

CALIFORNIA *Bloomin'*

FRESH-CUT NEWS FROM THE CALIFORNIA CUT FLOWER COMMISSION

WINTER/SPRING

More Than A *Daisy*

If flowers were food, gerberas would be haute cuisine.

With perfect form, not a petal out of place, and regal bearing, the Gerbera outranks other daisy-type flowers. It blooms in a festival of luminous color, from creamy pastels to hot and spicy. An eye-stopping focal flower, just three stems in a vase has high impact.

About ten years ago, plant breeders introduced the mini Gerbera, a smaller, hybridized version of the Gerbera. This flower possesses many of the qualities of its larger relative, but some unique benefits give it a floral image all its own. Because of its size, about two and a half inches in diameter, the mini Gerbera can add color in a floral piece without “out focusing” attention on itself.

“This flower has a round, pleasing shape and works wonderfully in specialty work like weddings, where its size is proportional to a bouquet,” says Tom Bowling, AIFD, PFCI, Fairfield, Ohio and a member of CCFC’s Outreach and Education Team.

The mini Gerbera works well in many design styles, mixing easily with other flowers including roses, lilies, cymbidiums, and exotics such as bird of paradise. It is very popular in Europe for bouquets of all kinds, in all seasons. In Japan, it is in demand for the architectural designs of ikebana.

The mini Gerbera can be dressed down for casual occasions, or dressed up for



Colors explode with mango-orange mini Gerbera, tangerine spray roses, periwinkle blue Gillia and Agapanthus, ‘Kermit’ Chrysanthemums and sword fern.

a special appearance. “It is easy to work with and very accommodating,” says Bowling.

Because of their color range and usefulness in bouquets, matching Gerberas and mini Gerberas is a growing trend for weddings. Like the Gerbera, mini Gerberas are available in decorator colors of cream, yellow, pink, peach, orange and red. Ever-Bloom, Inc.,

Carpinteria, Calif., the largest U.S. grower of Gerbera, grows about 40 varieties of mini Gerbera and 200 varieties of Gerbera. Nearly 20 other growers across the state also produce Gerberas, making it one of California’s most popular flowers.

With impeccable beauty in a wealth of colors, both of these flowers command a high perceived value among consumers. Technically, they are daisies. In actuality, they are in a class of their own.

Common name: Gerbera jamesonii, Transvaal daisy, miniature gerbera

Botanical name: Gerbera spp.

Available: year round

Storage: 36 –38 degrees F

Leave flowers in packing trays while conditioning to prevent bent-neck. Place trays over buckets of clean water for about two hours. Use preservative made specifically for Gerberas. Fluoride in water may cause brown spotting in some varieties.

Grower tip: Clean water and containers are absolutely essential to avoid clogged stems and bent neck. Do not mix with other flowers in containers while storing.



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TREND

Trend-Watch

by Kim Morrill



In January and September, every year buyers from all over the world travel to Paris for the *Maison & Objet*. *Maison & Objet* features fashion and trend for textile, tabletop, home décor, as well as gift and design influences.

Having heard it was the premier show to look at color and design trend, I decided I needed to go myself and look first hand at the latest influences. The show, followed by a couple of days scouting out Parisian flower shops and gift resources, proved not only to be inspiring personally, but was infused with great insight for the floral industry as well.

A Look at Color

Over and over again we see that color takes its cue from nature. Cool colors come from mineral and plant materials, while warm colors originate more from plant materials and fruits and vegetables. Color in this time, whether in its lightest or most saturated state, is organic and inspired immensely by the world of flowers.

Brown had a huge presence this year. Not only was it used as a background color, but it was also found as a base of many color schemes. From Cognac to Espresso to Mocha, it provides a warm and rich foundation to many color harmonies.

Reds had a major influence. Reds had a rouge cast and were frequently married to browns, “dirty” lilacs and to burnt orange, as well as strong pinks.

