

Top Tips & Rants

A new year brings special flower days: first off, it's Valentines Day which falls on a Sunday (and yes, we will be open all weekend and delivering both Saturday and Sunday); then Mother's Day follows soon after on Sunday 6 March; and finally Easter weekend, which starts this year on 25 March.

It's a busy time in the land of floristry and in the shop right now it's like the lull before the storm. At the moment we're trialling a new 'red rose' they're all talking about but, unfortunately, it's not gone down well in the shop, so it's been relegated to the back shop. These red roses have maybe travelled too far and have been too long out of water (they're from Columbia) so it's back to our favourite roses from the Netherlands. We always do trial runs of flowers, plants and arrangements before we sell them to you, and occasionally we get it wrong. At other times ... success!

Also under trial are flowers with little hearts and stuff attached with flower glue. As you all know, we're fans of anything we can spray out of a can in here: snow, paint, glue, frosting, air freshener, more snow, more glitter...

A constant question from our customers at Valentines Day is 'What will I write on the card?' Aaaaah! We're no experts in the romance line but 'Best Wishes is a definite no-no – you'd be surprised at the number of times that one pops up! This year the wrap that our 'trial roses' arrived in was covered in suggestions, so that was one good thing about them. We've kept it and will have it on display near the greetings cards to give our customers some ideas. Mind you, some of the suggestions are a bit risqué so if they're likely to be risky for you, maybe better to stick with 'Best Wishes'.

Our cheery neighbours across the way in the Dentists spent their days at this time of year peering through their blinds at all the gents coming out of the shop, looking round furtively then shoving the flowers in the back of the car before speeding away in case any of their pals catch them in romantic mood. You know from the tooting and cheeky banter when they've been caught.

Valentines Day is always a bit of a 'last minute' time in the flower calendar – you never know how much to stock, but it's always good to have a mix of colours like yellows and purples and oranges, just to give a wee change from tradition. Every year, we say to customers, 'Buy what your budget can afford.' Sometime something small and simple is the perfect gift – and that goes for Mother's Day and Easter too.

At this time of year, our shop bear comes out of hibernation and graces the window and our shop bicycle sits outside once again (sorry no deliveries by bike – except by special arrangement). Our bear is a very soulful bear and you wouldn't believe the number of people who want to buy him but he's no' for sale – he lives here!

On a more local note (we report that readers like the Biggar news) traffic and parking is still an issue: who, where, how long has that car been parked outside? Two weeks is our record – can anyone beat that? Our hopes were raised when we got a new swanky car park where the old primary school used to be but ... it has restrictions on it. I'm sure there are reasons for all that, but shopkeepers in a wee village welcome car parking space so their customers can drop

by easily and, unfortunately, people tend not to want to walk too far these days. Biggar is awaiting changes in the speed limit – down to 20mph. I can't wait for this. It should be fun. As anyone knows, drivers of all vehicles (except the shop bike) once they pass the chippy at the top of the town it's foot down, especially at 4am – yes, you'd better believe it, we are working in the shop at that hour, at peak times.

With that, we'll head off again in search of perfect Valentine's flowers, or the prettiest Mother's Day basket or the cutest Easter chic filled with fabulous bulbs. See you in the shop soon...