**November Flower of the Month: Chrysanthemum**

Chrysanthemums—the November Flower of the Month—come in an amazing variety of stem type, flower forms, petal formations and colors, making them one of the most fascinating flowers available in our shop. In fact, you may actually think you are seeing a wide variety of flowers in a single vase when they are actually all chrysanthemums!

What are the differences?

* **Stem type.** Chrysanthemums come in two stem types: single-flowered stems (which we florists call “standards”) and multiple-flowered stems (which we refer to as “sprays”).
* **Flower forms.** Chrysanthemums are available in a variety of flower forms. The various names of the forms include daisy, cushion, spider, Fuji, spoon, quill, football and button.
* **Petal formations.** The blossom on a chrysanthemum is a bit deceiving. While each bloom on November’s Flower of the Month looks like one flower, it is actually what is called a *composite head* made up of *ray* and *disk* flowers in various forms and sizes. What appear to be petals are actually small flowers (known to florists as *florets*), thus the reference to chrysanthemums being a *composite* of many individual flowers on one head.
* **Colors.** The variety of colors makes chrysanthemums especially popular. You’ll find them in hues of lavender, bronze, red, yellow, pink, purple, green, orange and white. Others are available as bicolors—a combination of two colors.

**A Thanksgiving Advantage**

One of the greatest advantages of chrysanthemums is that they are not sensitive to ethylene (an odorless, colorless and totally harmless gas that is emitted by ripening fruits and vegetables as they mature). That means you can combine our Flower of the Month with these natural options to create some unique and colorful options and still have a long vase life. For Thanksgiving decoration, then, you can create arrangements that include apples, broccoli, kale and other organic products for gorgeous and unique arrangements.

Consider designing a bouquet of autumnal-colored chrysanthemums and then inserting apples on picks (long wooden skewers) into the design. Or create a centerpiece with sprigs of kale and broccoli nestled among the blooms for ruffly texture and contrasting, verdant color.

**Heat Is the Enemy**

Like all flowers, the one thing you must ensure is that you keep your chrysanthemums away from any sort of heat source. Heat will cause November’s Flower of the Month to wilt and also increase the likelihood of bacteria growing in the vase water. Bacteria are a major source of early death for blooms because they clog flower stems, restricting the flowers’ ability to uptake water. Without water, the blossoms wither and fade.

Don’t place arrangements near or on top of console TVs and computers or laptops, which can produce a lot of heat. Also keep them off the top of refrigerators and out of the flow of air from heating vents.

**Chrysanthemum Care**

The foliage on chrysanthemums will deteriorate far more quickly than the blooms themselves. Thus, as leaves yellow and droop, simply snip them off to keep your arrangement looking fresh.

Also, follow the same vase-care recommendations of other Flowers of the Month to ensure the longest vase life. When you do, you’ll benefit from being able to enjoy your flowers for up to seven to 14 days on average.

Proper vase-care steps are:

1. Remove the stems from the vase every two to three days (or when the water becomes discolored or cloudy—a sign of bacteria growth, which inhibits water uptake).
2. Using a sharp knife or scissors, cut off one-half to 1 inch from each stem. Always remove any foliage that may be underwater when you replace the stems into the vase.
3. Dump the vase water, wash the vase with warm, sudsy water and then rinse thoroughly.
4. Refill the vase with fresh water and the appropriate amount of flower food from the packet that came with your flowers.

Another tip for keeping your Flower of the Month looking lovely: Avoid pairing them with carnations. Carnations have certain microorganisms associated with them that can be harmful to chrysanthemums. As a result, when the two flowers are combined in the same vase, the tiny creatures can shorten the life of the chrysanthemums.

**A Unique Fact About Chrysanthemums**

In the United States, floral designers take advantage of the gorgeous variety of chrysanthemum options to include them in bridal bouquets, corsages, table centerpieces, birthday and anniversary arrangements—you name it! But in Europe, many consider the beautiful blossoms to be “death flowers.” As a result, they don’t use the flowers in any arrangements except for funeral flowers or memorial flowers on graves. (Silly Europeans!)