Care and Handling

THE COOLER

Floral Cooler Plan









- 1. Wet pack flowers or Dry pack flowers no need for separate coolers, both should be stored at the same relative humidity (RH%). Optimal RH% should be between 75% 85%.
- 2. Humidifiers may be installed in coolers to keep the humidity at an optimal level (Red Hat SM 707 Humidifiers, for instance) and for Dry pack flowers, the proper RH% is very important. Wet pack flowers that are in a floral holding solution can be fine in less than ideal RH% conditions.
- 3. Regardless of how you store your flowers, wet or dry, they need to be hydrated before using in an arrangement or bouquet. If they are dry packed, be sure you use a hydrating solution that will stimulate ideal flower head size and leaf quality for the arrangement or bouquet. It is best to protocol proper hydration in your production process to keep production running smoothly and get the end results your customers expect for long lasting, beautiful flowers.
- 4. Optimal cooler temperatures should be 33° F or 0° C overall. However it is best to "map" the temperatures of your cooler to find the "hot" spots and "cold" spots and use the variance to your advantage. For instance, roses prefer cooler spots and pomps the warmer areas of the cooler. Tropicals should be kept at 58° F or 15° C. If you are not planning to map coolers for variance be sure your temperature range is between 33° F 35° F. Remember, airflow out of the air handler can be well below freezing so placement of flowers in the cooler is very important.
- 5. The key is to maintain the cooler temperature as close to 33° F as possible. Opening and closing doors, people moving in and out, how many flowers are in the cooler, are all things that will affect correct temperature maintenance. Plastic curtains with strips touching, swinging doors that close quickly and air curtains are all things that help maintain the optimal set temperature.
- 6. Cooler maintenance is essential: Coils, drain pans and drain lines need to be cleaned 3 times per year. You want to be sure your coolers are in top condition before the stressful times of the year. A good maintenance schedule would be before heavy use times Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, September 1st (prior to the holiday season).
- 7. Keeping your coolers clear of ethylene as much as possible is also very important to avoid flower damage.

a. Oxidizing systems or blankets like Potassium Permanganate can be effective only if in a sealed environment, and can be pricey.

- b. Air exchange very effective and inexpensive. Fresh air in, stale air out. A small door or opening in the ceiling of the cooler may be enough to take care of air exchange.
- c. Use of an ethylene inhibitor can also help mitigate ethylene damage.
- 8. Always keep your cooler clean.
 - a. Remove dead or decaying leaves and flowers daily as well as any other debris that may have collected.
 - b. Keep all shelves and surfaces both on the interior and exterior of the cooler clean from water spots, fingerprints or any other dust and dirt.
 - c. Clean your cooler weekly with a professional cleaner.
 - d. Keep the coils and vents of your air system clean and clear.
 - e. Wipe down all surfaces, gaskets, surfaces of the cooler on a regular basis.
 - f. Maintain the cooling system mechanics of your cooler on a regular basis. Check for leaks or cracks. Regular maintenance can save you from disaster.

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PROCESSING AND RESTOCKING AT STORE LEVEL – DRY PACK



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F	Flower Food





- 1. Remove all the fresh "in-date" flowers that are currently in the floral display case and move them into the store's dairy cooler (or produce if dairy cooler is full) to keep them at a cool temperature while cleaning and restocking the floral display cooler.
- 2. Empty out all water and remove all plastic liners from the buckets in the display case.
- 3. If the buckets are brand new or have gotten dirty, first clean them with cleaner solution of 2 oz. per gallon of mixture and water to remove any bacteria. See product label for full instructions. If the bucket is to be reused but still clean, there is no need to wash the buckets.
- 4. Clean floral cooler walls, floor, glass, etc. with the same cleaner solution. Also clean the floral snips / cutters used for cutting flower stems.
- 5. Secure a plastic sleeve bucket liner onto each clean bucket, rolling any excess liner over the lip of the cooler ready bucket.
- 6. Fill each bucket $\frac{1}{2}$ full with cool tap water and properly mixed flower food.
- 7. Restock the empty buckets with previously inspected, dated, and cooled dry pack flowers. Bring out of the cooler only as much as is needed.
- 8. Rule of thumb, in dry pack, a 3 5 day rotation system should be observed. Flowers that suffer hydration issues (e.g. hydrangea, rose, gerbera) should be left in dry pack no more than 3 days, whereas flowers such as alstroemeria and carnations can be kept up to 5 days.
- 9. Using a clean cutting tool, cut off 1 inch of the flower stem from the base of the bouquets. Make sure to cut every stem.
- 10. Shake any loose leaves and petals out of the flower sleeves into a trash disposal.
- 11. Remove all flower "nets" around individual flower petals within the floral bouquets.
- 12. Place signage in the correct place and visible above each item in the cooler display.
- 13. Again, check the operating temperature in the floral display cooler, and several times throughout the day, as temperature is the key to fresher, longer lasting flowers.
- 14. Evergreens should never be stored along with flowers as they are a large ethylene generator.
- 15. For other greens like filler, use $45 55^{\circ}$ F cooler for the most part.
- 16. For more tips on care and handling visit <u>www.floralife.com</u> or <u>www.syndicatesales.com</u>.