Flower Confidential

Award-winning author Amy Stewart takes readers on an around-the-world, behind-the-scenes look at the flower industry and how it has sought — for better or worse — to achieve perfection. She tracks down the hybridizers, geneticists, farmers, and florists working to invent, manufacture, and sell flowers that are bigger, brighter, and sturdier than anything nature can provide.

1. What are some food/flowers where science has improved the item over nature?
2. What has been gained and what has been lost by tinkering with nature?
3. What’s the first thing people do when you hand them flowers?
4. What are growers looking for when growing flowers?
5. On San Francisco’s fishermen’s Warf, there are many venders selling fish. On the otherhand, the flower trade is tucked away from the public eye. Why?
6. While Ms. Stuart is in the flower warehouse she says “Imagine Wall Street in the Garden of Eden.” What does she mean?
7. What flower is the most anatomicly simple? What does this mean for the Geneticist?
8. What does it mean when we take what is basically a bouquet of sexual organs and expect them to stop behaving like sexual organs?
9. How can we compare the book’s discussion of flower production to other commercial items?