



FLOWERS CANADA (ONTARIO) INC.

RETAIL GUIDE

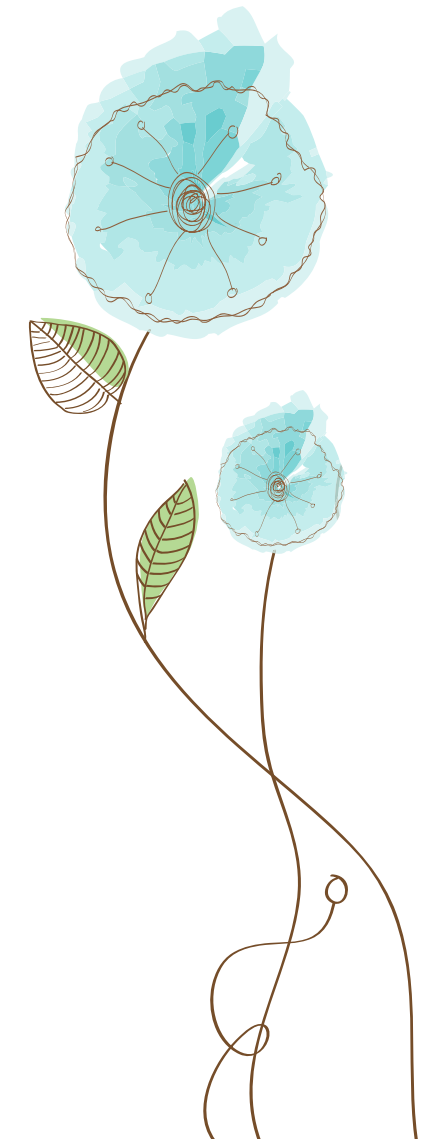


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ABOUT US

Flowers Canada (Ontario) Inc.

(FCO) is a not-for-profit provincial trade and professional association that has served the floriculture sector for over 45 years. FCO works with all levels of government to promote industry competitiveness and support employment growth in the Canadian floriculture industry. Our members include greenhouse growers, distributors, specialty suppliers, service providers, and floral industry importers/exporters.

Our Vision

The vision of FCO is to provide an infrastructure and approach that integrates the current resources and future potential of our floriculture

stakeholders and upholds the standards that will establish Ontario and Canada as world leaders in floriculture.

Our Mission

To enhance the profitability and competitiveness of Ontario's floriculture industry by helping members address common issues, challenges, and opportunities to retain and enhance Canada's pre-eminent position in the North American floriculture industry.



www.flowerscanadagrowers.com



INTRODUCTION

There are far more benefits to having flowers and plants in our homes and workplaces than nice décor. Each purchase has an emotional, health, and economic impact. Flowers act as a mood enhancer, increase productivity, and provide higher levels of oxygen to any space. They are also a choice way of communicating love and appreciation. In Europe, flowers are purchased as a staple item and are often viewed as a household necessity. In Canada however, flowers are more likely to be purchased on impulse. In North America, Canada is the 4th largest in farm-gate sales, behind California, Florida, and Michigan.

As a supporter of flowers and plants, harnessing your customers' impulse power is crucial to your business. Your

customers are far more likely to buy flowers and plants that are attractively displayed, clean, and organized. They wish to see that they are getting value for their money and are assured a fresh, quality product.

Flowers and plants act as a calling card. They draw people in and improve your store's atmosphere. A better atmosphere in turn ensures greater sales throughout.

FLORAL BEAUTY = SALES STRENGTH

How do you create a balanced and attractive floral display that will benefit your entire store? Throughout this guide, you will learn how to turn your flowers and plants into profits.



PREPARATION

ORDERING

A good display begins with ordering the right products. We recommend that you buy local first!

Buying local products supports our family of growers, up to 10,000 jobs, and our economy. In addition, local flowers do not travel as far so they are regularly fresher than imports and many local growers also produce specialty products using the latest technologies.

Ordering the right product in the correct amounts requires experience and time management. The art of purchasing also lies in putting together the right range of products. You'll learn this through experience and by studying your customers' buying behavior.

- ✿ Focus on what's in season.
- ✿ Know the size of your display and storage area.
- ✿ Keep in mind what items sell best in your store or department.
- ✿ Only purchase product that has reached the proper stage of maturity or you will risk shrink and spoilage.
- ✿ Order products according to a carefully planned schedule; weekends are typically the busiest time for flower sales so be sure to have enough flowers and plants available.

DELIVERY & RECEIVING

When the supplier delivers your order, notice if any of the product has received special treatment during production or after harvest and handle it appropriately.



Use the following checklist to ensure quality control.

Immediately on delivery, check the following:

- * Are the quantities correct?
- * Did you get what you ordered?
- * Is the product of high quality and in good condition?

Immediately after the driver leaves:

- * Open the cases to let the plants breathe and to release any heat that may have accumulated in transit.
- * Do the cut flowers have enough clean water?
- * Have the flowers been sent with the correct preservative?
- * Inspect the plants carefully and note their "arrival" condition.

Immediately notify the vendor of any problem(s).

While arrangements may have been made with the supplier ahead of time, it is always wise to double check and report back to the supplier. Make sure that the supplier removes the trolleys from the previous delivery and ensure your deposit is returned, if applicable.

CUT FLOWER CARE

Never use scissors or dull shears when cutting flower stems; the two-bladed cut of scissors squeezes the stem and crushes the water-conducting vessels of the xylem.

