

Flowers Alive With Possibilities

Blooming Beginnings For Your Fresh-Cut Flowers

by Dr. Bridget K. Behe, PhD

(NAPSA)—Can flowers make people bloom? A Rutgers University study showed that having flowers around evokes many positive emotional, physical and psychological benefits. Here are some tips to prolong the enjoyment you get from flowers:

- **Cool Off**—While preparing to put the flowers in a vase, store the blooms in a cool place.



Kitchen Beauty

- **Keep it Clean**—Vases, floral clippers and knives should be clean.

How clean the tools and container are can truly affect the presentation and life of the flowers. Wash the tools and selected flower container with a detergent or antibacterial cleaning solution.

- **Food for Thought**—Commercial flower food solution is a must. Follow the mixing instructions on the flower food packet. Most packets should be mixed with either a pint or a quart of water. Flower foods should not be diluted with more water than is specified.

- **Leaf 'Em Out**—If the leaves on the stems will fall below the water line, remove. Leaves in water will promote bacterial microbial growth that may limit water uptake by the flower.

- **Under the Knife**—Recut stems by removing one to two inches with a sharp knife or floral shears while under warm water. Place the flowers in the vase solution you've prepared.

- **Climate Control**—Keep fresh flowers out of direct sunlight



Dr. Behe looks at the stems when choosing flowers. They should be clean and not slippery.

and away from drafts.

- **Maintenance Musts**—To prolong the life of fresh-cut flowers, simple maintenance is a must. It is important to recut stems and change water often. The Flower Doctor offers these other things to consider:

- **Do Downsize**—The once appropriately sized vase may be too big once the stems are cut. Move to a smaller vase and rearrange.

- **Divide and Decorate**—Don't be afraid to separate flowers into different groupings and move them into different rooms of your home as the stems get shorter and the vase gets smaller.

- **Maximum Enjoyment**—When flowers are coming to the end of their life cycle, cut the stems 1/2" from the blooms and float them in a bowl of water (maybe accompanied by some floating candles, stones or marbles).

Dr. Behe is a professor of horticulture at Michigan State University. You can ask her questions at www.flowerpossibilities.com/ask.html.