



The Flower Godmother's

# fresh cut flowers

CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES



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## CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES

**F**resh cut flowers are like good friends ... they each have different characteristics, needs, and preferences. Flowers require different levels of attention, depending on what stage of life they are in – so they can develop into their full beauty and last a long time for you.

Here are some general guidelines for flowers arranged in water, flowers designed in foam, hydrated flowers, and raw flowers. The ultimate goal being that you experiment and then decide on your own processes that fit your needs and desires as they change from situation to situation.

Just treat your flowers like a welcome house-guest and they will respond by staying beautiful a long time, offering you lots of pleasure, and giving you fond memories.

*“Treat your flowers like a welcome house-guest and they will respond by staying beautiful offering you pleasure and giving you fond memories.”*

– Dottie Harrigan “Voice of The Flower Godmother”

## CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR FLOWERS DESIGNED IN FOAM

### PROFESSIONALLY OR CUSTOM DESIGNED ARRANGEMENT USING FLORAL FOAM AS A BASE MECHANIC

#### Prepare for Their Arrival

- **"Oh, It's so nice to see you!"** - Like unexpected guests, designed arrangements often come as a delightful surprise - and there is not much you can do to prepare for them.
- **"What a great surprise"** - Just clear a space or find a favorite spot where you can view your arrangement often.

#### Greet Them

- **"Can I take your coat?"** – Remove any packaging that was used for transport or delivery.
- **"What can I get you to drink?"** – Inspect the design to find the best place to check for and add water. Often the best way to add water (and flower food) to a flower arrangement created in foam is to use a condiment dispenser (ketchup or mustard bottle with a little pointed lid). Check it daily to be sure there is always a little reservoir of water. But you'll find that the flowers will drink more water in the beginning of their duration and less as the days go by.

#### Make Them Feel Comfortable

- **"Have a seat."** – Place your arrangement in a comfortable spot – out of direct sunlight to make it last.
- **"Are you too hot, too cold?"** – It rarely gets too cold for flowers inside a room but sitting near a fireplace or heat source could be hot enough to shorten their vase life keep that in mind when you decide where to place it.

#### Enjoy their Company

- **"You are what you eat"** – You enjoy the best of meals with your friends ... your flowers will show their appreciation for commercial flower foods and preservatives by lasting longer for you. And it's easy to mix the solution in a water bottle or a condiment dispenser.
- **"Have fun"** – Enjoy watching your design and the individual flowers grow and evolve as the days go by.
- **"Mix and Mingle"** – You often introduce houseguests to other friends. The rules about "keeping flowers away from fruits and vegetables" apply to professionals (preventing ethylene damage before you get your flowers) but once they are in your home - it's all up to you. Personally I enjoy flowers in my kitchen – mixing and mingling with displays of fruits and vegetables.

#### Prepare for Departure

- **"Petal Perfect"** – Pluck or cut any deteriorating petals and leaves from the flowers and stems as the days go by to keep your display looking fresh.
- **"Packing Up"** – Remove any weak or wilting flowers or foliage from your arrangement.
- **"Relax & Replace"** – Use clippers or small scissors to keep the design groomed. You can sometimes add fresh flowers into the spaces where others have been. Relax, you can't go wrong at this point. Just enjoy the process of making the display last as long as possible.
- **"Cleanliness is Key"** – Once you are ready to say good bye take the whole arrangement apart, wash and store the container and any supplies (structures, decorations, trims) that can be salvaged so you can use them in another creation.



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# CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR FLOWERS ARRANGED IN WATER

## FLOWERS ARRANGED OR FREE-STYLED INTO A VASE OF WATER

### Prepare for Their Arrival

- **"Oh, It's so nice to see you!"** – Clear a space or find a favorite spot where you can view your arrangement often.

### Greet Them

- **"Can I take your coat?"** – Remove any packaging that was used for transport or delivery.
- **"What can I get you to drink?"** – Check the water level of the arrangement and be sure to replenish daily.

### Make Them Feel Comfortable

- **"Have a seat."** – Place your arrangement in a comfortable spot – out of direct sunlight to make it last.
- **"Are you too hot, too cold?"** – It rarely gets too cold for flowers inside a room but sitting near a fireplace or heat source could be hot enough to shorten their vase life.

### Enjoy their Company

- **"You are what you eat"** – You enjoy the best of meals with your friends ... your flowers will appreciate commercial flower foods and preservatives by lasting longer for you.
- **"Have fun"** – You enjoy a variety of activities with your house guests. Arrange and rearrange your flowers into different designs while you have them. You'll have fun and the flowers will last longer.
- **"Relax"** – Use a knife if you are comfortable with one. Use clippers or bunch cutters if you want to. Your flowers in a vase are already hydrated – you can't go wrong at this point. Just relax and enjoy the process.
- **"Mix and Mingle"** – You often introduce houseguests to other friends. The rules about "keeping flowers away from fruits and vegetables" apply to professionals (preventing ethylene damage before you get your flowers) but once they are in your home - it's all up to you. Personally I enjoy flowers in my kitchen – mixing and mingling with displays of fruits and vegetables.

### Prepare for Departure

- **"Petal Perfect"** – Pluck any deteriorating petals and leaves from the flowers and stems as the days go by to keep your display looking fresh.
- **"Packing Up"** – Eliminate and weak flowers or foliage from your arrangement.
- **"Cleanliness is Key"** – Wash the vase and any supplies (armatures, decorations, trims) that can be salvaged so they are ready to use again.



