



# ROSES: PREP, CARE & HANDLING

## BEST PRACTICES

- The night(s) prior to your roses arriving prepare buckets with water and stage inside your cooler.
- The day the roses arrive, open boxes and spread roses on rack in the cooler for at least an hour and up to four hours prior to cutting and placing in water that has a correct dose of hydrating solution (Floralife; or equivalent from Chrysal etc.). Do not use flower food at this stage.
- Alternatively, prepare buckets of water with professional floral hydrating solution and stage in a cool part of the shop. Let roses acclimatize to ambient temperature of the shop where the buckets are staged, and then cut and place in water. The key is to ensure that the roses and the water are more or less the same temperature. Do not plunge cold stems into warm water or warm stems into cold water as the shock could cause a blockage in the stems, and they may not hydrate properly.
- Do NOT unwrap the roses until they have hydrated for at least an hour, and preferably two to three. If you hydrated the roses outside of the cooler, after about an half hour or so put into the cooler. By leaving the wrappers on, the water can hydrate the stems and restore them to a turgid and stable state, restoring strength and elasticity to the stems and flowers.
- After two or three hours you may loosen the cardboard sleeve and remove it. It is suggested that you keep the plastic sleeve in place. It is not recommended that you leave the cardboard sleeve on longer than 24 hours once they are in water as the hydrating blooms will start to swell against the packaging and the other roses.
- When cutting the stems of roses, it is suggested that you use very sharp and clean cutting equipment, blades and knives. Because of the high volume at this time of year, bench-cutters are normally used by many floral businesses, but make sure they are sharp and cleaned regularly throughout the processing task. If you like to hydrate each stem with an individual cut on each stem, it is recommended that you cut the whole bunch and hydrate with the sleeve in place, and then after two or three hours has elapsed, process as you would usually do.
- Maintain your roses in buckets that may be full but not packed tightly. Keep roses away from breezes, drafts and fans, and where necessary tent them with a clean plastic cover (drop cloth from Home Depot is ideal and inexpensive).
- If necessary, change the water and re-cut the stems every two to three days. This step is normally not necessary except when large volumes of flowers are being processed and also during holidays where roses are a large investment: Any stem that perhaps was not drinking water properly, was inadvertently not cut or had a clogged stem is afforded an opportunity to be perfectly hydrated.
- Remember to remove any leaves that will fall below the water line in the buckets as this can cause copious amounts of bacteria and organic material to block stems from drinking water properly.
- Leave the guard petals on until you are close to using for an order. Guard petals protect the inner blooms from damage due to handling but also inhibit a flower's ability to open. Removing them initiates a signal to the flower to start opening.