

Care and Handling



A PICTURE'S WORTH 33 CENTS Does flower food work? Judge for yourself (above left photo) which looks more salable: the flowers displayed for five days in plain tap water (left), or those displayed in a flower food solution? The photo at right shows how flowers in a vase that had been cleaned with Floralife's D.C.D. fared much better than those cleaned with plain water (middle) or not at all (left).

WHAT CAN 33 CENTS BUY? HAPPY CUSTOMERS

➤ Consumers want flowers with staying power. Independent research confirms that when asked what matters most about flowers, most people say they want them to last (source: Prince and Prince 2010 Consumer Preference Survey). You have proof right in your shop — when customers walk in with a return, they're usually holding a plant or flower that died too soon.

Given the premium the market puts on durability, you must concentrate equally on both the basics of care and handling and the beauty of design. Think about all the time, energy and heart you put into giving customers the full floral experience. Why waste that work and deny them the full enjoyment by rushing handling and cutting corners on care? The total cost of using proper care and handling is 3 percent of the arrangement's total cost. When someone returns an arrangement that didn't last, you lose 100 percent of that sale — not to mention the loss of repeat purchases and reputation.

The Beauty of Basics

Clean it like you mean it. Bacteria in buckets and storage containers can subtract days from flower life before they even see the design bench. Cleaning has the lowest cost and highest return. Take it from the Tide commercial: "Style is an option, Clean is not." With professional grade cleaners, including Floralife D.C.D., and Chrysal Clear Professional bucket cleaner. You can add just 3 ounces — a

10-cent investment — to one gallon of water and clean your buckets, coolers, counter tops and floors with confidence. You get flowers that last longer and a shop that looks and smells better. Professionally formulated cleaners kill bacteria, remove grease and oil residues and provide a disinfectant that lasts seven days. The bottom line: You're spending less than a penny per bloom and giving customers what they want the most.

Get in the drink. Invest in hydration solutions, including Floralife Quick Dip and Chrysal OVB, to ensure flowers are ready for flower food and stems are unplugged. For about 50 cents per treatment, you'll have enough for at least 120 stems. For finicky flowers, such as hydrangea, hydration solutions make a noticeable difference. A word of warning: Don't drink without having something to eat (good advice for humans and flowers). Hydration solutions are most effective when used with flower food.

The need for feed, indeed. Enriching cooler buckets, vases and foam with flower food is the second most important investment. For as little as 7 cents in each quart of water, flowers benefit from proper nutrition and bacteria inhibitors, which means optimum bloom opening, color and vase life. This is less than 1 percent of the cost of the arrangement, and not worth skipping. While more money is invested in watering instructions and sachets of flower food than all other costs combined, this could be the least effective way to improve

flower life if none of the other care and handling was employed. The average cost of a sachet of flower food for one liter or quart of water is 9 cents, plus 2 cents for water instruction signage. But this 11 cents assures nothing if the flowers were not properly hydrated and fed at the shop, with the proper doses. So while a sachet of flower food is a good investment, if this is all your shop does, your money is better spent by starting with the basics.

It All Adds Up

For as little as 33 cents, you're making an investment in customer loyalty. For the average arrangement, this is less than 3 percent of the total cost of goods. And for the average customer, it's what impresses them the most. 🌻

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Shopping List

- Hydration Solution
5 cents/dozen flowers
- Flower Food
7 cents/quart of water
- Customer sachet
11 cents/arrangement
- Shop Cleaner
10 cents/arrangement
- Total: 33 cents/arrangement**