

## A career in floristry is the combination of art and science

Florists are both artists and scientists. As an artist, they creatively design floral arrangements, considering the type of flower, colour combinations and sizes of blooms.

As a scientist, florists are working with living plants and flowers, and therefore, must understand proper care and handling. Florists know that because fresh cut flowers have been removed from their source of water, the root system, they will wilt quickly if not placed in water. The flowers' stems are cut on an angle to provide a larger surface area for the absorption of water and placed in water immediately, so air does not move into the water-conducting tissues and plug the cells. Cut flowers have also been removed from their major source of food—the leaves on the plant to which it was attached. Although the leaves on the flowering stem make food, once indoors they are in a reduced light situation and this limits available carbohydrates. Therefore, floral preservatives are used, which is a complex mixture of sucrose (sugar); acidifier, an inhibitor of microorganisms; and a respiratory inhibitor. Sucrose serves as a source of energy to make up for the loss of the functioning leaves and insures continued development and longevity of the flower. An acidifier makes the pH of the water more near the acid pH of the cell sap. The acidifier also stabilizes the pigment and the color of the flower. A microorganism growth inhibitor is perhaps the most important part of a floral preservative. Bacteria and fungi are everywhere and are ready to enter the cut surface of the stem and multiply. Prior to actual decay symptoms, cells of the water-transporting tissues can become blocked with microorganisms, inhibiting water uptake.

**To become a florist** you need a strong interest in flowers. In high school you should take courses in art, math, botany and accounting (important in running a business). After high school, you can either get experience in a flower shop or take college courses in floristry.

After learning about the art and science of floristry, you can work in a flower shop, become the owner of a flower shop or impart your skills onto others by teaching flower arranging.

**Other careers related to floristry** are: botany (the study plant life) and horticulture ( the cultivation of flowers and plants).

*\*\*This information has not been verified by Science Alberta Foundation, and is for general informative purposes only.*



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