



Gerfolia® series Gerberas with foliated stems

Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.

#### BOTANICAL NAME

*Gerbera jamesonii*

(GUR-bur-uh jaym-SO-nee-eye)

(also JUR-bur-uh, jur-BEE-ruh, gur-BEE-ruh and JAYM-sun-eye)

#### COMMON NAMES

Transvaal daisy, Barberton daisy, African daisy, Veldt daisy

#### DESCRIPTION

*Gerbera's* daisylike (composite) blooms comprise three types of florets: The center (disc, eye) contains *disc florets*; around the

center is a ring of intermediate *trans florets*; and the petals that compose the outer ring are known as *ray florets*.

There are five standard types of *Gerbera* flowers plus specialty hybrids:

- **Singles** - one row of nonoverlapping petals (ray florets), usually with a green center (disc florets)
- **Doubles (Duplex)** - two rows of overlapping petals, with a green or dark center
- **Crested doubles** - two rows of overlapping petals, with one or more inner rows of shorter petals (trans florets), and a green or dark center
- **Full crested doubles** - solid overlapping rows of petals, with inner rows of shorter petals that cover the center entirely
- **Quilled crested doubles (Spider)** - overlapping rows of spike-shaped petals, with one or more inner rows of shorter petals, and a green or dark center
- **Specialty hybrids** - **Terra Nigra's Gerrondo®** and **Florist De Kwakel's Pomponi®** branded hybrids are "cushion"-type *Gerberas*, which have 500 to 700 petals in multiple overlapping rows. Other new hybrids include the wild "feather"-petaled varieties (e.g., **Schreurs'**

**'Pasta'** series) and **Preesman's** limited novelty green **'Loco'** series. (See photos on Page 20.)

*Gerberas* are available in three sizes: *miniature* (2-3 inches in diameter); *standard* (3-5 inches in diameter); and *giant* (5-6 inches in diameter).

*Gerbera* stems are naturally leafless; however, breeders have developed hybrids that have short, spike-shaped leaves (e.g., **Terra Nigra's Gerfolia®** series and **Florist De Kwakel's Deco** series).

#### COLORS

*Gerberas* are available in virtually every hue imaginable (including, now, green) except for blues and blue-violets. Striking bicolors also are available. The centers can be yellow, green, brown, black or dark red/red-violet.

#### VASE LIFE

Four to 14 days is the typical vase life for cut *Gerberas*, depending on variety, care, environmental conditions and stage of maturity at the time of sale. Some new varieties reportedly last as long as 18 days.

#### AVAILABILITY

*Gerberas* are available year-round from domestic and international growers.

## vase-life extenders

**PROCESSING** Unpack *Gerberas* immediately upon their arrival, and check flower quality.

Next, recut stem ends with a sharp blade, removing at least 1 inch of stem. Immediately after cutting, dip or place stem ends into a hydration solution to help the flowers absorb water more quickly and easily, then place them into a nutrient solution prepared with nonfluoridated water, if possible (fluoride can cause petal tip burn in some varieties).

Finally, suspend flower heads through a mesh support or shipping tray, over the opening of their storage container, so the stems hang straight into the nutrient solution without touching the bottom of the container. This will encourage straight stems.

**REFRIGERATION** After processing *Gerberas*, immediately place them into a floral refrigerator at 33 F to 35 F, and allow them to hydrate for at least two hours before selling or arranging them. Except for design time, keep these flowers refrigerated until they're sold or delivered. It has been a widely held belief that some varieties of *Gerberas* are chill sensitive, but that has never been scientifically substantiated.

**CARE EXTRA** Change the nutrient solution and clean the storage containers every day because *Gerberas* are particularly susceptible to stem clogging by bacteria-contaminated water.

**ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY** *Gerberas* are not affected by exposure to ethylene.

**CONSUMER ACTION** Provide consumers with packets of flower food so they can change the nutrient solution in their containers daily. Also, advise them to recut the stems daily, as well, removing at least one-half inch of stem; to display *Gerberas* out of direct sunlight, away from air/heat vents and out of cold drafts; and to place the flowers in the coolest room at night.

## challenges

**CONKING** One problem with cut *Gerberas* is their tendency to "conk," which is the folding or collapse of the stems 4 to 6 inches below the blooms. This condition is more prevalent in some cultivars than others and varies throughout the year.



**STEM BENDING** *Gerberas* often have curved stems—making them difficult to arrange—which is primarily a response to the forces of gravity (geotropism). This often can be rectified by suspending flower heads through a mesh support atop their storage containers (see “Vase-life Extenders: Processing” on Page 18) and by storing them at the proper temperature (33 F to 35 F). *Gerberas* also will naturally turn their heads toward light (phototropism).

Wiring the stems or placing them inside straws (preferable to wiring) can help straighten the stems and prevent conking, but neither method will increase the vase life of the flowers.

## fun facts

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** The genus *Gerbera* is named after Traugott Gerber, an 18th-century German medical doctor and naturalist who was the director of the oldest botanical garden in Moscow, taught medicine at the university and created a medicinal garden to educate medical students in herbology.

The species epithet, *jamesonii*, was given in honor of Robert Jameson (1832-1908), a Scottish condiment manufacturer who collected live specimens of these plants while on a gold prospecting expedition in Barberton, South Africa, in 1884.

The common names—Transvaal daisy, Barberton daisy, African daisy and Veldt daisy—come from the flowers' origin: Transvaal is the former name of the northeastern province of South Africa to which these flowers are native; Barberton is a town in that region; and “veldt” is a term applied to the grassy plateaus of this region of South Africa.

**FAMILY MATTERS** *Gerberas* are a member of the huge *Asteraceae/Compositae* (*Aster/composite/sunflower*) family. Close relatives include sunflowers, chrysanthemums, *Dahlias*, *Zinnias*, *Asters*, marigolds, *Calendulas*, black-eyed Susans, bachelor's buttons, safflowers, *Veronica*, yarrow and *Solidago* (goldenrod).

## novelties



Pomponi® cushion  
Gerbera 'Sponge Bob'  
Photo: Florist De Kwakel B.V.



Gerrondo® cushion  
Gerbera 'Terra Pluto'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Mucho Loco'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Poco Loco'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii*  
'Pasta di Mamma'  
Photo: Schreurs B.V.



*G. jamesonii*  
'Pasta'  
Photo: Schreurs B.V.

## miniatures



*G. jamesonii* 'Welcome'  
Photo: Schreurs B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Lenn'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Zazu'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Pompadour'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.

## spider



*G. jamesonii*  
'Red Springs'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.

## standards



*G. jamesonii* 'Fiction'  
Photo: Florist De Kwakel B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Woodstock'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Balance'  
Photo: Florist De Kwakel B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Aventura'  
Photo: Florist De Kwakel B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Crossroad'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Yalo'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Ceasario'  
Photo: Schreurs B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Lieke'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Dinja'  
Photo: Preesman International B.V.



*G. jamesonii* 'Mermaid'  
Photo: Terra Nigra B.V.

Some information provided by:

Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
Dictionary of Plant Names, by Allen J. Coombes  
Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflife.org  
Hortus Third, by Liberty Hyde Bailey and Ethel Zoe Bailey

New Pronouncing Dictionary of Plant Names  
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SAF Flower & Plant Care,  
by Terril A. Nell, Ph.D. and Michael S. Reid, Ph.D.

Stearn's Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners,  
by William T. Stearn

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