

Keep Smelling the Roses

For everyone who receives vases of flowers on Valentine's Day, or anytime of the year, here are a couple of tips and tricks to help get the most out of your flowers. Follow these helpful guidelines to help extend the life of your flowers.

To help keep floral arrangements longer follow these easy three steps:

- 1) Keep the vase filled, or the floral foam soaked, with warm water. Add fresh, warm water daily. If the water in the vase turns cloudy, replace the water immediately. If possible, recut stems by removing one to two inches with a sharp knife. When cutting the stems, cut them under water, as this will allow the stem to draw in water instead of air.
- 2) Keep flowers in a cool spot (65 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit), keep away from direct sunlight, heating or cooling vents, near radiators, and directly under ceiling fans.
- 3) If a rose begins to wilt in your arrangement, remove it and recut the stem under water.

For loose stems that don't come with in a vase, follow these easy steps:

- 1) If you can't get your flowers in a flower food solution right away, keep flowers in a cool place.
- 2) Fill a clean, deep vase with water and add the flower food obtained from your florist. Be sure to follow the mixing directions on the package.
- 3) Remove leaves that will be below the waterline. Leaves that are in the water will promote bacterial growth.
- 4) Recut stems under water with a sharp knife and place the flowers in the vase solution you've prepared.
- 5) If a rose begins to wilt, remove it and recut the stem under water.

For those of you who receive planted tulip bulbs for Valentine's Day instead of roses, here is what you can do with them after they are finished blooming. Once the bulbs have stopped blooming, discontinue watering and allow the foliage to die back. Don't try and remove any foliage while it is still green, but once the foliage is dried and brown, remove it from the pot by gently tugging on the leaves until they break away from the bulb and come out of the ground. If the leaves don't pull away from the bulbs easily you haven't waited quite long enough for the foliage to die. Once you have removed all the leaves allow the soil in the pot to dry out. Gently brush off any excess dirt from the bulb. Do not wash the bulb, because this can add excess water to the bulb and cause it to rot. Store your bulbs in a cool dry place until the ground has warmed up in the spring. Plant your tulips in an area that gets afternoon to full sun exposures. Plant tulips 6 to 8 inches deep and make sure you plant them pointy side up, otherwise the bulb will be upside down, and might not grow next spring. Once you have planted the bulbs your job is done until next spring, then all you have to do is enjoy the spring color.

If you have any questions feel free to stop by or contact me in the in the Washington Office by calling 785-325-2121 or emailing khatesohl@ksu.edu.