



## AS IT IS

# Flower Farms See Lunar New Year Sales Decrease Because of Virus

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The Lunar New Year holiday is usually a busy time for flower farms in Hong Kong. The farms prepare to sell plum blossoms, orchids and daffodils at flower markets during the cheerful season. But the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on such markets this year has affected many farms. Farmers worry that they may be left with an oversupply of flowers.

Lunar New Year fairs – known as “flower markets” in Cantonese – are usually held before the holidays. Thousands of flower sellers and goods dealers sell their products to the public. This year, the Hong Kong government will place restrictions on such markets. They will only be permitted to operate with half the usual number of people and must shorten their business hours.

The policy concerns farm owners like Yeung Siu-lung. He runs one of Hong Kong’s largest orchid farms. He had grown over 30,000 **pots** of orchids in 10 **greenhouses** in Hong Kong’s rural New Territories area to prepare for the Lunar New Year holiday.

Yeung had first planned to have 16 selling spaces in flower markets. Now, he is planning other ways to sell his supply of orchids, including selling them online or urging buyers to visit the farms directly.

Lunar New Year traditionally brings an increase in sales for some businesses in Hong Kong. There is usually a big seasonal sale of goods such as holiday foods, gifts and home **decorations**, which often include flowers.

Flower farms like Yeung’s usually make about 50 percent of their profits from the Lunar New Year season alone, says business expert Francis Lun.

Pinky Chan is one of Yeung's **customers** who drove an hour to his farm to buy orchids. Chan thought it was still important to create a cheerful atmosphere during difficult times.

"We Chinese people feel happier if our homes are filled with red and green during the Lunar New Year," Chan said. "Because of the pandemic, we are all not very happy, we are not able to meet with our families. So I hope buying a pot of flowers for my parents can make them feel a bit happier."

I'm Jonathan Evans.

*Alice Fung and Nicole Ko reported on this story for the Associated Press. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Bryan Lynn was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**customers** – *n.* people who buy goods or services from a business

**decorations** – *n.* things added to something else to make it more attractive

**greenhouses** – *n.* buildings or part of buildings that have glass walls and a glass roof and are used for growing plants

**pots** – *n.* deep, usually rounded containers