

Dye Uptake by Cut Carnations

Recent work by Harry Kohl and Dan Smith at the University of California, Davis shows clearly that it pays to recut the stems of carnations under water before placing them in dye solution. This is one means of demonstrating the presence of air bubbles in flower stems that have been exposed to air. The air bubbles in the conductive system partially block the uptake of dye (or water).

Carnation stems that were not recut required 60 minutes to show the first color in flowers. Stems recut in air showed first color in 20 minutes; those

recut under water showed first color in 2 minutes.

The real difference was in the intensity of color developed by flowers whose stems were recut under water. One hundred percent of these flowers developed intense color while only 4% attained intense color when stems were recut in air. Emulsifying

agents were not needed in the dye mixture when stems were recut under water. WDH.

Your editor,

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