

MSU Product Center

For Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Cut flowers – Overview

Products included in the product line

- Popular marketed cut flowers include standard carnations, roses, chrysanthemums, gladioli, tulips, orchids, lilies, alstroemeria, delphinium and larkspur, gerbera daisies, iris, lisianthus, and snapdragons. Cut flowers are sold in arrangements, single stems or as bunch bouquet.

General market trend and information

- About 46.5% of the sales come from arrangements, while bunch bouquet and single stems account for 31% and 16%, respectively. The transaction shares are 50%, 27% and 19% for bouquet, single stems and arrangements respectively.
- Sales from cut flowers have been declining in recent years. The highest sales were exhibited in 1997. Sales in 2004 were \$421 million, down 11% from 1997. In 2004, cut flowers had 8% market share in the floriculture category.
- In terms of quantity, there were 830.8 million units of cut flowers sold at wholesale in 2000. That number was 794.5 million in 2003.

New product trends

- There are new high quality cut flower cultivars and varieties with longer vase life, and unique and new colors, petal shapes and fragrances that are introduced by breeding companies. Also, there are plants selected for their shipping endurances, lateral buds and extended availability over a longer season.
- Some cut flowers have been introduced with unusual forms such as pods and thistles. Especially, these have become desirable characteristics for special events, parties and weddings. So, there are some exotic plants that are being introduced for their thistle flowers. Some companies are focusing on native cut flower varieties.
- Rose is the world's leading cut flower. As in other floral categories, new varieties drive the business. Consumers' color selection is the most significant factor in rose selling. Currently, bright, vibrant colors – oranges, deep reds and hot pinks are in strong demand. There are many new rose varieties that have different colors and shapes.

Distribution issues

- In contrast to most consumer products in the U.S., many flower and plant products are not marketed or recognized by brand names. Though several companies are interested in establishing a brand identity in the floral market (e.g., Dole, Sunkist, Gerald Stevens, Hallmark), this is still in its infancy. There are, however, some flowers and plants that are currently becoming less of a commodity.

Overall assessment of opportunities

- Cut flower growers and retailers that can offer a wide range of selections and colors, tie cut flowers with gift items, and develop packaging and container innovations that provide unique flower designs and arrangements and better feeding and watering systems can increase sales.

Sources

<http://www.cfcf.org/design/stories/consumertips/summervari.html> - Summer varieties from California.

Pohmer, S. U.S. Flower buyers : What do we know about them. Slide presented at the Seeley Conference, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, June, 27, 2004. Pohmer consulting group/Flower promotion organization.

USDA/ERS. 2004b. Floriculture and nursery crop outlook, electronic output report from ERS – www.ers.usda.gov, FLO-03, September 23, 2004.