We also saw a strong presence of red and white in concert with one another. In their paler form, soft rose pinks were spotted with celery green and in a recurring rose to oyster to platinum theme; lovely for holidays.

Following reds, the purple family was very strong. Eggplant owned a strong presence, while at the lighter end of the spectrum, lilac and fuchsia both had a browned or dirty value.

Looking at the green family, the biggest difference was that it has opened up substantially. On the cooler side, it goes to aqua and on the warmer to khaki, gold, and brown. There was an emerging presence of an old “7-Up bottle” green that was featured in the more exotic shapes and motifs.

Regarding blues, there is still a strong presence of blue in a more traditional interpretation; delphinium blues blending to their counterparts in the

green family. New this year however, navy blues were featured with reindeer brown and gray.

Both yellows and oranges favored a more organic flavor. Yellows appeared as gold in warm color harmonies and as butter yellow to a soft biscotti on the softer side. Oranges clearly favored fruit and floral inspired colors. They ranged from persimmon to pumpkin to the reddish orange of lilies.

A Look at Flowers and Floral Design

A plethora of flowers abounded in colors and varieties enough to tease the senses of any person, much less tempt the hands of a floral designer! Despite the vast range of materials there were some floral products that seemed to play center stage.

Botanicals such as grasses, vines, blooming and fruited branches were used extensively to create line, texture, and drama. Southern Hemisphere natives—Malaluca and Restio—were used in concert with other floral materials and as stand-alone elements. Also vegetation such as echeveria, eggplant, and chestnuts lend an earthy form to arrangements. This application of botanical materials creates an aesthetic that evokes feelings of home and nature. Truly bringing together the best of old world elegance and new style and feeling.

The exotic influence in floral materials is emerging even stronger. We’ve seen anthurium varieties burgeon in variety and application for a while now. *Maison & Objet* supported that trend. From red to brown to green to shell colors, anthurium was widely used. Orchids, too, were center-stage; particularly the large catelleya. Both the color and the ruffled texture lend drama and

sophistication to both classical and modern interiors. Banksias and ginger lent form and drama to contemporary design accented with exotic foliage.

A wide variety of flowers were used to create the painterly color harmonies that appeared everywhere. Roses, Gerberas, Callas, Asiatic and Oriental Lilies, and Gladiolus found their way into many color schemes and were particularly strong in the warm red to orange to gold harmony. Lisianthus, Hydrangea, Scabiosa, and Kermit Poms dictated the cooler watercolor palettes. Floral design was overall direct in its color statement and not overly manipulated in structure.

A Look at the Possibilities

As exciting and as inspiring as it is to look abroad at new trends, the real fun begins when we apply them to our everyday floral design and floral sales. Unlike the first time I ventured to the European flower market some 16 years ago, I now see no product in the European market that cannot be found in our North American market as well. As life-style flower sales (flowers for daily consumption) increase, we see North Americans’ taste for variety and color expanding. Trends that used to take 18 months to make their way to our market are now here within a year, often less. The good news is as color and style evolve in home interior, and the hard-goods used in the floral industry, there is no lag time meeting the market’s needs in cut flowers or botanical materials at home.

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Matchmaker, Matchmaker

***For a bloomin'
Colors R Us,
take a stroll
through
California
flower fields***

In the neutral interior of Mariah Carey's New York apartment, a bowl of 'Blue Curiosa' roses picks up the color of a throw lying across a sofa. At a world class hotel, roses at the center of each banquet table reflect the yellow of the chair fabric. For home interiors and special events, floral arrangements are taking their cue from elements such as table linen, china, a lamp shade, or sofa. (See Trend-Watch story on facing page.)

California growers have reacted by providing retailers with a selection of new, trendy floral colors. Orange flowers include palettes of peach, apricot, hot orange, and terra cotta. Tones of pink flowers extend from blush to raspberry ice. Green is a fast-growing category with choices that now range from vanilla lime 'Avalanche' rose to chartreuse gladiolus.

