and the impact we make beyond it. Shipping by sea into Port Manatee creates jobs here and abroad, supports greener commerce along the supply chain, and takes a positive step in a more earth-friendly mode of delivery. Together, all of this



Manatee Fresh Logo

enhances our ability to provide our customers with the freshest, most responsibility sourced cut flowers.”

In an industry that traditionally relies upon air freight (which pollutes at an average rate of 20-30x more than ships) and trucking (10x greater carbon footprint than ships), McLaughlin discovered that innovating more sustainable practices in flower importation was a challenging endeavor. Despite grower relationships dating back nearly 40 years, he had to start from scratch and educate himself about ocean freighting, including the different ports and shipping routes, as well as develop relationships with growers who were willing to try shipping by this new, more environmentally-friendly method. He also had to find customers to buy an entire refrigerated container load of flowers.

“For perishable goods such as flowers, ocean transport can be a risky business as the delicate stems can go bad if the ship is delayed. But Manatee Fresh was founded upon the pillar of creating unique solutions that support what we know matters. This evolution underscores our commitment to enhanced service and distribution, and authentically reflects our leadership position as the industry’s premier full-service floral provider with a conscience,” said McLaughlin.

The 500,000 arriving blooms include mixed roses, 4-foot tall Asiatic and Oriental lilies, gerbera daisies, iris, eucalyptus, and other mixed bouquets. All are bound for wholesalers and retailers nationwide including throughout Florida. Locally, shoppers can find these products in Detwiler’s Farm Markets, Sue Ellen’s Florist in Sarasota and Ms. Scarlett’s Flowers in Bradenton, among 200 other locations.

“Port Manatee looks forward to playing a continuing role in the green supply chain of Manatee Fresh, benefiting from the cross-gulf proximity of Mexico’s flower growers to the global gateway of Southwest and Central Florida,” said Port Manatee’s executive director, Carlos Buqueras. “This blossoming partnership with locally based Manatee Fresh further broadens our diverse port operations, which generate more than \$3.9 billion in annual economic impacts while providing for more than 27,000 direct and indirect jobs.”

Born from the ashes of the COVID-19 pandemic, Manatee Fresh was created to be the nation’s best global floral importer, convert 100% of purchasing to farm direct, and to grow its own crops in Palmetto, Florida. In just one year, the company has not only achieved these goals, it has commenced growing beds of sunflowers and expanded its premium offerings, now including the finest quality 4-foot tall Asiatic and Oriental lilies. Some of the best hydrangea, double stock, roses from the equator, and a large collection of orchids from Thailand and Dutch and Italian flowers will soon be added to Manatee Fresh offerings. The company has also created Manatee Rewards, an effective rewards program that has already issued rebates in the thousands to its loyal retail customers. From its offices in Palmetto and Orlando, FL, New York, Bogota and Medellin, Colombia. Manatee Fresh is proud to supply the freshest, ethically- and sustainably-sourced flowers, at great prices to wholesalers and retailers all across the USA.

For more information about Manatee Fresh, please visit www.ManateeFresh.com.

ABOUT MANATEE FRESH:

Manatee Fresh is a leading full-service direct importer, national distributor and local grower/partner of ethically sourced cut flowers, potted plants and greenery for wholesale, retail, and event production. A different kind of floral company, its leadership has been a relentless advocate, industry driver, and a true influencer of sustainable floriculture for over 30 years. Having required all farm partners to engage in sustainable floriculture and provide a safe workplace decades before these moral imperatives were popularized, Manatee Fresh only works with growers that care for their workers, pay fair wages, are certified sustainable, and commit to the health of the local ecology and the global environment. The company is unrivaled in the authenticity with which it speaks to today's consumers who expect retailers to carry brands that reflect their personal values. From farm to your home table, Manatee Fresh's standards of transparency and devotion to its people are what make them different. To learn more, please visit www.ManateeFresh.com.

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