Cut flowers are highly perishable, very sensitive to their environment, and have a short shelf life. This is why life-prolonging techniques are essential in a retail environment. Water is the lifeblood of the plant. It carries food, supports the stalks, leaves, buds, and flowers, and just like us, flowers require water to survive.

When treating and handling cut flowers, remove approximately 1" of the stem under warm water. This is particularly important if the flowers are displaying signs of water stress. Use a sharp knife.

Never use scissors or dull shears when cutting flower stems; the two-bladed cut of scissors squeezes the stem and crushes the water-conducting vessels of the xylem (the vascular tissue in plants). Check flower bunches to ensure all stems are cut to approximately the same height. Ensure each stem receives a fresh cut. Remove any excess foliage below the water line to prevent rotting and bacteria. Dirty water produces bacteria-promoting ethylene and fungi, which inhibit water uptake.

Cut flowers need clean, pure water. Most tap water contains chemicals and minerals that can shorten flower life. Sodium for example, is present in high concentrations in soft water and is toxic to roses and carnations. Fluoride, added to drinking water for dental health, is harmful to gerberas, gladioli, and freesias.



WATERING TIPS

- ✿ Water foliage plants twice a week, blooming plants three times a week (e.g. tulips, hybrid lily, daffodils, amaryllis, hyacinth, and narcissus), and all cacti and succulents once a month (e.g. aloe vera, hens and chicks, and jade).
- ✿ Blooming bulb plants generally require water at least every other day.
- ✿ Give plants a good soaking; do not simply wet the top of the soil.
- ✿ Use room temperature water only! Cold water will shock the plant and inhibit new growth and flowering.
- ✿ Water the plants according to pot size; small 4"–4 1/2" pots need less water than medium sized 6" pots, which in turn need less water than larger 10" pots.
- ✿ Create a weekly watering schedule (e.g. foliage plants every Monday and Friday, blooming plants every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and cacti and succulents the first Monday of each month).
- ✿ Hairy leaves on plants must not get wet. Water on these leaves will cause moulding. Water these plants either in a saucer from the bottom up, or gently hold blooms and foliage to the side to water the soil directly. Varieties in this category include gloxinia and African violets.

Rule of Thumb
 The best way to determine the watering needs of a plant is to press your finger about 1" into the soil. If the soil is moist, don't water it. If the soil remains dry more than 1" down, water it.

- ✿ Since ferns take in water through their leaves, misting them will ensure healthier plants.



Cut flowers also need food to survive. Using a floral food will help increase the lifespan of your cut flowers. Be sure to carefully read and follow the directions of the floral food/preservative that your store uses. There are a number of commercial floral food/preservatives on the market that are essentially the same in ingredients and function. The three primary ingredients work together to increase the lifespan of your cut flowers: sucrose (sugar) to nourish; a biocide to inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi; and an acidifier to lower the pH of the water. Ensure that your customers are provided with individual packets of preservative at the time of purchase. This will lengthen the life of their flowers and increase the customer's satisfaction with their purchase.



PLANT CARE

Most plants are highly perishable and don't have a very long shelf life therefore life-prolonging techniques from delivery to display are essential. By displaying plants immediately, you can secure a quick sale and ensure a longer shelf life for the customer.

Use care when taking your plants out of their shipping cases to avoid 'bruising' the leaves. Water the plants immediately to help settle both the plant and the soil. Use room temperature water only. Wipe off any excess dirt on the outside of the pot or pot cover. Groom the plant by removing any damaged leaves, stalks,



or blooms. Price and display the product immediately.

To maintain an attractive store, keep only fresh, top-quality plants on the shelves. Remove any old, dead, and/or dying plants. No one will buy them and they reflect poorly on the entire store.

REMEMBER:

If you wouldn't buy it yourself, get rid of it.

At least three times a week, go through all the plants you have on site. Use scissors and

your fingers to remove brown, yellowing, and dead leaves, and any broken stems. Just as most of us enjoy a shave, haircut, and bath to improve our appearance, plants also enjoy a good grooming. It encourages new growth and prevents the proliferation of insects and disease.

STORAGE

Store your cut flowers in optimum conditions. After harvest, flowers become very temperature sensitive. When temperatures are too high, food is absorbed too quickly and water is lost faster than it can be replaced leading to deterioration and premature death. In dry air, flowers lose water from the surface of their leaves, causing them to wilt and perspire.

The majority of cut flowers can be displayed outside the cooler during business hours but should be returned for overnight storage. Check the temperature

Keep additional stock to a minimum. Store cut flowers for a maximum of 2 days and potted plants a maximum of 3 days. Never keep fruit or vegetables in the cooler with flowers.

and humidity levels in the coolers every day. Keep flowers cool and away from draughts, hot spots, televisions, and air conditioners. Do not store food (especially fruit) with your flowers.

Try to keep additional stock to a minimum. Cut flowers should be in storage a maximum of 2 days and potted plants a maximum of 3 days.

WATER

To ensure you have the highest quality water for your flowers, we recommend that you have your store tested by a water treatment company or an independent laboratory. This can be done for little to no charge. A water analysis will tell you two primary characteristics about your tap water: the pH level and the level of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS).

The pH level is the measurement of acidity and alkalinity on a scale of 1 (acid) to 14 (alkaline), with 7 being neutral. Most tap water is close to neutral. Acidic water is taken up more readily by flower stems than neutral or alkaline water so the best water for flower longevity is slightly acidic with a pH factor between 3.0 and 4.5. If your store water tends toward alkaline, acidity can be added with a commercial floral preservative.

