

20 WAYS TO SHOW YOU CAN HANDLE FEB 14

> For many, purchasing Valentine roses at a florist is a first-time event. For others, it may be their only flower purchase for the year. The stakes are high and you don't want to disappoint.

At the intersection of high consumer expectations and heightened pressure on the supply chain is the retail florist. To avoid getting caught under a pileup of pathetic petals and cranky Cupids, follow these face-saving and rose-reviving tips.

January 1-31

1. Take advantage of a slow January to deep clean. Start by organizing tools and processing areas.
2. Check and chart cooler temperatures first thing every day for the first 10 days of January to make sure your cooler is holding its temperature (34-36 F) consistently. (By checking in early January, you leave yourself time to call for maintenance if there's a problem.)
3. To ensure an accurate measurement, measure the water in a cooler bucket rather than relying on the wall thermostat. The water should read 34-36 F, the same temperature as the set point for the cooler.
4. Schedule a service call to have cooler coils vacuumed for better energy efficiency.
5. Deep clean floors in the design area and cooler, floor mats, cooler walls and shelves to remove bacteria, Botrytis spores, algae and dirt.
6. Remove pine sap from cutters and sharpen anything with a blade.
7. Scrub buckets with a commercial flower cleaner and let dry completely before stacking. Before dumping bucket-cleaning solutions, dunk brooms to clean bristles, then pour the solution in trash cans to sanitize.
8. Toss out funky rags and use paper towels instead. Service your Dosatron's automatic injectors to remove any lime build-up inside the casing. (See "Deep Clean the Dosatron" in More Online.)
9. Organize design areas and toss out junk.
10. Check inventory for hydration,



DON'T CHANCE LOVE Stick with suppliers you know at Valentine's Day, when the stakes are so high, with so many first-time buyers. Photo courtesy of Esmeralda Farms.

bucket and vase solutions, leaf shine, consumer sachets, finishing spray and cleaners.

11. Stick with suppliers you know. Be aware that not all roses are ready to be harvested the day they are needed. Sometimes growers have to store flowers which means blooms are super thirsty by the time they reach your shop.

February 1-14

12. Control the climate. Keep the cooler set between 34-36 F and floors dry and clean.
13. Use pallets to stack boxes and allow 6 to 10 inches between cooler wall and boxes to maximize air flow efficiency.
14. Inspect at least 25 percent of your shipment on each arrival even if you don't intend to process the stems immediately.
15. Contact the supplier immediately if there's a problem. Describe the issue and give the grower name on the sleeve or box and the percentage of bunches showing the problem.
16. Feed the specific needs. For wilt-sensitive flowers (roses, hydrangeas) use hydration solutions to jump-start flow. For everything else, prep buckets with a low-dose flower food such as Chrysal Professional

#2 or Floralife Professional. Use **cold** water to mix all flower solutions. Measure when mixing and keep water level at one-third the height of buckets to avoid dripping on other blooms when pulling bunches, as this reduces Botrytis potential. Regardless of which solution used, don't rush. Flower stems need a minimum of four hours to fully fill.

17. Make sure all stems get a fresh cut and transfer immediately into solutions. Cells start to close within 10 seconds of being cut.
18. Never consolidate solutions when consolidating displays.
19. Fill vases with full-load flower food such as Chrysal Rose Pro Vase or Floralife Premium Rose Food. Vase food ensures blooms have ample nutrients to open and stand tall to the end.
20. Never spray blooms with water or finishing spray as product is going into the cooler. Allow flowers to dry completely before placing in cooler.

Don't get lazy when Cupid makes things crazy. Discuss how your team can remain an efficient machine during crunch time. 🌹

Gay Smith is the technical consulting manager at Chrysal Americas in Miami. Email: gaysmith@earthlink.net