

PRETTY POPULAR

> Last month, as snow fell in 49 states (don't rub it in, Florida!), consumers craved anything that signaled the tropics. In flower shops around the country, proteas have been in high demand.

"We can't keep them in stock," said Georgianne Vinicombe, owner of Monday Morning Flower and Balloon Company with locations in (equally frigid) Princeton, N.J., and Yardley, Pa. Proteas' popularity, though partially driven by cold, gray days, should prevail long after winter ends, she thinks. "Even brides are requesting them, especially the pincushion varieties," she said.

Here are a few varieties to whet your customers' appetite. 🌿



'KING ICE'
Protea USA



'YIH-MEI TENG'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'ALI'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'KRISTEN'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'ROSELLA'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'HELBRECHT YOUNG'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'RED BARON'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm



'WHITE OWL'
Maui Floral and Malolo Farm

MAUI FLORAL AND MALOLO FARM - PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES



'SUCCESION'
Resendiz Brothers



'BANKSIA ASHBYII'
Resendiz Brothers



'BANKSIA MENZIESII'
Resendiz Brothers



'CHICAGO'
Resendiz Brothers



'PINK DUKE'
Resendiz Brothers



'ERUBESCENS'
Resendiz Brothers



'PINITA'
Resendiz Brothers



'IVY'
Resendiz Brothers



'EMPRESS'
Protea USA



'SPIDER'
Resendiz Brothers

PRIZED PROTEAS

> Making your design look more expensive is as easy as adding a protea.

The brightly colored flowering plant provides incredible texture (be it furry, spiky or spindly) that stands out in customers' eyes, especially those who appreciate "an earthy look," said J Schwanke, AAF, AIFD, PFCI. And then there's their longevity. "Remember: All proteas have two lives," said the host of JTV at uBloom.com. "They look great fresh, but they dry exquisitely, too, so they can be enjoyed for years to come."



PROTEA PARADISE For a quick moneymaker, Schwanke ordered a premade protea bunch from the Resendiz Brothers Company, placed it in a vase and added "a shoelace bow." Wholesale costs: \$62. Suggested retail price: \$100. Labor time: less than two minutes (\$5).

Sharing a fun fact or two "adds to the wonder and enjoyment" (and perceived value) even more. Here's one to borrow: Grown in the mountainous regions of South Africa, proteas have avian traits (think: feathered bracts) to attract birds to help pollinate them. 🐦

Find complete recipes at safnow.org/moreonline.

Katie Hendrick



UNDER THE SEA Pincushion proteas, myrtle and various types of leucadendron take on an aquatic look in a bubble bowl. Wholesale costs: \$26. Suggested retail price: \$105. Labor time: 15 minutes (\$33).

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