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) refers to the measurement of water salinity or soluble elements in the water. TDS can include magnesium, sodium, calcium, chlorides, and sulphates. Water-based TDS are measured in parts per million (ppm). The best quality water for flowers has a TDS measurement of less than 200 ppm.



If you are concerned that the quality of your tap water may harm your flowers, we recommend using bottled or distilled water.

CLEANLINESS

Bacteria and fungi can grow very rapidly in water, especially where there is decaying plant debris blocking proper water uptake.

Routinely clean storage area floors, benches, and walls. In between uses, wash vases and floral containers with a solution of chlorine-based bleach or a commercial bucket disinfectant.

Change all vase water at least every three days by replacing it with a solution of fresh water and a floral preservative.

ETHYLENE

Ethylene gas is one of the greatest enemies of fresh flowers. It can cause rapid wilting, colour fading, blossom drop, bloom shattering, and early death. Ethylene is an odourless, colourless gas naturally produced by the flowers.

The burning of hydrocarbons (car exhaust and tobacco smoke), ripening fruit, vegetables, bacteria, and decaying plant material also produce this gas. Most commercially grown ethylene-sensitive flowers are treated at harvest to reduce sensitivity. To ensure the longest possible flower life, keep flowers away from ripening fruit, vegetables, and tobacco smoke.

DID YOU KNOW?

Flowers will age faster around fruits & vegetables, as they produce ethylene gas

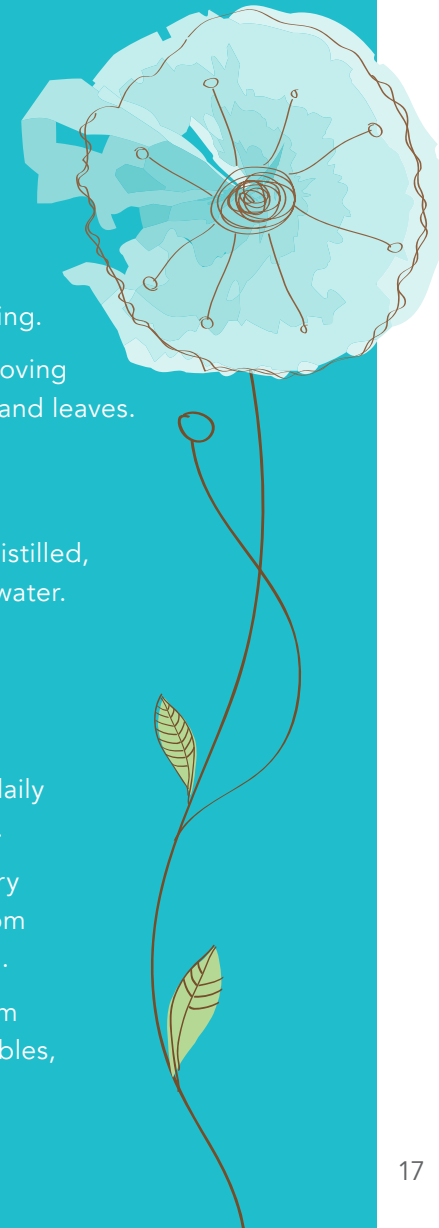
REVIEW

Cut Flower Care

- ✿ Unpack flowers immediately and carefully.
- ✿ Re-cut all stems with a sharp knife under warm water.
- ✿ Remove excess foliage.
- ✿ Settle the flowers by placing them in warm water and a cool place.
- ✿ Use a clean non-metallic vase or container.
- ✿ Use bottled, distilled, or slightly acidic tap water.
- ✿ Add a floral food/preservative.
- ✿ Check water levels daily and replenish as needed.
- ✿ Keep flowers away from ripening fruit, vegetables, and tobacco smoke.

Plant Care

- ✿ Unpack plants immediately, being careful to avoid bruising.
- ✿ Groom plants by removing dead or dying stems and leaves.
- ✿ Wipe all dirt off pots and pot covers.
- ✿ Water with bottled, distilled, or slightly acidic tap water.
- ✿ Display immediately.
- ✿ Create and follow a watering schedule.
- ✿ Check soil moisture daily and water as needed.
- ✿ Water plants with hairy leaves from the bottom up to avoid moulding.
- ✿ Keep plants away from ripening fruit, vegetables, and tobacco smoke.





IN THE STORE

STOPPING POWER

A great display will draw a customer in by saying, "Look at our beautiful, fresh flowers... and our clearly marked prices make your choice even easier!"

A customer's temptation to look at your display is called 'stopping power' and it's the responsibility of you and your staff to create it. Though a customer may have entered the store to buy something else, you can draw them into your department by using some of the following techniques to catch their eye.

To achieve greater stopping power and increase impulse purchases, consider these 6 things: Freshness, Variety, Cleanliness, Creativity, Colour, and Information.

Assess the stopping power of your display.

- ✿ Are the prices of all products clearly marked?
- ✿ Does the display look clean and tidy?
- ✿ Have you used colour and/or product blocking techniques?
- ✿ Are the products well cared for and fresh?
- ✿ Is there a good selection of plant and flower varieties?
- ✿ Are the plants and flowers accessible to potential customers?

The right techniques result in greater stopping power and better sales. In this section, you will learn tips 'n tricks that will help you improve the stopping power in your store.

