

CARE TIPS

WAXFLOWER

- Look for stems without brown spots or yellow leaves; avoid stems that are dropping or shedding either flowers or leaves. These symptoms can result from botrytis mold or ethylene gas. Ask your supplier about whether the waxflower you purchase has been treated for protection from botrytis and ethylene, and whether it has been kept at proper low temperatures during storage and transport.
- Purchase stems with at least a quarter and up to four-fifths of the flowers fully open.
- Remove any leaves that will be below the surface of the water. Recut stems and place into a flower-food solution. Store, if necessary, at 32-34 degrees Fahrenheit.

chlorine dioxide sheets are newer. And with the newest varieties, the breeders have done a lot to combat the problems that people have associated with wax flower in the past."

CREATING CHOICES Well more than 50 varieties of waxflower are being grown commercially today—out of more than 400 named hybrids and varieties in existence. "There will always be a place for the standards, because they're ubiquitous, and they're aggressively priced," says Steve Dionne. "But the future of wax lies in the new hybrids."

Developing new varieties always takes patience and persistence. Still, breeders have been hard at work, and as a result, buyers today have more choices than ever before: "At the peak of my impact season, I had easily over 20 varieties available," says Steve. And if there's one thing flower buyers appreciate, it's having more choices—all of them good ones! ➔

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