

Everything is coming up roses!

Valentine's Care & Handling: Roses & Spray Roses

Cupid's arrows flying can only mean one thing, Valentine's Day is just around the corner and everything will be coming up roses! Typically shipments of fresh cut roses and spray roses are received 5-7 days prior to Valentine's with the biggest volume hitting retail sales floors February 13th and 14th. Getting these roses fresh from the farm and into the hands of happy consumers takes superior care and handling, especially when you consider the extended shipping and storage period needed to meet the increased demand.

Rose growers and wholesalers are faced with challenges throughout the year at every point in the distribution chain. Among them are pathogen and ethylene control, temperature management, and correct care and handling. Despite these challenges, Valentine's demand means suppliers have to extend their harvest and storage periods. The additional days needed means that it's necessary that every possible measure is taken to preserve and care for roses and spray roses along their journey to guarantee the freshest, longest lasting stems go home with consumers for Valentine's.

To learn more about best practices from the experts in flower care, visit www.floralife.com

Keep your cool!

Temperature is essential to overall quality. Place roses into a 34 to 38 F cooler, with 75 to 85 percent relative humidity. Maintaining low temperature and high humidity is important to minimize water loss and maximize vase life. If you process flowers outside of the cooler, make sure that you minimize the amount of time that the flowers are outside of the ideal storage conditions.

Good Beginnings

Once flowers have reached the proper harvesting stage, growers begin the process by following proper sanitation, hydration, and controlling ethylene and pathogens. Properly dipping or spraying roses with products such as FloraLife® Shield after harvest protects roses from the external environment. Additionally, roses leaving farms should be packaged in a transport paper (such as FloraLife® Transport Paper).

Wholesale & Value Added Operations

Wholesale and production facilities sometimes provide "value added" processes such as wet packing bouquets or manufacturing pre-made arrangements. Shipping wet or dry pack, the cold chain must be maintained and flowers properly conditioned for storage and transport. An ethylene action inhibitor (such as EthylBloc™ Truck Kit) with shipments is a must.

Retail TLC

This is without a doubt the most important step on the journey to Valentine's fresh. Once roses and spray roses reach retailers, they have likely been harvested and stored longer than usual to meet Valentine's demands. This can be a make or break moment for maximizing the Valentine customer's experience so it's imperative to pay extra attention to:

1. Disease prevention

Preventing diseases, such as Botrytis, requires control measures such as:

- Temperature management.
- Minimizing or eliminating temperature fluctuations.
- Proper sanitation.
- Gently removing all grower packaging from bunches when unpacking boxes.
- Avoiding getting flower blooms wet.
- Avoiding touching or handling flowers by their blooms.
- Avoiding dropping or throwing flower boxes to prevent physical damage.
- Making sure your supplier has treated your cut flowers with an ethylene action inhibitor.
- Making sure that the cooler humidity is not too high (anything over 90% humidity encourages diseases).

2. Sanitation

Clean and sanitize your buckets, tools, work surfaces, cooler walls, floors and shelves with a floral cleaner (such as Floralife® Floral Cleaner or D.C.D.® Cleaner).

Unlike bleach, floral cleaners have a residual effect that helps keep items clean and sanitized for days after treatment. This is your best weapon to minimize exposure to pathogens.

3. Hydrate & Nourish

After such a long journey, roses need to be properly hydrated and nourished, especially when received dry pack. For best results:

- Use FloraLife® Quick Dip to jump-start hydration and ensure free-flowing stems.
- Re-cut flower stems approximately 1 inch, using a sharp, sanitized knife or clippers.
- Place cut flower stems immediately after fresh cut into water prepared with flower food such as Floralife® Express.
- Use a dosing unit that is properly calibrated, or hand mix the solution according to label instructions.

4. Protect

Use a professional finishing spray like FloraLife® Finishing Touch or Floralife® Crowning Glory® to refresh, hydrate and protect your flowers.

5. Customer care

As the flower expert, offer lots of advice on how customers should care for their roses and spray roses once they get them home.

- Avoid placing flowers in direct sunlight, extreme heat, cold or drafts.
- Provide flower food packets with every purchase or delivery and advise on proper use.
- Send a few extra flower food packets to last for the entire vase life of cut flowers.

Valentine's may be the only time of year someone might purchase roses or flowers at all and your one chance to make a lasting impression! A happy customer means repeat business so make sure you're sending your customers home with roses and spray roses that have had all the TLC they need to flourish. Quality roses accompanied by good care and handling advice and Floralife® Flower Food packets to last the duration of their purchase will ensure a positive experience and a happy Valentine's Day!



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