REMEMBER:

Looking + Touching = Buying

TIPS 'N TRICKS

Display Only High Quality Product

Attracting and holding that initial glance is the first step in setting up an impulse buy and for this, quality is key. Regardless of whether floral items are sold individually or as part of an ornate arrangement, flowers in excellent condition attract the greatest attention.

Creative, exciting arrangements can draw customers in but if the quality of the product isn't acceptable, they won't make the purchase. Manage your inventory well and keep all floral displays clean, fresh, and full. Check daily for plants that need to be rotated. Immediately discard plants that have a shop-worn look. If a plant is still in fairly good condition, mark it down and price it to move. If a plant or arrangement isn't selling, price it at a lower cost as a 'Tuesday Special' while it's still sellable.

REMEMBER:

If you wouldn't buy it, you shouldn't expect your customers to buy it either.

Create displays to attract customers with a variety of fresh, clean, creative, colorful, and well marked products.

Encourage Browsing With Visually Appealing, Accessible Displays

If your store seems to be too carefully organized, customers may hesitate to enter unless they have a purchase already in mind. A casual layout with plenty of space to move around invites potential customers to browse.

Creating visible displays that one can move around easily with shopping carts or strollers encourages impulse buying. Customers who are comfortable are more likely to make a purchase. Spraying a floral aerosol fragrance also appeals to most people's sense of smell and can help draw prospective customers.

Keep It Clean & Organized

Putting off cleaning until tomorrow will only hurt your sales today and double your workload later.

The appearance of your store is your first merchandising tool. Check inventory, clean shelves and displays, and remove any dead and/or dying plants. These simple steps will help attract and keep your customers.



Have Knowledgeable Staff On Hand At All Times

Customers often require more information before they make a purchasing decision. When someone is available to offer advice, alleviate concerns, or provide care recommendations, customers are more likely to take something home with them. Have someone on hand to help close the sale and to promote other tie-in items such as vases, cards, and ribbon.

DISPLAY TECHNIQUES

Cut Flowers

A good display is a magnet for customers. Once a customer has stopped at a display, they must be able to find what they are looking for quickly and efficiently.

Create visual harmony throughout your displays; customers do not like chaos. Use available materials to build and design displays that enhance stopping power. These may include rolling bucket racks, trolleys, nesting tables, metal display units, or shelving. If you've received one, follow your planogram.

When assembling your display, consider your market and your most popular products. Your most popular products will exert the greatest pull on your customers. If gerbera daisies sell well in your store for example, give them a prominent spot in your display.

Differentiate between mono bunches and mixed bouquets since the customers who buy them have different motives. A mono bunch is viewed as a quick and inexpensive purchase. For this reason, and

to increase sales frequency, mono bunches should be grouped by flower variety and clearly priced.

A mixed bouquet must be beautiful. Customers buy mixed bouquets for the experience and are looking for impact. For maximum effect, mixed bouquets should be grouped by colour (see colour blocking on page 24).

Plants

Since plants live longer than flowers, they require a longer period of care. Take this into account when creating your display. If space will allow, add decorative pots or pot covers, potting soil, and plant food to your designs. Combining a plant with complementary items gives your customer everything they need in one go. This offers convenience for your customer and also increases revenue for your store.

Group plants by variety and colour. This creates a visual sense of calm and order and makes the decision making process easier on your customer.

Display plants from short to tall. Arranging plants according to height accomplishes two important objectives: it creates a pleasing and eye-catching presentation for your customer and it ensures all your products are visible and accessible. Many stores put all pot sizes together on the same shelf but even within the same pot sizes, there can be



Use what you have on hand to create attractive displays. Put big sellers in the front. Keep mono and mixed bunches separate. Group in colours that are in season.

dramatic height differences. On a display with nesting tables above one another, place the tallest plants on the highest shelf. Take a step back every now and then to look at your display as if you were a customer entering the store.

TIPS 'N TRICKS

Colour & Product Blocking

In nature, flowers attract insects by means of colour and scent. These same properties draw customers to your store.

Add value by including pots, pot covers, potting soil, plant food. Colour block by variety. Display short to tall.

Displaying your product properly will maximize appeal and invite new sales. Colour blocking and product blocking are two ways to use your displays effectively.

Colour blocking is the grouping of similar colours, regardless of variety or price. Displaying for example, all plants and flowers in pink, red, and burgundy or creams, yellows, and mustards. To increase the impact of your colour blocking, place all warm colours (yellow, orange, and red) together and all cool colours (white, blue, and violet) together.

One of the many benefits of colour blocking is that it creates attractive displays that can be seen from farther away, thereby driving potential customers to your store. Shiny black display counters and shelves are especially effective for highlighting colourful arrangements. Place arrangements directly on them or drape with an inexpensive fabric in a contrasting colour. On Valentine's Day, experiment with colour blocking by displaying contrasting colours such as white and pink or red and lavender.



Product blocking is the use of similar products such as cards, teddy bears, or candles, regardless of their colour or price. Avoid mixing different colours of the same item but instead use colour blocking along with product blocking to create a more visually appealing display. Arrange for example, all your chrysanthemums in a pie shape with contrasting colour 'slices'. Place all the yellows together, followed by all the whites, and all the pinks to create a colourful, orderly effect.

Display Similar Varieties Together

Full displays of a particular type of plant (e.g. all blooming plants, all dieffenbachia, all pothos, all cacti etc.) are not only more attractive, they are easier to price, create signage for, care for, and re-stock or re-order.

