

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **O'CONNOR FFA CONTEST**

#### **Students develop project to extend life of flower bouquets, hope to patent idea**

SAN ANTONIO - An internship at a local floral shop inspired two high school students to come up with an idea to keep flower bouquets fresh for a longer period of time.

Everyone has tried different tricks to keep their flower bouquets fresh for longer, anything from adding aspirin to sugar to even bleach to the water. And now Ashley Walker and Hannah Taylor have a product that is just waiting to be patented to fix just that.

The James Madison High School students, who are part of the Agriscience Magnet Program, were looking for a science project when they came up with the idea. They looked at how water aeration could extend the life of the flowers with the help of their teacher, Joshua Anderson.

Their research revealed there wasn't anything on the market, so they created two different prototypes, tested it on nine bouquets and looked at bacteria formation for several weeks. They found that the flowers stayed fresh for up to two weeks.

"When the air enters the water, it makes the little bubbles. We thought this would lower the amount of dissolved oxygen and reduce the amount of bacteria," Walker said.

The supplies for the project cost about \$50, but it has the potential to change the multibillion-dollar floral industry.

The students' research showed that about 45 percent of flowers that are cut are thrown away before they are ever sold.

"With the floral industry, we think this could raise the bar," Walker said. "We think this could really cut costs because people go and throw away flowers that are dead after a few days."

There's a precision to their creation. The students have entered competitions and won the grand prize for the Alamo Regional Science and Engineering competition and placed first at the Texas FFA competition. They'll compete at another national competition next month.

Walker and Taylor are currently raising money to patent their idea.

"It started as a simple idea. We were trying to think of science fair ideas," Taylor said. "It just turned into this huge thing we never thought would happen."

Their idea has received a lot of interest and praise, elevating the students' confidence in their creation. The idea works for the retail industry, but they are already thinking about ways to take it to consumers.

"We could give this to women at home that want their flowers to be bloomed and last longer," Walker said.

The teens have taken their idea to the floral company where they interned and say the company seemed interested in the patented product.

<https://www.ksat.com/news/students-develop-project-to-extend-life-of-flower-bouquets-hope-to-patent-idea>