



False Queen Anne's lace, Bishop's weed
Ammi majus

BOTANICAL NAME

Ammi majus (AM-mee MAY-jus)

COMMON NAMES

False Queen Anne's lace, Bishop's weed, Bullwort, Lace flower, Goutweed

Note: In the commercial floral industry, *Ammi majus* is commonly, but incorrectly, called Queen Anne's lace—which is the common name of a close relative, *Daucus carota*. (See "Fun Facts"/Twin Cousins.)

DESCRIPTION

Queen Anne's lace features large (up to 6 inches in diameter, or larger) branching umbels that comprise masses of tiny white flowers atop long (24-36 inch), ferny-leaved stems. The umbelliferous flower heads have a lacy appearance.

COLORS

When mature, Queen Anne's lace flowers

are typically white, but green and greenish-white varieties have been introduced.

VASE LIFE

Queen Anne's lace flowers are relatively short-lived: Consumers can generally expect three to five days of vase life. When the flowers are displayed in warm, dry environments, the tiny blooms tend to drop quickly. However, when these flowers are purchased at the perfect stage of maturity, given proper care, displayed in an ideal environment and cut short, they can last from seven to 14 days.

AVAILABILITY

As a commercially cultivated crop, Queen Anne's lace is available year-round from both domestic and foreign growers; however, its natural season is late winter and spring (March-June).

vase-life extenders

PROCESSING Remove Queen Anne's lace from the shipping boxes *immediately* upon arrival (these flowers are highly susceptible to water stress).

Check flower quality, then remove any packaging and stem bindings, as well as any leaves that would be under water in storage containers.

Rinse stems under tepid running water, then recut them with a sharp blade, removing at least 1 inch of stem. Immediately after cutting, dip or place stem ends into a hydration solution (particularly important with Queen Anne's lace), to help the flowers absorb water more quickly and easily.

Finally, place the stems into clean, disinfected containers half filled with warm (100 F to 110 F), properly proportioned flower-food solution.

REFRIGERATION After processing, place these flowers into a floral cooler at 37 F to 40 F, and allow them to hydrate for at least two hours before using or selling them. (These flowers also can tolerate temperatures ranging from 33 F to 36 F) Relative humidity of 90 percent in the cooler is ideal.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY Queen Anne's lace is sensitive to ethylene gas, so make sure your purchases are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower level or during transportation, and keep them away from sources of ethylene (fruit, cigarette smoke and vehicle exhaust). Exposure to ethylene gas accelerates premature flower drop.

CARE EXTRA Recut stems, wash containers and change flower-food solution every other day to prevent bacteria buildup and keep nutrient solution flowing up the stems.

purchasing checklist

- For maximum vase life, buy Queen Anne's lace when outer florets show color but before the flowers have opened.
- Check closely for damaged florets, rot and yellow foliage (a sign of age or prolonged storage).
- Make sure stems are strong enough to support the flower heads.
- Hold bunches upside-down, and shake gently to check for petal drop.

Some information provided by: Botanica, by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflife.org Hortus Third, by Liberty Hyde Bailey and Ethel Zoe Bailey

fun facts

FAMILY MATTERS *Ammi* is a member of the *Umbelliferae/Apiaceae* (parsley/carrot) family, which also comprises blue lace flower (*Trachymene/Didiscus*) and sea holly (*Eryngium*). Other family members include carrot, parsnip, celery, parsley, dill, chervil, fennel, caraway and anise.

TWIN COUSINS *Daucus carota*, commonly (and correctly) known as "Queen Anne's lace" and "wild carrot," is similar in appearance to *A. majus*. It is not cultivated as a cut flower but is often found growing abundantly along roadsides and riverbanks and in fields and wetlands during the summer.

HOME SWEET HOME *A. majus* is native to the Mediterranean region, including northeast Africa, southern Europe and western Asia.

handling concern

Sap exuding from stem ends can cause skin irritations (contact dermatitis) with some people, so it may prove beneficial to wear gloves when handling these flowers. Advise customers of this risk, as well. **sfr**