Arrange According To Density

Space dense plants approximately one foot apart (or more for larger pots). Use a floor tile as a spacing guide. Break these plants up with other items in your inventory. This will keep your store looking balanced. Examples of dense plants include Boston ferns, Dallas ferns, caladium, and chrysanthemums.

Plants that are not as dense in appearance should be merchandised closer together. Bulb plants, such as tulips, hyacinth, daffodils, and hybrid lilies, are great examples of this. Space these plants slightly closer together and stagger (one in front, one in back and to the side, another in front, etc.) to fill larger spaces.





Arrange According To Colour

Avoid side-by-side clashing colours. Multi-coloured chrysanthemums beside multi-coloured violets beside multi-coloured caladium create an unfocused and confusing display. Separate each item with a block of green plants or each section with a showy, blooming item.

Merchandise green foliage plants by colour shadings. Stripes of dark green varieties with lighter green or variegated plants can create a dramatic effect to any display.

COMMUNICATION

Good signage is one of your greatest selling tools! Attractive and professional signs will help catch your customer's eye and promote purchasing decisions. Signage around your display can increase sales and make it more visually appealing.

Make sure that all your signs have the price and product information clearly visible. If you use promotional materials, ensure they apply to all the adjacent products or you may confuse potential customers and prevent impulse purchases.

All products should be clearly priced with the tag visible to the customer. Some customers will not feel comfortable or have the time to ask a sales clerk for a price. To avoid confusion, remember to remove old price cards and labels when the product is no longer available.

Keep displays attractive, use good signage, with product and price information, remove old signage. Use relevant promotional material.

TIPS 'N TRICKS

Good Signage Is One Of Your Greatest Selling Tools

An attractive, informative sign not only tells the customer the price of the product but it tells them the name of the plant and a few characteristics. The easier something is to understand, the more likely customers are to buy it. Try including some of the benefits of certain plants in your signage.

Cross Merchandise

Cross merchandising can maximize floral exposure. Whenever possible, display gift items with complementary products throughout your store and pair pots and soil with plants.

Packaging

Proper packaging prevents damage to the flowers and exposure to the elements. Use sleeves or wrapping on all flowers and plants leaving your store. Be sure to include a packet of floral food/preservative to increase flower longevity and customer enjoyment.



POSITIONING

Biscuits, coffee, milk, bread, pasta, cheese... these are items on your customer's shopping list. Flowers and plants aren't usually on that list because they're often impulse purchases. It is therefore best to display your flowers and plants in a high-traffic area such as near the store entrance. Be mindful to keep your inventory away from draughts and ripening fruit.

The sight line of a product is also an important factor. It was originally thought that products at eye level sold best. This is why supermarkets stock products with the highest profit margins at eye level and why advertisements are also at this height. Recent research indicates however, that products at chest and mid-height also sell well. This means that your potential display range is greater than you may have originally thought. However you structure your display, ensure that it is safe and easy to move around and that the flowers and plants are not on the floor.

REMEMBER:

Wide aisles and easy product access increase sales.



Position product in high traffic areas, away from draughts, and fruits and vegetables. Put products at optimal buying height.

TIPS 'N TRICKS

Location

In a larger store, position the floral department in a highly visible area. Don't hide it behind the produce department; get it right out in front. If the customer can see it when they come in as well as from other areas of the store, they are far more likely to stop and take a look.

Although the ideal location may not be possible for every store, placing tables with flowers and plants near checkout stands will also stimulate impulse purchases.

Make sure you have displays in high-traffic areas. If your customers don't immediately see something that appeals to their taste, they may be stimulated enough to visit the floral department to see what else is available.

REMEMBER:

If they don't see it, they won't buy it.

Create Impulse Buying Areas

Small items and add-ons should be placed neatly and attractively at the cash register area as well as in strategic places throughout your store. Merchandise with special attention to how a plant may look in a customer's home.



TOPPING UP

Create your displays in the morning and check them three to four times throughout the day in order to ensure they are fully stocked, clean, and attractive. High volume displays increase sales.

Top up your product by keeping the freshest flowers at the bottom. Move the flowers that have been standing longest to a higher level and fill cut bunches from the bottom to the top so you do not drip on the other merchandise.

Always use clean buckets and water with preservative. Fill buckets to a depth of about 15 centimeters or with allowance for the slant of the display. Never pour previously used water from one bucket to another and be sure to dispose of used water appropriately. Always remove any old, dead, or dying products.

TIPS 'N TRICKS

Rearrange Stock & Displays Often

Creating a store that looks new and different to customers each week is crucial to capturing the impulse buy, especially when much of the stock remains the same from one week to the next. Reposition display tables on the floor and spotlight different items every few days to give your store a fresh look.

Variety Is Key

Don't display the same products all the time. If a customer buys a gerbera daisy this week, they may not want to buy another one at their next purchase. They may however, buy a fresh bouquet of something else. One way to increase variety in

Keep displays full. Volume = Sales. Put older products in key selling spots for faster turnaround. Change water frequently.

your store is to buy large quantities of one item then sell it at a slightly reduced margin. The favourable bulk price offsets the margin cut and minimizes the loss if the item doesn't sell as well as expected.

THEMES

For the floriculture industry, holidays and season changes are some of the most important times of the year.

Take advantage of Valentine's Day, Christmas, and Mother's Day by tailoring your displays and arrangements to suit. Reflect the changes of the season in shades of colours: in the autumn, display warm earth tones; use pinks, purples, and light greens in the spring; and appeal to your customers with mixed bouquets in the

winter. Make use of seasonal promotional materials in your store to encourage impulse buying.

