



# Valentine's Day Rose Care & Handling

by Sharon Mikulinski  
Global Marketing Director @ FloraLife

Valentine's day is just around the corner and the staple item in every flower cooler? Roses of course! Generally, shipments of fresh cut roses are received 5-7 days prior to Valentine's with the biggest volume being picked up or delivered on February 13th and 14th. Getting these roses from farms and into the hands of consumers fresh takes superior care and handling, especially with the extended shipping and storage period needed to meet the increased demand.

Rose suppliers face 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 every measure is taken to preserve and care for roses and spray roses along their journey to fresh.

## Retail

Once roses reach the stores, they have likely been harvested and stored for longer periods than usual. It's at this point the most attention is needed:

## Disease Prevention

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

- Temperature management.
- Minimizing or eliminating temperature fluctuations.
- Proper sanitation.
- Gently removing all protective 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).

## Good Temperature Management

Temperature is critical 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 storing temperatures.

## Sanitation

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

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

## Hydrate & Nourish

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

- Re-cut flower stems approximately 1 inch, using sharp, sanitized knife or clippers.
- Use FloraLife® Quick Dip to jump-start hydration and ensure free-flowing stems.
- Place flowers in a bucket or vase filled with fresh water that has been properly mixed/dosed with flower food, such as FloraLife® Express 300.
- Use a dosing unit that is properly calibrated, or hand mix the solution according to label instructions.

## Protect

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

## Customer Care

As the flower expert, offer lots of advice on the steps customers should follow at 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.

A happy customer means repeat business, especially at Valentine's! This may be the only time of year someone may purchase or receive roses, and may be your one and only chance to make an impression. Be sure to send your customers home armed with the tools and know-how! Proper care and handling and educating customers will not only give your customers an amazing experience but have them coming back to you when it's time to buy roses again!



powered by

# FloraLife

To learn more about best practices from the experts in flower care, visit [www.floralife.com](http://www.floralife.com)