

## KEEP YOUR FRESH FLOWERS FRESH!

It's such a delight to receive fresh flowers and it's so sad to watch them fade. Fading or wilting is a natural process of course, but here are a few tips for keeping them fresh longer.



#1 **CHANGE THE WATER** in your flowers every 2 days, don't just top it off. This is the single most important thing you can do to keep your flowers fresh.

#2 Keep your cut flowers away from air conditioning vents, out of direct sunlight, and move them to a cool location at night.

#3 Keep your flowers away from fruit! Fruit releases a gas that will cause your flowers to wilt.

Have you ever wondered why your roses wilted so fast? While storage issues may come into play, air bubbles and bacteria are probably to blame. To prevent air bubbles, cut the rose stem while holding it under water. Water will cling to the stem and prevent air bubbles from clogging the end. Always use a sharp knife, and serrated blades are a “no”.

You can also use a packet of “floral fresh”. These packets contain a Biocide, acidifier and sugar. Biocides kill bacteria, yeasts and fungi that seep into the water from the cut flowers. These bacteria will clog the flower stem and prevent water from moving up the stem, resulting in a wilted flower. The acidifier helps water move up the stem and the sugar acts as flower food.

Here are a few hints for additives if don't have floral packets and have some fresh picked flowers:

1 qt water, 2 tbs. Fresh lemon juice, 1tbs. Sugar and half a tsp. of bleach

Or

2 oz Listerine per gal. of water

Both of these natural alternatives include the three components of the “floral fresh”. If you are picking from your own garden, early in the morning is best, followed by late afternoon. Carry a bucket of water with you and plunge the flowers immediately into the water. You may notice that your flowers are also most fragrant in the morning. Ever wonder why? Hmmmmm...that's another whole Connie's Corner! Cut your flowers just beyond bud stage, and remove all leaves that will be under water.

One final tip from Sautter's designer, Holly. If you want your cut Hydrangeas to stay fresh, add Alum to the water. Get it right off the grocery store shelf.