The trend toward more environmentally sound practices is the perfect opportunity for the sale of green plants which are often overlooked in favour of showy, floral arrangements. Use themes such as Earth Day and 'Save the Planet' to educate customers on the benefits of green plants. An ecology table or signage can also help generate sales.

Remember to discuss upcoming seasonal availability with your local grower or supplier. They will assist you in creating beautiful displays that reflect the seasons or holidays.



TIPS 'N TRICKS

Create Large Dramatic Displays

Display several plants together in one area to encourage impulse purchases. Shelves or stands are most effective for mass displays. Block by colour, type of product, or price so that the customer knows what they are buying and for how much. Quality is just as important as quantity in a mass display so be sure to replace and refresh the area often.



Generate Interest

Use the upcoming holiday or change of season to emphasize your products. Place promotional materials or information cards near your displays to generate the interest of your potential customers and increase sales.

Emphasize Specific Products & Services

Brides-to-be may not be thinking about floral arrangements for their upcoming wedding when they head into the supermarket but a good display can quickly change that. Mannequins dressed in bridal attire have been very successful in attracting brides who hadn't initially thought of having their supermarket do their flowers.

Try placing mannequins at the end of an aisle with arches and wedding bells above it. Add swaths of white linen and sprays of flowers behind it and smaller tables with mixed flowers and champagne or a wedding cake.

Appeal To The Do-It-Yourself'ers (DIY)

If an item is too showy, people may be reluctant to buy it for themselves or might overlook it for their own home. Give customers the choice of something less dressy to stimulate those who wouldn't normally buy plants or flowers for themselves.

Individual items will appeal to people who like to create their own arrangements, perhaps in a favourite vase or container from home. Keep a variety of picks and ribbons for customers who may return for more supplies and ideas.

Inspire the DIY'er by displaying individual items alongside beautifully designed or arranged products. Grouping these items together also shows the value of your larger arrangements.

Make Use Of Great Lighting

Appropriate lighting is critical to an effective in-store display. Use wide beams and floodlights for larger displays and narrower beams to highlight specific sale or promotional items. Remember to vary the height and direction of your lights.





TALKING TO CUSTOMERS WHO ARE GARDENERS

Tips to Garden Success

A long-lasting and truly satisfying garden starts with high-quality, fresh Ontario-grown plants. These plants haven't undergone long distance travel or significant shifts in temperature and climate. Since they're less stressed, they easily acclimatize into new environments, such as a consumer's garden. Help customers choose pest and disease-resistant plants to ensure longevity.

Use Compost Or Fertilizer

An important key for a healthy customer's garden is keeping it fertile. A well-composted mulch or livestock manure, or well-diluted bone or blood meal will help plants thrive. Products high in Phosphorus encourage root growth.

Read The Tag

Some of the best advice is located on the plant tag. Most tags will make recommendations for the correct light conditions, watering guidelines, and planting location.

Avoiding Over-Watering

Suggesting that customers provide water to plants in the morning when temperatures are cooler and using mulches will help preserve water in the soil. These simple actions will help establish root systems, prevent evaporation, and are also a good practice for water conservation. Applying too much water can be detrimental to some plants.

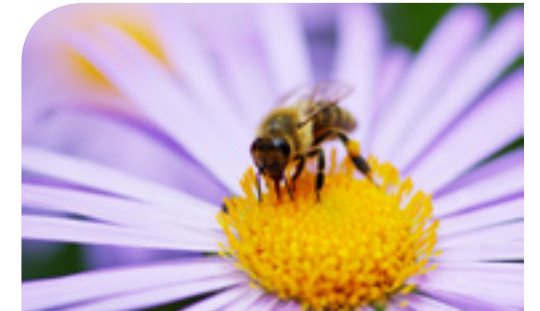
Pollinators & Your Garden

Pollination can occur in many ways: bees, butterflies, animals, and wind. In Ontario, over 1000 insects and animals use pollen and nectar from flowers, which makes flower selection an important consideration for the entire food chain. Bees in Ontario face many threats including the loss of habitat, Varroa mites, Nosema fungi, and pesticides.

Plants such as Alyssum, Asters, Calliopsis, Cosmos, Dahlia, Marigold, Poppy, and Sunflowers are good examples of local annuals that encourage pollinators to visit.

Promoting Pollinators

- * Encourage homeowners to have large plantings of many different flowers that bloom sequentially. Bees and pollinators prefer purple, yellow, white, and blue flowers with single, fragrant blooms.
- * Home gardeners should prune and remove spent flower heads ("deadheading") and shrubs to encourage new growth and new blooms.
- * Homeowners who add a water feature or birdbath to their garden will help attract pollinators.
- * Suggesting that gardeners leave dandelions in their garden during the early spring will help bees and pollinators start the season off with a food source when there are few others available.



Ontario Ornamental Production, Pest Management

In Ontario, there are many biological pest control solutions available that are very effective at controlling pests and do not contravene the 2008 Cosmetic Pesticide Ban. Try to recommend that homeowners do their research before applying domestic chemical pesticide treatments.



Ontario Ornamental farmers employ a variety of approaches to control pests, especially in greenhouse production where environments are more easily manipulated. Over 90% of surveyed growers indicated that they chose biological organisms to protect and prevent pests and diseases on plants over chemical treatments.

