

# Fresh Choices

Trend-Setting Tips for Buying Fresh Cut Flowers and Greens

## Scents and Sensibility

WHEN A CHARACTER IN A TV SHOW OR MOVIE GETS flowers, she almost always plunges her nose into the bouquet. If the actress is good, she'll look up and say convincingly, "They smell wonderful!" Fat chance, say florists, who have watched over the years as flower fragrances give way to longer vase lives, improved disease resistance and larger flower heads. It's the give-and-take of modern breeding.

"Fragrant flowers do not last long in nature, because the bees will find them sooner because of the fragrance," says Corine van Veen of De Ruiter Innovations, a Dutch breeder. "This is a problem for breeders because customers prefer flowers (with a long vase life). So, as breeders, we are looking for roses with fragrance, but vase life is an important matter during the selection and trial period."

### Roses, Lilies

'**Vitality**' (1), a creamy white hybrid tea rose, passed muster at De Ruiter, with a solid vase life and unique scent. In the United States, it's available in "small quantities" now, but van Veen expects increased plantings in South America to improve its U.S. presence. 'Sweet Moments,' a large-headed, medium-pink rose, has won multiple awards from SAF's Outstanding Varieties Competition and has a distinct, fresh fragrance, says Saskia ten Brink of Schreurs, a Dutch breeder. "It's like drifting through Mediterranean gardens," she says, "full of all the riches nature has to offer." (For a picture, see Photos to Go.)

Another pink with fragrance is '**Tickled Pink**' (2). Currently grown in Colombia, the variety will soon be available from Ecuador, too, says Luis Efre of Franko Roses, a New Zealand-

based breeder. Along with a "strong, but delicate" fragrance, the variety has 28- to 32-inch stems and a "soft pink" color.

People expect fragrant lilies, but the "citrus, oriental" scent of the Sonata series of oriental-trumpet lilies fills a room, without overpowering it, according to Bruce Brady of The Sun Valley Group in Oxnard, Calif. The series has about 20 varieties, including '**Prince Promise**' (3), which was the industry's first "readily available colored trumpet lily" when it debuted on the Dutch auctions in 2003, according to the Flower Council of Holland. Sixty thousand 'Prince Promise' stems sold worldwide through the auctions in the first year after its launch, making it one of the most successful introductions of 2003.

### Carnations

Consumers who only buy flowers in grocery stores may not realize it, but carnations are a very fragrant bud, says Marius Kooij of P. Kooij & Zonen, a Dutch breeder that has bred and propagated carnations for nearly 80 years. Kooij says dynamic scents can be found in standard and spray varieties. Some of his favorites include:

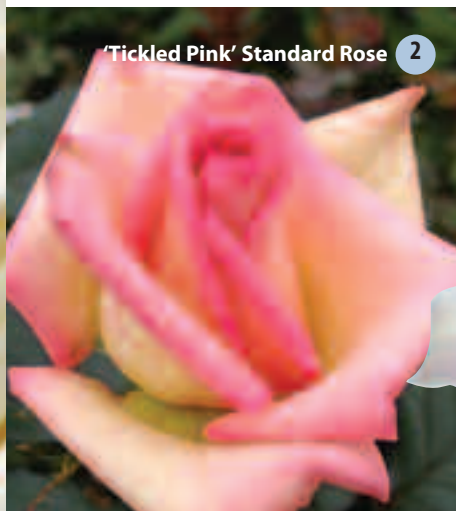
■ **Standard Carnations** (24- to 28-inch stems): '**Prado Mint**' (4), a mint-green variety with a woody smell, reminiscent of "autumn in the forest." For more feminine fragrances, Kooij recommends the dark purple '**Farida**' (5), which has a sweet scent, and '**Primero Mango**' (6), which smells, appropriately, fruity.

■ **Spray Carnations** (20- to 24-inch stems): '**Fleurette**' (7) is pink with a traditional, rose-like scent, while '**Melissa**' (8), a white and lilac variety, has a sweeter fragrance. Deeply hued and romantic, '**Satisfaction**' (9), a cherry-colored pick, smells fruity.



'Vitality' Hybrid Tea Rose 1

De Ruiter Innovations



'Tickled Pink' Standard Rose 2

Franko Rose

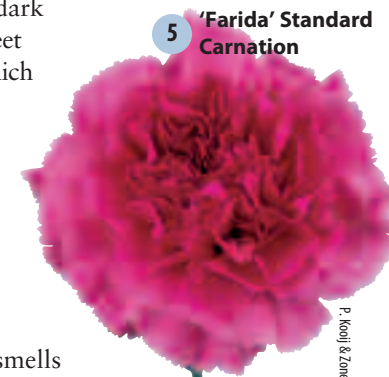


'Prince Promise,' Oriental Trumpet 3



'Prado Mint' Standard Carnation 4

P. Kooij & Zonen



'Farida' Standard Carnation 5

P. Kooij & Zonen

## Aussie Pride

Cut flowers aren't the only fragrant additions to a flower shop, and Australian fillers are a reliable source for light scent, says Sally Sutton of the Australian Flower Export Council. "What's worth its salt, in fragrance, comes into bloom in the spring, which (in Australia) is from September to December," she says. And, while "eucalyptus (10) is by far (Australia's) most noble fragrance," Sutton also recommends:

7 'Fleurette' Spray Carnation



P. Koofj & Zonen

■ **Waxflower:** "New varieties are especially for the bridal world," she says. "They are not only luminous but have the fragrance of the bush, and especially, honey." In

addition to its "heavenly" fragrance, waxflower won't turn the water murky. "Like all flowers," Sutton says, "a fresh water top-up will give added life to these thirsty stems." 🌿

— Mary Westbrook

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'Melissa' Spray Carnation 8



P. Koofj & Zonen

West Australia

10 'Bridal Pearl' Waxflower



9 'Satisfaction' Spray Carnation



P. Koofj & Zonen

6 'Primero Mango' Standard Carnation



P. Koofj & Zonen

## Photos To Go



### More Scents

See more photos of fragrant varieties by clicking on the Photos to Go logo in the Floral Management section of SAF's member Web site, [www.safnow.org](http://www.safnow.org)