



Florists Supply Ltd.

# The Source

January 2008 Edition

## Donation Day 2007 - A Success!

Each year Florists Supply Ltd. holds a Donation Day where 5% of our sales are donated to support local charities.

This past year, Florists Supply Ltd. held its 8th Annual Donation Day on October 22nd, 2007. We are proud to donate a total of **\$7,037** to our charities this year, compared to \$5,418 we donated last year!

Thank you for participating in this worthwhile cause. Your participation and support is greatly appreciated!

**Alzheimer Society**  
MANITOBA  
*Serving People with Dementia*



**Winnipeg, MB**  
Branch Donated To  
**Alzheimer Society of Manitoba**



**Saskatoon, SK**  
Branch Donated to  
**Ronald McDonald House**



**Edmonton, AB**  
Branch Donated to  
**Lois Hole Hospital for Women**

## Heart&Stroke

**Vancouver, BC**  
Branch Donated to  
**Heart & Stroke Foundation**

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[www.floristssupply.com](http://www.floristssupply.com)

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- latest news & events
- current catalogues, flyers & specials
  - design gallery & design recipes
  - join our e-newsletter mailing list



## Parallel Lines

By: Laurie Nesbitt, President

Happy New Year and thank you for your support in 2007! We are in the middle of winter but our minds have been on Spring & Summer for some time, as we launch our latest and largest catalogue, Spring & Everyday 2008. We began work on the 128-page catalogue in late September and it came together for printing in the middle of November, so it could be ready for you on January 1st.

There are too many new things in the catalogue to cover in depth, but some highlights are more beautiful affordable floral prints, a collection of mirrors and wall metal art, a wider variety of garden décor and large metal planters, an expanded designer glass section, and some great additions to our permanent botanicals line.

### Smithers Oasis vs. Floralife Preservatives

Some of you may recall hearing or reading about the company Smithers Oasis purchasing Floralife last year. The two companies went through an integration process in the fall of 2007 and it was decided by Smithers Oasis that their line of preservatives, known in the market place as Clear Solution, would be discontinued and only Floralife's preservative line would continue into the future. Floralife sells Crystal Clear as a brand name for its mainline of preservatives and still offers Original Floralife in a few items.

As a company, we historically had pushed the Smithers Oasis products and had carried some of Floralife's products that were demanded by our market and some of our customers. Our reasons were more based on price and vendor support than on one preservative being any better than the other.

We believe the integration at this stage is good for all of us for the following reasons:

As a wholesaler we try to avoid overlap of items that essentially have the same purpose, thereby limiting the number of skus and inventory dollars we need to carry each day.

As a customer you will be happy to see the pricing on the Floralife products – we have essentially combined our buying power and are passing along some nice prices throughout the Floralife line, now featured in our everyday essentials area of the catalogue.

While we dropped some items we felt overlapped, it did allow us to add some new items including 10 gram consumer packets that should really be used when sending out a larger design in a large vase (good for 1 qt of water vs. 1 pint) and 2.5 gallon DCD cleaner with a convenient pump (price per gallon is better for this item than buying the 1 gallon size without pump).



You can find our line of Floralife Preservatives on pg 121 of the Spring & Everyday 2008 catalogue.

### Things to Watch for in 2008

As of writing this on November 26, 2007 here are a few economic things that you should be aware of in 2008 that will impact your business:

- **Goods & Services Tax (GST)** reduction from 6% to 5% on January 1st, 2008 - alter point-of-sale and accounting systems.
- **Employment Insurance (EI)** rates as of January 1st, 2008 for employees fall to \$1.73 from \$1.80 per \$100 and the rate paid by employers reduced to \$2.42 from \$2.52.
- **Maximum Pensionable earnings** under Canada Pension Plan as of January 1st, 2008 moved up to \$44,900 vs. \$43,700 in 2007. Contributors who earn more than \$44,900 are not required to make additional contributions to the CPP. The employee and employer rates for 2008 will remain unchanged at 4.95%.

### Minimum Wage by Province & Territory (as of November 26, 2007)

**British Columbia** – currently \$8.00 per hour, no announced changes

**Alberta** – currently \$8.00 per hour (set September 1, 2007), to be reviewed every April starting in 2008

**Saskatchewan** – moved to \$8.25 per hour January 1, 2008, announced changes to \$8.60 on May 1, 2008 and \$9.25 May 1, 2009

**Manitoba** – currently \$8.00 (set April 1st, 2007), announced change to \$8.50 effective April 1, 2008

**Ontario** – currently \$8.00 (set February 1st, 2007), announced change to \$8.75 March 31, 2008

**Yukon** – currently \$8.37 (set April 1st, 2007), potential increase on April 1st, 2008 by an amount corresponding to the annual increase for the proceeding year in the Consumer Price Index for the city of Whitehorse

**Nunavut** – currently \$8.50, no announced changes

**Northwest Territories** - \$8.25, no announced changes

### Forecasted Provincial Growth, averaged between TD and RBC forecasts released in Fall 2007

#### Retail Sales Growth

Ontario 4.45%  
 Manitoba 4.2%  
 Saskatchewan 7.2%  
 Alberta 8.05%  
 B.C. 7.15%

#### Gross Domestic Product Growth

Ontario 2.3%  
 Manitoba 2.4%  
 Saskatchewan 3.2%  
 Alberta 2.9%  
 B.C. 2.9%

There are a lot of numbers presented above and it is a reminder to all of us that paying attention to the numbers is important for our businesses' long-term health. Don't forget, however, to have fun along the way. On behalf of the management and staff at Florists Supply we wish you nothing but success in your professional and personal lives in 2008!

