

California Commentary

*By Lee Murphy, President
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It's a Guy Thing

A survey conducted by the Society of American Florists (SAF) found that more than 60 percent of men surveyed would like to receive flowers on Valentine's Day. The opportunities for giving flowers to men go much beyond this romantic occasion.

There is also Father's Day, birthdays, to say "Congratulations!" on a promotion or successful business deal. Even completing a challenging sporting event, such as running a marathon, can be an appropriate time.

Creating floral arrangements for men requires a different perspective than when designing for women. For example, men tend to prefer bright colors like yellow, red, orange and purple. They are drawn to novel flowers, clean contempo-



Brenda

rary lines and very natural designs.

Recently, California growers introduced a host of new proteas that meet these criteria. These new hybrids were developed in South Africa and Australia, the native homes of these special flowers, and each was selected for a distinctive feature such as color, head size, or stem length.

Red Baron protea has a pink center that contrasts vividly with bright red outer petals edged in silver fir. Brenda has glossy, deep pink petals, tipped with white fir, surrounding a pale pink center. Red Robe is a brilliant red with dark fuzz. Many of these protea hybrids are available sometime during

the period of late December to spring.

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. Mid-February to June is the peak production period for pincushions.

Leucadendron foliage is another category with new introductions that bring dynamic color and texture to designs. Jester has variegated white and green leaves, edged in a crimson red. Others are yellow, red and blends of color.

Despite their novel appearance, these flowers combine well with more traditional flowers. For example, White Mink protea works well with creamy yellow roses, sunflowers and orange pittosporum berries. The new red proteas may be combined with red Asiatic lilies, and leucadendron foliage such as Safari sunset.

It is also fun to personalize floral arrangements for men with containers and props that speak to a special interest, like golf balls for a golfer, a tool box for a handyman, etc. Really, though, these new hybrids are such knockouts, they don't need any help to make an impressive presentation.



Tango

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