

Conditioning and Hardening for Spring Flowers

From: Snippy Tips 1- Care of Fresh Flowers and Foliage

BASIC CONDITIONING

1. Have a clean, non-metallic pail filled with lukewarm water. (For woody stems use hot water.)
2. Remove one-third of the foliage to enable flowers to last longer.
3. Re-cut stems on the diagonal under water to prevent air bubbles from entering the stem and blocking water intake. A sharp knife works better than secateurs.
4. The ends of thick or woody stems should be split.
5. Place woody stems immediately into deep, quite warm water. Place fleshy stems, especially of bulbs into lukewarm water.
6. Leave for a minimum of 6 hours in a cool, dark draft free place.

SEARING METHOD

In the case of stems which exude a milky fluid this is necessary to prevent the fluid from blocking the intake of water and stops further liquid from leaking out. (Caution-the milky substance may cause some skin sensitivity, so avoid touching it,)

- As soon as possible after cutting, hold stems in a flame until the end is well blackened. (Suggestion – bring a lighted candle to the garden!)
- If the stem is recut, then the searing should be repeated.

Dicentra spectabilis: Bleeding Heart

Cut when one-quarter to one-half of the flowers on the stem are open. Split the stem.

Basic Conditioning plus Searing Method.

Hyacinthus: Hyacinth

Wipe off the excess sap and wrap in newspaper for support.

Basic Conditioning.

Arrange in shallow water.

Muscari: Grape Hyacinth

Remove white stem end. Basic conditioning in shallow water.

Narcissus: Daffodil

Remove white stem end. Rinse stem end to remove sap which clogs the stems of other flowers. Do not re-cut stem if placed in arrangement with other flowers. Sap can cause contact dermatitis.

Tulipa: Tulip

Basic Conditioning

Remove white part of stem. To keep stems straight, wrap in newspaper while conditioning.

Arrange in shallow water.

Remember that cut tulips continue to grow and flower heads will grow towards the strongest light.