## Florists Supply Ltd's 2007 Customer Survey - Results Are In!

At Florists Supply Ltd. we pride ourselves in our Customer Service. In order to measure our level of customer service we conduct a Customer Survey every 2nd year. This June, we sent out 864 surveys to our regular buyers and received 213 responses. Thank you to all respondents for your valuable feedback.

We use your comments to improve our level of service. An area of concern in particular, was lower scores in "Prompt in Answering Phones" in some of our branches. Contributing to these lower scores was the recent introduction of new phone systems in two of our branches, and some temporary staff shortages at the time of the survey. We are working on streamlining the systems and providing

extension numbers for Customer Service Representative's, to get you in touch with our service personnel as quickly as possible. In addition, we feel our compliment of staff are now at the appropriate number.

The overall response on the surveys was very positive, with customer service expectations being met 88% of the time overall in both Cut Flower and Supply departments. The tabulated results of the survey are shared with our staff, to help them continually improve and strive to achieve higher results. Most importantly, we share your positive feedback with our staff to let them know they're doing a good job!

## Staff Announcements

### Dean Verkerk, Cut Flower Manager, Vancouver

Dean has been with Florists Supply Ltd. since 2006 as a Cut Flower Customer Service Representative. Marcy is now going to move into the role of Cut Flower Buyer. She has previous experience in this role, providing vacation relief for Dean. Her extensive floral design experience combined with her Customer Service experience over the past year, made Marcy the ideal choice to assume the position as the Fresh Flower Buyer.

### Marcy Emery, Cut Flower Buyer, Vancouver

Dean has been with Florists Supply Ltd. since 2006 as a Cut Flower Customer Service Representative. Marcy is now going to move into the role of Cut Flower Buyer. She has previous experience in this role, providing vacation relief for Dean. Her extensive floral design experience combined with her Customer Service experience over the past year, made Marcy the ideal choice to assume the position as the Fresh Flower Buyer.

## Getting to Know Us

### WINNIPEG - Head Office

**Mark Gershkovich**  
Website Administrator

Mark works as Florist Supply Ltd's Website Administrator at our Head Office in Winnipeg. His job requires assisting customers' needs including: Website enquiries and answering questions in regards to the various shows and events.

Mark's background includes graduating with a Communications Degree with the University of Winnipeg and Red River College.

His experience includes working at J/SonyBMG Records in New York City, where he had the opportunity to work with various musicians. Mark was also the Marketing Assistant at the MTS Centre prior to starting at Florists Supply Ltd.

When Mark has free time, he likes to cook, go to movies, spend time with friends & family, travel, and listen to music from around the world.

### SASKATOON - Cut Flower Dept

**Leslie Sikler**  
Cut Flower/Buyer Assistant

Leslie has been with Florists Supply Ltd. for 18 months. Her main role is Cut Flower Purchasing. Along with Buying decisions she is also responsible for Quality Control & some Administrative Duties. She is also able to assist in any other area required in our Cut Flower Department.

Prior to joining Florists Supply Ltd., Leslie and her family owned a clothing Store where she was involved in the buying and Customer Service aspect of the business.

Leslie and her husband Garry have 3 kids; Sofia 11, Jake 14 and Zach 20.

In her down time she enjoys cooking, gardening & Yoga.

### EDMONTON - Supply Dept

**Karen Casavant**  
Supply Warehouse Personnel

Karen joined Florists Supply Ltd's Edmonton branch in June 2004.

She currently works in our warehouse as our Supply Warehouse Personnel.

Karen has been married to David for 17 years and they have a son Brody who is two and half years old, who is the light of her life.

Her hobbies include reading, petite point, playing with Brody and taking long walks.

### VANCOUVER - Supply Dept

**Marnie McDiarmid**  
Customer Service Representative

Marnie works in our Supply Department as a Customer Service Representative. After taking arts in high school, she enrolled in a two year, Art in Merchandising course at Langara College taking interior design, visual arts, graphics and academics.

Deciding not to pursue that field, Marnie returned to design.

Marnie's work experience with several companies led to full time courses in floral design and a career that she loved. She opened up her own company in 1998 specializing in West Coast design and catering to clients needs and budgets. Marnie closed her business in 2004, and decided to pursue the wholesale side of the industry.

In her free time, Marnie likes to take in the art and theatre scene in Vancouver.

## **Fresh Focus** By: John Forsyth, Vice President of Cut Flowers Operations **Gerbera Daisy Straws**

Some of our customers have been asking for a wider diameter Gerbera straw to be carried in our supply department, as our current size is not wide enough for some of the large Gerbera varieties being grown. There is a wider straw available, but it is more expensive and it is only 1/16 of an inch wider. That increase in diameter will not solve the problem of wider stems fitting into the straws.

