

Did you know...?

GYPSOPHILA



**FM Flores
Montellano**

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Gypsophila

Gypsophila has been a staple in the floral industry for many years. Used to “fill out” floral arrangements and bouquets, gyp was seen as an important but unsophisticated flower with a limited vase life. Over the last two decades that perception has changed dramatically with the development of new and improved varieties, a change in growing climates and more effective post harvest treatments. Gyp is now available in a number of interesting varieties and grades and boasts a longer vase life than ever before.

When gyp was just gyp

In the 70’s and early 80’s, 90% of all gyp sold in North America was grown in California and Florida. The predominant varieties were “Bristol Fairy” (a variety with small blooms and a weak stem) and early cultivars of “Perfecta”. Gyp from these production areas was not cleaned of its foliage, weak stemmed and lacked the proper post-harvest treatment to give the product a reasonable vase life. Ultimately, it remained a product that was viewed as having little value.

Gyp goes south

In the mid 80’s, armed with new, improved varieties bred in Israel, growers began to produce gyp first in Colombia, and later in Peru and Ecuador. The microclimate created by high altitude mountain ranges, the dryness of the environment, and the amount of intense sunlight was the perfect combination for growing long lasting, strong stemmed gyp. These growers also intensified their post-harvest treatment by using S.T.S. (Silver Thiosulfate) in the hydration process. S.T.S. was found to dramatically increase the lasting qualities and extended the vase life significantly.



A “Million Star” is born

Rarely has a new variety revolutionized the image of a product in the way the introduction of “Million Stars” did in 1997. Bred in Israel by Danziger and grown in Peru and Ecuador, “Million Stars” transformed gyp from the role of filler to a valued flower in its own right. Its strong stem, long vase life, easy separation and unique look and structure made it an instant success with florists around the world. Growers and wholesalers alike are seeing an increasing trend towards the use of “Million Stars” over the traditional “Perfecta”. The higher selling price of “Million Stars” is a result of higher production costs, breeder “royalty” costs and the fact that plant material must be imported directly from Israel.

A “New Love” for gyp

“New Love” is the newest hybrid gyp variety. Introduced by Danziger as an improved substitute for “Perfecta” in 2001, it has a better structure with fewer lower laterals and more blooms per stem with all of the blooms on the top quarter of the stem. The stem is strong and straight and supple enough for any type of design work. When cared for properly, this variety also boasts a longer vase life than “Perfecta”. Although the plants are slightly more productive than “Perfecta”, breeder royalty costs put the selling price of “New Love” higher than the traditional “Perfecta” price.

What grade is YOUR gyp?

To be able to buy the right gyp for your needs, it is important to know what grade it is. Gyp is available in 4 grades: Premium, Extra, Select, and Bouquet. These grading standards represent the weight, length and number of stems in each bunch. Upper grades of gyp have stronger, heavier stems while bouquet grade gyp usually has thinner, weaker stems.

The technical process of growing gyp to meet exact stem count grading standards is more complex and costly than simply producing weighted bunches with unreliable

stem counts. These processes allow growers to offer a range of stem counts and stem sizes to meet individual market needs. Ask for the grade that suits your needs best.

Million Stars and New Love are graded as follows:

■ Premium Grade	7 to 9 stems	280+ gr	70cm minimum
■ Extra Grade	10 stems	280+ gr	70cm minimum
■ Select Grade	15 stems	280+ gr	65cm minimum
■ Bouquet Grade			
“New Love”	18 - 20 stems	280+ gr	55cm minimum
“Million Stars”	20 stems	280+ gr	55cm minimum

Perfecta is graded as follows:

■ Premium Grade	7 to 9 stems	320+ gr	75 cm minimum
■ Extra Grade	10 stems	320+ gr	70 cm minimum
■ Select Grade	15 stems	320+ gr	65 cm minimum
■ Bouquet Grade	20 stems	320+ gr	55 cm minimum

How to care for gyp

The most important factors that affect the flower opening and vase life of gypsophila are water uptake, light, and temperature. Hydration out of the cooler for several hours in lukewarm water treated with a floral preservative is the best way to process gyp upon reception. To open up a tighter cut gyp, this process should be done in a warm, well-lit area. This combination of light and warmth will significantly accelerate the opening of your gyp. Cold chain management in the shipping of gyp is extremely important and special attention should be paid to any excess condensation upon reception (particularly in plastic sleeved bunches) as this humidity can cause unwanted browning of blooms. If the sleeves are wet they should be removed to allow the gyp to dry. When properly handled, good quality gypsophila will last upwards of 12 days.