Some plants can often be grown virtually pest-free and therefore, require minimal control measures. When pests are encountered, Ontario flower growers practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices whereby they scout,

use physical or cultural control measures, apply biological controls and, as a last resort, administer approved chemical corrections.

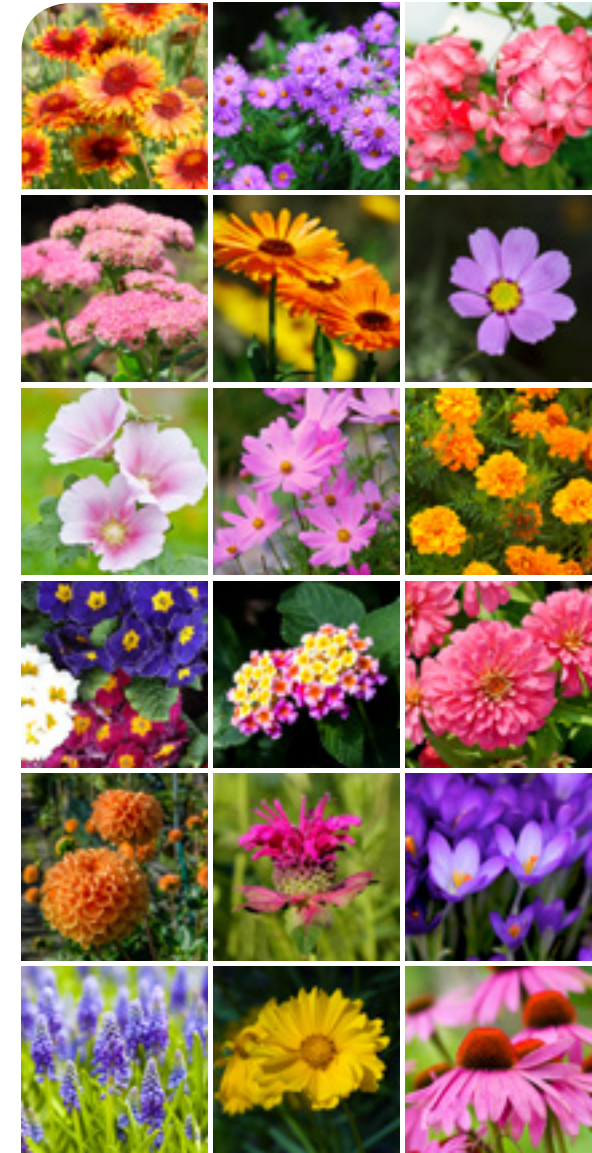
Where pesticides are used, growers always follow the Health Canada label instructions. These rare cases help to prevent the spread of disease and pests to home gardens, other farmers and avoid quarantine concerns.

Many pesticides used in floriculture production, have not conclusively demonstrated that they remain in the crop for extended periods of time or that they even have any significant impact on pollinators. Health Canada, beekeeping groups, and many other researchers agree that ornamentals grown with occasional applications of pesticides, are not contributing to the problem of bee decline.

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS THAT ATTRACT POLLINATORS

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Allium* | Grape Hyacinth* |
| Alyssum | Ground Phlox |
| Aster | Helleborus |
| Bee Balm | Hollyhock |
| Bidens | Iberis |
| Blue Salvia | Iris* |
| Calendula | Lilium* |
| Calliopsis | Lantana |
| Coral Bells | Lobelia |
| Cosmos | Marigold |
| Cornflower | Nasturtium |
| Creeping Thyme | Nemesia |
| Crocus* | Poppy |
| Dahlia* | Primula |
| Echinacea | Sage / Salvia |
| Evening Primrose | Sedum |
| Forget-Me-Not | Snowdrop |
| Gaillardia | Sunflower |
| Gladiolus | Tickseed |
| Globe Thistle | True Geranium |
| Goldenrod | Zinnia |

*Denotes a bulb or a tuber





AFTER CARE

SPOILAGE & SHRINK

Manage shrink in your store with the following considerations:

Insist On Quality Product

Find out if growers are using proper post-harvest procedures such as silver thiosulfate (STS) treatment to protect flowers against ethylene damage. Ensure your growers and distributors are shipping in refrigerated transport vehicles.

Tighten Receiving Practices

Flowers should not be stored near ethylene-producing fruit or a warehouse banana-ripening room. If your product is to be held at the warehouse for more than a few hours, make sure they are placed

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Flowers and plants are living products that have a limited shelf life. Impress your customers with only fresh, top quality plants and flowers on your shelves.

Shrink and spoilage are always risks when dealing with plants and flowers but they can be minimized with the right processes in place. With proper care and handling, you can lower your shrink levels from the 20–25% of a beginner floral associate to as low as 7–10%.



in a 34°–36° F cooler and are kept away from ripening fruits and vegetables.

Use Proper Storage Facilities

For optimum shelf life, store flowers at 34°–36° F and a relative humidity of 90–95%. Make sure there is a gentle airflow in the storage facility. Produce coolers, dairy coolers, and beer coolers do not provide these conditions.

Order Only What Can Be Sold

Keep tight control on inventory to ensure maximum freshness and to guard against damage that might result from unfavourable storage conditions. Since many supermarkets do not have a floral key on their cash registers, the best source for sales and ordering information is the store-level floral manager.

Ensure Employees Have The Training They Need

Plants and flowers are highly perishable. Train your employees to appropriately care for merchandise

and address any danger signals that may result in widespread shrink.

