

Top Tips

For Spring

Well, at the moment of writing this, turn up the heating and keep cosy, fill up the bird feeders, get on the bike and head off, put on a woolly hat and cosy coat and get out for a walk – but leave those tubs alone!

Don't fill them with wee pots of bulbs and leave them outside or, if you do, bring them in at night. These nice wee pots you see in the shop are okay till about -2 degrees C, but they've not got used to hard frost like their pals in the ground from last year or the year before. Hold back!! Keep them on the cool kitchen windowsill to cheer you up as you make the coffee.

Right now there are lovely tulips, double-flowering daffs, scented broom, irises, anemones making a comeback and catkins to fill a vase in the house. With bulb flowers, just use fresh water and no food unless you want them to open up quickly - there is flower food available specifically for spring flowers and you can use that if you wish. A tip when buying daffs is to cut the ends at an angle and keep them separate in fresh clean water for 24 hours, then chuck that water away, clean the vase, cut the ends at an angle and mix with your other flowers.

It's always nice to get a spring bouquet but, to make it last, you need to take it out of a warm room and place it somewhere cooler at night. Everyone has such a warm home these days but still seems to expect flowers to last for ages... I sound like an old granny here but, on deliveries, people open their doors and whoosh - the heat – and quite often they look as though they're dressed for a day at the beach!!

Rosie's Rants

We're not really ranting this spring, and only just a wee bit. I know you'd be disappointed if we didn't say anything at all! We're talking about scents, smells, sense of smell, good and bad smells.

In a shop like a florists, people come in especially to smell things. It's a sheer joy to some people and the thing we often forget about or take for granted. So let's chat about every aspect of SMELLS...

People say they associate scents/smells with:

- (a) a person
- (b) their animals
- (c) a place
- (d) a time in their life
- (e) a death/birth/marriage.
- (f) a flower shop

- (g) a car/van (help there's a few around Biggar we know of – woof!)
- (h) go on, think of a smell/scent you associate with...
- (i) not having any sense of smell
- (j) losing sense of smell as a result of illness
- (k) changing what we like and dislike in the scent/smell line as we get older.

Well, there's a fair list there. Let's go for (f) the flower shop. The number of people that wander about this shop smelling things and the pleasure on their faces makes it worthwhile. Sometimes, depending on what we have in, they just open the door and go 'aaaah, lovely!' They just stand there at the door sniffing the air.

It's always advisable if you work in this business not to layer on the perfume and you need to use a plain deodorant as you could lose a sale – people want to smell the flowers and plants, not you! I learned that years ago in my first job in a smart restaurant in Glasgow, when the owner 'went aff his heid' about the amount of perfume everyone was wearing (me included). It was the days of spraying it everywhere and all the time you'd dash home and fire some on before heading out again and if the bathroom didn't reek of it and others at home didn't complain about it, well, you just hadn't put enough on! The owner said, 'People want to taste and smell my food, not my staff.' Enough said. In later, life I agree totally.

We get some strange smells in here, much to the entertainment of our friends. We've had every type of aftershave from El Cheapo (the £1 shop – nothing wrong with that) to the top of the range stuff, and the same applies to ladies' perfume. So sorry ladies and gents, it's out with the air freshener. There is a good one that really neutralises all that aftershave and perfume. We also get farm animal smells, cigarette smells, alcohol smells, all of which attach themselves to clothes, so it's a fair mixture passing through the shop.

Most people have a scent or smell they like. Perhaps you were on holiday somewhere and you remember a flower, a dish of seafood, meat, etc, an outdoor market or even the sea. But for some the sense of smell has gone, perhaps because of age or illness and if you listen to these people talking, you realise it's a big miss in their lives – something we too easily take for granted.

In the shop here, our happy bunch isn't too interested in scents as I think they've got too used to them, as you do. They're more interested in the smell of chocolate (from that biscuit box I mentioned before) – and food!

I used to love hyacinths but now, no way once they are about to bloom. I have to get them out of the shop as they give me this really sore head and stuffed up feeling. I can't smell my own shop but I do go and stand outside other people's and just take in that 'lovely flower shop smell'. It's lovely. If I do go in, it's just to smell the flowers and the water. The whole mix is perfect. Yes, you can smell the water – honestly - as long as it's fresh in the shop. You can also smell if they've not been keeping that water fresh.

Other smells that are good for me were my old dog's feet. I will always remember them. My new dog just looks at me strangely... I'm sure all of you will have a favourite pet whose smell you remember. People have smells about them too. Some bring back good memories and some not so good. I wonder if, as time passes, smells become more important and the way you react to them changes.

Anyway, we look forward to you coming in to 'smell' our shop with all the nice spring flowers and plants we'll have in stock over the next few months...