



# BIZ BIO: Ashland Floral

410 W. Main St. 715/682-6615  
<http://www.ashlandfloralwi.com/>

*A stem above the rest!*

## Flowers and plants and cats, oh my!!



Ashland Floral owner Rita Johnston discusses the care of a flowering plant with employee Geneva Anderson, an Ashland High School senior.

When Rita Johnston purchased what would become Ashland Floral in 2005, she brought with her many years of experience in the floral industry. Rita began her career working in a greenhouse and in 1989 moved to Ashland from Madison to manage a flower shop before opening her own.

An obvious animal lover, Rita helped found the local HOUNDS 4 HOSPICE organization, which is part of PET N' PALS Therapy Pets. And her shop has become known as the home of two friendly cats, Odie and Ferdie.

While Rita may be the sole proprietor of Ashland Floral, she likes to tell people that "Odie owns the place." Both "shop cats" are rescues who now lead pampered lives roaming the confines of Rita's Main Street business and greeting customers, but — like most felines — only when they feel like it.

"My first shop cat, Garfield, was such a hit with people that when he passed away we decided to get another one."

Rita explained. "We got Odie first and he needed a pal so then we got Ferdie from the same place. It's nice for when people come in to order flowers for a funeral. The cats are a welcome distraction if people are having a hard time."

Looking ahead in 2016, Rita said for St. Patrick's Day, Ashland Floral will have the popular shamrock plants (oxalis), Bells of Ireland, blarney stones, and, of course, green carnations. "It just wouldn't be St. Patrick's Day without green carnations," she joked.

Rita said she will have plenty of beautiful bulb and blooming plants for Easter, and for Memorial Day she would like to remind folks that she will deliver to the cemeteries. "We also offer a summer care program that will keep their plants and things looking nice out at the grave."

With the rise in popularity of succulent gardens, Rita said she will be increasing her store's inventory on those and getting some really cool containers in for them.

In addition, wedding season is coming up, Rita noted. She has vast experience in serving brides and grooms — from small to large weddings, all faiths and denominations. Ashland Floral offers a complete wedding service including rentals on items like arches, vases, aisle poles or markers, and wedding baskets. Rita said she can special order unusual decorative items for customers too, as she did recently for a wedding on Madeline Island.



**Ashland Floral carries a large selection of foliage, blooming and specialty plants — many unique varieties grown at their greenhouse facility. They also offer the finest fresh flower arrangements.**

**Their talented designers are always pleased to consult with you on the types of flowers currently available. Let them convey your sentiments in a variety of styles using the best flower and plant selections possible.**

