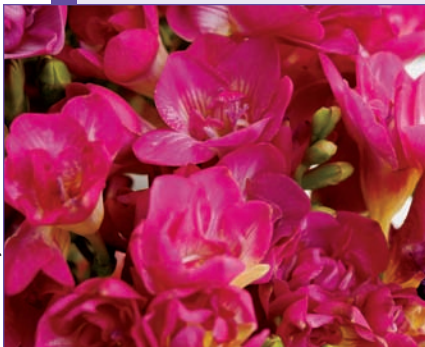




Freesia x hybrida



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Photos courtesy of California Cut Flower Commission and Florists' Review

BOTANICAL NAME

Freesia x hybrida
(FREE-zhuh, FREE-zhee-uh,
FREE-zee-uh, FREE-see-uh
HIGH-bri-duh)

COMMON NAME

None

DESCRIPTION

Freesia inflorescences each comprise five to 10 trumpet-shaped florets and/or buds along the top, upper side of a curved stem. Each 1-to-2-inch-long floret has six "petals," or segments. These sweetly fragrant blooms are available in single- and double-flowered varieties. The smooth, thin and often branched stems can be as long as 2 feet. *Freesia* foliage, which may not be included in cut flower bunches, is narrow and sword shaped.

COLORS

Freesias are available in reds, pinks, oranges, rust/bronze, yellows, lavender, violet (purple), blue-violet, red-violet, white and cream. Bicolored or multicolored varieties are available, as well.

VASE LIFE

Cut *Freesias* typically last four to 12 days at the consumer level, depending on their care, their maturity at the time of sale and the environmental conditions in which they're displayed. If the buds on the lateral (branching) stems develop and open, the blooms generally will not be as large, be as colorful or last as long as the blooms on the main stem.

AVAILABILITY

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

vase-life extenders

PROCESSING Unpack *Freesias* immediately upon their arrival. Remove sleeves and stem bindings as well as any loose leaves. Check flower quality.

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

FLOWER-FOOD SOLUTION For best results, place *Freesias* immediately into a nutrient solution formulated especially for bulb flowers (e.g., Chrysal Clear Professional Bulb T-Bag™ or Floralife® Bulb Flower Food). If using a bulb-flower-specific solution is not possible, place *Freesias* into a standard flower-food solution. Whichever types of flower food you use, prepare it with cold nonfluoridated water. Fluoride can inhibit bloom development and opening and cause flower and leaf tip burn.

REFRIGERATION After processing *Freesias*, 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 sold or delivered. Sell cut *Freesias* within two days of receipt; prolonged refrigeration can cause chilling injury and diminish fragrance.

CARE EXTRA Change the nutrient solution in storage containers and recut stems every other day or so.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Freesias* are moderately sensitive to ethylene, which causes buds and blooms to drop, buds to become malformed or fail to develop and open, petals to become translucent and blooms to die more quickly, so make sure your purchases are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower level or during shipping. Also, protect these flowers from sources of ethylene gas including ripening fruit, decaying flowers and foliage, automobile exhaust and tobacco smoke.

CONSUMER ACTION Provide consumers with packets of flower food, so they can prepare solution for their flowers or to refill their arrangement containers. Give bulb flower food (e.g., Chrysal Clear Bulb Food Sachets or Floralife® Bulb Flower Food Packets) if purchases are all *Freesias* or *Freesias* and other bulb flowers.

Advise customers to 1) display *Freesias* out of direct sunlight and away from air/heat vents, 2) remove florets as they fade, 3) check water level daily and add fresh flower-food solution—made with cold, nonfluoridated water—as needed, 4) recut stems at least one-half inch every other day or so to ensure effective water uptake, 5) mist blooms daily and 6) place the flowers in the coolest room at night.

DRY STORAGE Wet storage is recommended for cut *Freesias*; do not store these flowers dry.

purchasing checklist

- Buy cut *Freesias* when the first bud on each stem is just beginning to open and at least two additional buds are showing color. If *Freesias* are cut too tight, many buds may not open.
- Check inflorescences, stems and leaves for bruising, browning, yellowing, mold and rot.
- Not all varieties of cut *Freesias* perform equally, so learn the names of the cultivars you purchase, monitor their vase life and other characteristics, and order only the best performing varieties in the future. **sfr**

Some information provided by:

Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflife.org

SAF Flower & Plant Care,

by Terril A Nell, Ph.D. and Michael S. Reid, Ph.D.