

“O my Luve’s like a red, red rose...”

Robert Burns



Since time in memoriam, the rose has been cherished by goddesses and mere mortals alike as the flower of love, beauty and friendship. Its enduring popularity is more than a Valentine’s Day phenomenon.

Beware the innocent Google enquiry into the meaning of a rose, for you will find to your increasing anxiety that orange roses symbolize enthusiasm and desire; yellow - joy or deep friendship (but not in Germany where it means jealousy or infidelity!); red - not only love but also courage and respect; and white - innocence and purity...

But colour’s not really the point. It’s the beauty of the rose as it develops from an exquisitely formed bud, opening to reveal a mass of beautiful petals. Years of breeding has created cut roses of consistently good quality, with high production yields and fabulously straight stems up to 90cm long and more. Their strong, thick petals and vase life of at least two weeks from cut has allowed them to be grown all year round in Holland, Africa and South America and shipped around the world.

## The Designer Favourites

**Jamie Aston:** “Right now I adore the Ecuadorian Esperance rose. I love these big blousy blown roses, they’re always a joy to work with. Roses like Esperance last incredibly well and have impact even on the flower market stand. Our one day rose class at The Flower School is always the first to sell! Seems it’s not just me who adores roses.”

**Robbie Honey:** “Maroussia is my favourite white rose, it has a lovely scent and opens well. However if colour is your thing, a plain white space decorated with masses of vibrant roses in reds, yellows, oranges and hot pink looks sensational!”

**Paul Thomas:** “I love the beautiful perfumes of the garden roses Mme Isaac Pereire and Margaret Merrill, but my favourite florist rose would have to be Maroussia too! I love to use this rose because of its colour and its light scent. Its almost always arrives a good size with a flat top and is great to use in more sculptured work. I usually buy it a few days before it’s needed so the flowers are fully blown.”



## The Flower Market View

John Hardcastle of wholesaler Bloomfield has been handling roses for decades, so which are his favourites and which are the bestsellers? “There is always demand for good white roses, and Avalanche, Akito, Maroussia and Boeing in particular are the best in my view. And whilst Grand Prix is probably the best known red, varieties like Passion, Ruby Red and Red Naomi are superb performers all year round.”



"I'd love to see more fragrance introduced back into the commercial cut rose," adds John. "The trade-off between vase life and scent is inevitable though. The only widely available scented cut roses are 'Sterling Silver' (lilac), 'Jacaranda' (blue-pink), 'Osiana' (peach-cream) and, of course, 'Extase' (deep red)."

## English Garden Roses

Since New Covent Garden's 'Best of British Flowers' event in May, deliciously fragrant garden roses are making an appearance at the Flower Market, as Country Roses have started supplying Mick Waite of wholesalers Pratley. On the Country Roses nursery in Essex, Danaë Duthy produces thousands of stems of fragrant cut roses from May through to early November in sumptuous shades of apricot, cream, white, magenta, pink, red, lilac and yellow. What you gain on scent, you trade on vase life - but what a joy to use!

## How can you maximise the vase life of roses?

"As soon as you get your roses back to your workshop, condition them in Professional 2," advises Claire Streit of Chrysal. "The next stage is then to give your customer a rose liquid sachet. This regime really does give those vital extra days of vase life."

## When are they available?

Cut roses are available all year with prices fluctuating according to key festival dates and upon variety, head size, quality and stem length. Rose farms in South America and Africa create thousands of jobs, and are increasingly tightly regulated by certification schemes. The air miles debate is dwindling since little or no heat or light is used in cut rose production in these climates.



Photograph courtesy of Country Flowers

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