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## CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR HYDRATED FLOWERS

PRE-PACKAGED BUNDLES, BUNCHES, AND BOUQUETS THAT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN IN WATER AND ARE READY TO BE STYLED, DESIGNED OR ARRANGED

### Prepare for Their Arrival

- **"Oh, It's so nice to see you!"** – If you are out-and-about and see a beautiful bundle, bunch, or bouquet of flowers just grab them up and bring them home to your **Flower Holding Station** or **Styling Vase** until you decide what to do with them. If someone arrives at your door with a bouquet of flowers just chop and drop them into your Flower Holding Station or Styling Vase. See *Set Up Essentials #1 and #2* to learn more about *Holding Stations and Styling Vases*.



### Greet Them

- **"Can I take your coat?"** – As soon as possible remove any packaging that was used for resale, and transport. Save any pretty wrapping, flower food, or special instructions that came with your flowers. And look them over to determine how you will design them. Use any of the ideas from *Set up Essentials #1– #3* and *TecQ Sheets #1– #12* for some fast, fun, simple and easy arranging ideas.

### Make Them Feel Comfortable

- **"Have a seat."** – Place your arrangement in a comfortable spot – out of direct sunlight.
- **"Are you too hot, too cold?"** – It rarely gets too cold for flowers inside a room but sitting near a fireplace or heat source could be hot enough to shorten their vase life.
- **"What can I get you to Drink?"** – Check the water level of the arrangement daily and be sure to replenish as needed.

### Enjoy their Company

- **"You are what you eat"** – You enjoy the best of meals with your friends ... your flowers will appreciate commercial flower foods and preservatives by lasting longer for you.
- **"Have fun"** – You enjoy a variety of activities with your house guests. Arrange and rearrange your flowers into different designs while you have them. You'll have fun and the flowers will last longer.
- **"Relax"** – Use a knife if you are comfortable with one. Use clippers or bunch cutters if you want to. Your flowers in a vase are already hydrated – you can't go wrong at this point. Just relax and enjoy the process.
- **"Mix and Mingle"** – You often introduce houseguests to other friends. The rules about "keeping flowers away from fruits and vegetables" apply to professionals (preventing ethylene damage before you get your flowers) but once they are in your home - it's all up to you. Personally I enjoy flowers in my kitchen – mixing and mingling with displays of fruits and vegetables.

### Prepare for Departure

- **"Petal Perfect"** – Pluck any deteriorating petals and leaves from the flowers and stems as the days go by to keep your display looking fresh.
- **"Packing Up"** – Eliminate and weak flowers or foliage from your arrangement.
- **"Cleanliness is Key"** – Wash the vase and any supplies (armatures, decorations, trims) that can be salvaged so they are ready to use again.

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# CARE-N-HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR RAW FLOWERS

**BOXED "STRAIGHT FROM THE FARM", IMPORTER, WHOLESALER  
FLOWERS THAT NEED TO BE HYDRATED AND CONDITIONED  
BEFORE HANDLING**

## Prepare for Their Arrival

- **"Oh, It's so nice to see you!"** – If you have ordered or received boxed flowers they will need hydration time before you can style them. Think of this as receiving a friend who has had a grueling travel experience to get to your home – they might need to rest before they can visit with you. Leave all the wrapping on – to keep the stems straight and the blooms upright. Cut the bottoms of the stems and place them in a preservative water solution in a cool place (like a **Flower Holding Station**) for several hours. See *Set Up Essentials #1* to learn more about *Holding Stations*.



## Greet Them

- **"Can I take your coat?"** – Once the flowers have fully hydrated you can play with them. Remove the wrappings, save any pretty wrapping, flower food, or special instructions that came with your flowers.
- **"So, how'ya feeling now?"** – To determine how you will design them, look your flowers over, inventory them, and sort them to a Styling Vase so they can continue to drink as you design. See *Set Up Essentials #2* to learn more about *Styling Vases*.
- **"What shall we do while you're here?"** – Use any of the ideas from *Set Up Essentials #3* or *TecQ Sheets # 1– #12* for some fast, fun, simple and easy arranging ideas.
- Once you have created design, follow the *Care-n-Handling Guidelines for HYDRATED FLOWERS* to – Make Them Comfortable, Enjoy their Company, and Prepare for Departure

Some flowers require special preparation for hydration. Here are some specifics to consider:

### Hearty Stems

Flowers with hearty (or solid) stems, such as Carnations, Roses, Alstromeria, or Lilies, need only the **diagonal cut with a knife** to absorb maximum water. Bunch cutters or clippers can be used but the results won't be as beneficial. They should be left to drink in lukewarm (room temperature) water with preservative for several hours before arranging for maximum shelf life.

### Hollow Stems

Hollow-stemmed flowers, such as Amaryllis, Bells of Ireland, Dahlias, and Delphiniums, do best when the **stems are filled with water**. Make sure they are in water at least four inches deep, so the water can travel up the hollow cavities of the stems.

### Soft Stems

Bulb flowers such as Hyacinths, Iris, and Tulips have soft stems and should be cut similar to the hearty stems. Place those flowers in **cold water**. Since most bulbs bloom when the air and ground are still at low temperatures, they do better in a vase of cold water.

### Woody Stems

For woody plants such as Lilac, Dogwood, Flowering Branches, and Heather, split the stems at the ends rather than trying to cut or smash them. This will keep tissues intact and create a surface area to absorb water.

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