Growers are making color-driven planting decisions, presenting designers with a floral paint box that includes roses, gerberas, callas, cymbidiums, lilies and gladioli. The color variation in flowers makes it possible to blend tones smoothly or intrigue consumers with subtle differences.

"The purple palette includes deep purple callas, wine red roses, almost black purple dahlias, purple scabiosa, and chocolate cosmos," says Charlie Groppetti, AIFD, Kerman, California and a member of CCFC's Outreach and Education Team.

There are even bi-colored varieties that can reinforce a color theme while introducing a complementary color. Picture this: pink-edged, creamy green 'Cézanne' roses with sweet peas and green hydrangea.

Corporate banquet? Wedding dinner? California has a color for every occasion. Happy unions, colorfully speaking, are grown in California.

Rich palettes of roses, 'Sunnyside,' 'Surprise,' and 'Rennata,' combined with flesh-toned Ranunculus, French tulips, peach stock and light green Viburnum blossoms are gathered in a hand-tied garden bouquet with water-marked stain ribbon.



Spring — Available Now in California

While much of the country is still deep in winter, California is blooming with the spirit of spring. To infuse a home or special event with the freshness of the season, select from a springtime menu of flowers.

- * A medley of sweet peas, waxflower and flowering quince for traditional decor
- * Lime green cymbidiums, white ranunculi and daffodils, for a contemporary interior
- * Pink boronia to electrify lavender and purple themes.
- * Fragrant blue hyacinth or lemon yellow forsythia.

For any setting, pluck a few stems of spring and savor its fleeting presence! Not sure what flowers are available each month from California? Then you need a CCFC Seasonal Availability Calendar for just \$8.99. To order, visit the CCFC On Line Store at www.ccfc.org or call CCFC at 831-728-7333.

New and Dazzling PROTEAS

“I wanted something gorgeous....” she said.

A few years ago, at the opening of Bellagio, the elegantly cosmopolitan Las Vegas hotel-casino, dramatic floral pieces with sunflowers, tulips and the ‘Waratah’ protea flanked the lobby. Bellagio’s floral designer chose the brilliant red artichoke-like flower because she wanted something gorgeous that would attract the eye.

Now, there is a host of new hybrids certain to bedazzle the consuming public. A few years ago in South Africa and Australia, the native homes of these

special flowers, plant breeders released new hybrids. Each was selected for a distinctive feature such as color, head size, or stem length. Many of these flowers are now available from California. They include:

- ‘Red Baron’ protea. Its pink center contrasts vividly with bright red outer petals edged in silver fir.
- ‘Brenda’ protea. Glossy, deep pink petals, tipped with white fir, surround a pale pink center.
- ‘Susara’ protea is unique for a buff center and soft peach petals.

There are also new leucospermum hybrids to provide tantalizing bursts of color. ‘Tango’ is a red-orange pincushion with “needles” that extend straight out, rather than curving. A long straight stem makes it easy to work with. Twice as big as the typical pincushion, ‘Flame Giant’ is aptly named. It is fiery red with golden orange tips. ‘High Gold’ is a brilliant yellow, large-headed pincushion, striking for its size and color.

The protea flower family is descended from plants that existed 300 million years ago. The newest members were specifically developed to mesmerize modern consumers. They are just waiting in the wings for a chance to fulfill their mission.

Ordering tip: The hybrids mentioned here are available sometime during the period of late December to spring. Mid-February to June is the peak production period for pincushions.



Protea photos: Courtesy of Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers



Common name: Protea
Botanical name: Protea spp., Leucospermum spp.
Available: year round, depending on species and variety
Vase life: 1-2 weeks or more
Storage temperature: 38 F and above
Ethylene sensitive: some varieties yes
Grower tip: Upon arrival, remove from box and process. Leaves may turn black due to warm temperatures, moisture, lack of light and food.

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