

banksia

BOTANICAL NAME

Banksia spp. (BANK-see-a)

DESCRIPTION

Banksias are among the most unusual blossoms used in the cut flower industry. The rugged look created by their serrated leaves and large flower heads gives them a distinctive appearance that is of great value in floral design. The actual flowers are quite small, but they occur in dense clusters, often numbering several thousand florets, which form cylindrical and cone-shaped inflorescences.

COLORS

The blossoms are available in hues of yellow, red, orange, pink, earth tones and green. The flower colors of some species and cultivars change over time in vase solutions. The colors can be altered using absorption floral dyes.

VASE LIFE

Banksias can last from six to 14 days as a fresh flower. They will dry naturally and can last for several years.

AVAILABILITY

Banksias are available year-round.

fun facts

FAMILY *Banksias* are members of the *Proteaceae* family, one of the oldest known groups of flowering plants. Scientific studies of plant life show that the family existed more than 300 million years ago. The first illustrations of the family appeared in the early 1600s. *Banksias*' relatives include *Grevilleas* (silk oaks), *Leucadendrons* (conebushes), *Leucospermums* (pincushions) and *Proteas*.

ORIGIN The flowers are native to Australia.

HISTORY Botanists Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) and Dr. Daniel Solander (1733-1782) are credited with discovering the genus, and it was named after Sir Banks in honor of his contributions to botany.



B. MENZIESII
'RASPBERRY FROST' BANKSIA,
STRAWBERRY BANKSIA,
MENZIES' BANKSIA



B. BAXTERI
BIRD'S-NEST BANKSIA,
BAXTER'S BANKSIA

vase-life extenders

REFRIGERATION Most cut flower experts say that *Banksias* can be refrigerated at temperatures between 32 F and 38 F although some recommend higher storage temperatures.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Banksias* show a low sensitivity to ethylene gas.

HEAT SOURCES Place the flowers in cool areas away from sun and heat sources.

BLACKENING Low light and lack of flower food can cause leaves to turn black.



BANKSIA SPECIOSA
RICKRACK BANKSIA, GREEN BANKSIA

of note

DRYING TIPS *Banksias* will dry without shedding leaves or florets and are ideal for use in dried flower arrangements. Stand *Banksias* upright in a bucket or vase or hang them upside down, but avoid laying them down or piling them together; otherwise, an unnatural shape will occur. Store in a cool, dry location, and in about three weeks, the dried flowers will be ready for designing. **sfr**



B. OCCIDENTALIS
RED SWAMP BANKSIA

Some information provided by:

The Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenet.org
Australian National Botanic Garden, www.anbg.gov.au
Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants (ASGAP), <http://asgap.org.au/b-can.html>

Photos courtesy of the Australian Flower Export Council (AFEC)

Reach "Cut Flower of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.

Super Floral Retailing has created this page for the education of store-level employees. To download a reprintable PDF of this page, please go to www.superfloraretailing.com and select "Current Issue."