Make The Manager Accountable

Floral managers should report shrink on a daily or weekly basis to enable the owner/director to identify problems with procedure, shipper, or grower.

Use A Preservative In Floral Buckets

There are many types of preservatives on the market, all designed to lower pH levels and increase water uptake. They play a significant role in ensuring maximum shelf life. Follow the care directions provided on your store's choice of floral food/preservative.

Pay Scrupulous Attention To Care Procedures

Stems of cut flowers must be cut with a sharp knife; leaves below the waterline must be trimmed; and employees must keep bacteria to a minimum by removing crushed leaves and flowers with broken stems from storage buckets. Every time a stem is cut, a leaf is bent, or a bud is removed, the flower produces ethylene,





which hurries it toward a premature death. Proper care practices will ensure product longevity and subsequently, increase your customer satisfaction.

Convey Tips On Care To The Consumer At The Point Of Purchase

Remind your customers to trim the stems of their flowers under warm running water and to add a preservative to the vase water. They will be rewarded with a longer lasting bouquet and your store will ensure repeat sales and referrals.

Observe Meticulous Housekeeping Rituals

The importance of cleanliness in the floral industry cannot be emphasized enough. Slimy buckets mean ethylene-producing bacteria are rapidly multiplying. Clean all buckets, coolers, and storage areas regularly with a disinfectant.

Sell Quickly, Markdown or Remove Old Product

Always look carefully at the sell-by date and remove any dead or dying

plants. Create a rotation policy to move old product out and create space for new product. This will empty your storage area quickly and make room on your shelves for new orders.

Managing and minimizing the markdowns and shrink factors is important to your profits. Maintaining inventory control and creating displays that attract customers will alleviate these by keeping your product moving.





CONCLUSION

Flowers create an emotional connection with your customers through their beauty and scent. When you display your quality product in an orderly and attractive way, you increase sales opportunities and customer satisfaction while decreasing risk of shrink and spoilage.

REMEMBER TO FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE GUIDELINES:

Buying & Ordering

Order products in amounts and varieties that suit your store and your sales.

FUN FACTS!

- ✿ Entertain customers and children by gently squeezing the sides of a snapdragon floret, which opens and closes the 'dragon's mouth'.
- ✿ Each Dahlia 'petal' is a complete flower. Dahlias are actually composites of many individual flowers on one flower head.
- ✿ Compounds found in Ranunculi are used in the naturopathic treatment of arthritis, sciatica, rheumatism, and various skin conditions.



Strong Merchandising

Create eye-catching displays by using proper pricing, signage, and lighting. Use seasonally appropriate themes to attract the attention of your customer. Keep your displays clean, full, and appealing.

High-Traffic Location

Position seasonal products in key locations throughout your store, in high-traffic areas, or close to exits to promote impulse buying.

Product Care & Handling

Handle your products with care from receipt of delivery to display in your store. Groom your inventory daily and follow a watering schedule to keep ethylene production to a minimum and to maintain the health and longevity of your flowers and plants.

Proper Markdown/Shrink policy

Remove out-of-date signage and low-quality product to make room for new orders and fresher products. Create in-store policies to keep

shrink to a minimum and report shrink to suppliers, if necessary.

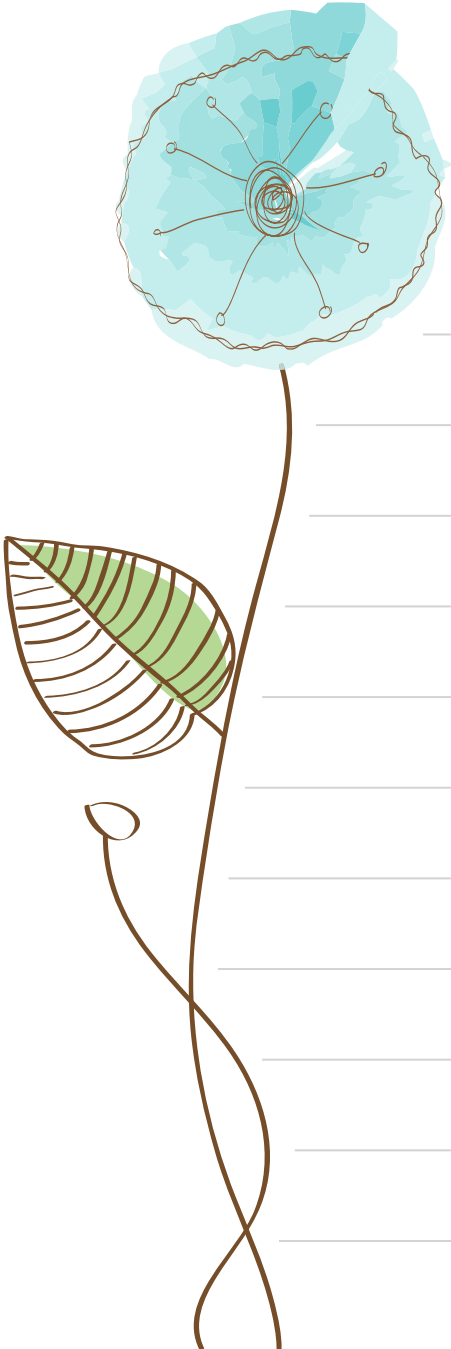
Congratulations!

You have taken the first step in becoming an expert floral associate. By following these care and display suggestions, you'll increase sales, customer satisfaction, and your own ability to move a customer from potential to purchase.

**GOOD LUCK AND
HAPPY SELLING!**



NOTES





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