I would like to address this issue in a number of ways. First let's look at the alternative ways you can use the current gerbera straw to make it work. If you cut a slit in the length of the straw, it will expand to fit the stem and still perform the intended function.

Now let's look at another option. We carry the "Stand Up" Gerbera Daisy support. This is an option that uses wire for support. The wire adjusts to fit any diameter stem and will accommodate the widest stem varieties.



Finally, the best option may be to use no straw at all. If you are using the straw to support the head in the event of bent neck or in certain design styles the wide stemmed Gerbera varieties are strong enough to support their own weight.

Bent neck generally occurs in Gerberas due to poor hygiene, so this can be greatly reduced or eliminated in all Gerberas by using the proper care and handling procedures. They require specific care and handling technique that is completely different than other flowers. They are highly susceptible to stem blockage from bacteria growth in the water. Most of the bent neck you see is caused by stem blockage and vase life is greatly reduced by this.

The following steps are the basic care and handling techniques for Gerberas.

- DO NOT use traditional floral food. The flower is fully developed and does not require the sugar in the food. The sugar helps develop color and open blooms and this will not be required by Gerberas. Using floral preservative is more harmful than beneficial as the unused sugar will help to feed bacteria in the water and increase stem blockage resulting in shortened vase life and bent neck. Additionally you are paying for floral food the flower does not require.
- Cleanliness is critical – always use a fresh sterilized container. NEVER use an unwashed bucket. Cut the stems with sterilized cutting tools. Our goal is to reduce bacteria growth possibilities. The stem of the Gerbera is covered with tiny hairs that trap dirt and disease kind of like your nasal passage. The smallest amount of bacteria will find it's way to the stems and begin to breed.

- USE GERBERA TABLETS to condition the water – the tablets are a slow release biocide in a tablet form that fights bacteria growth in the water for several days. They are extremely effective in eliminating bent neck and increasing vase life. In testing, we see a noticeable increase in vase life and stiff straight stems. Some of you may use bleach in the water, but bleach is difficult to dose and is only effective for hours rather than the tablets which last for days. The cost of the tablets is very low and the benefits they provide make them a real bargain.

If you choose to use gerbera straws then use them carefully. If the stem will not easily fit into the straw then do not force it into the straw. The stems of gerberas are very soft and any scraping of the stem against the straw will wound the flower and allow air or bacteria to enter the stem. Another problem can occur in the straw as the stem hardens it may snap if too much pressure is put on it.

I suggest you take a minute to review your care and handling procedures for Gerberas in your shop and ensure all your staff understands them as well. If you are planning to try the tablets and need to convince yourself of the effectiveness, test a few stems in the tablets and a few stems in water and see the results. Gerberas are a flower where an investment in the time for proper care and handling can save you money and increase the vase life of your flowers.



### **Visit Us At The Upcoming**



## **February 17 - February 20, 2008**

## **Agricom, Hall B, Booth 2127**

# Steps To Success - Marketing Your Business

By: Nadine Martyniuk, Marketing Manager

## "Check Out Our Website" or "Visit us Online"

These are common phrases of our time. They are used frequently because so many companies use their Website as a major selling and communication tool. Using the Internet to enhance your business is not just "jumping on the bandwagon", it's a necessary business tool in today's marketplace. So it's important to ask yourself why you don't have a Website of your own. And if you do – is it effective?

## Benefits of Doing Business Online

There are many reasons to have a Website.

**Who Are You?** – The Internet is the first place consumers turn to find any type of product or service, so make your presence known online. It's an excellent way to promote your business to potential clients anywhere, anytime. All they need is your Website address, be it from a business card, advertisement, your vehicle decal, delivery box, E-mail or search engines. Potential and existing customers will look you up to find out more about you. Where you are located, your number, your level of creativity and types of services you offer.

**Enhance Your Image** – Increasingly, your clients and potential clients are judging the level of service and product you supply, by the standard of your Website; and specifically the presence or absence of one. A professionally designed Website will enhance the image of your shop, and should be considered a long term asset.

**Your Site as a Marketing Tool** – In combination with your Website, E-mail and electronic newsletters, you can promote new products, services and specials and encourage repeat visits to your site. It's a cost effective and convenient way of keeping in touch with your existing client base. You can achieve great results cost effectively without printing and mailing hundreds of letters and flyers.

**Virtual Shop Window** – Ultimately, customers can purchase your products and services by ordering on-line. It becomes your virtual shop window enabling you to compete on much more equal terms with larger organizations. The benefits of a Website depend on how you embrace the technology available and the nature of your business.

Although it makes sense to utilize hi-tech features, it's perfectly valid to take it one step at a time. Having a full E-Commerce site (meaning online buying capabilities) is not right for all businesses from a cost and implementation perspective. It is not a case of all or nothing – if you develop and market your Website wisely, you don't necessarily need all the "flash".

## Objective of the Site

Make sure you have a clear objective for your Website before you forge ahead:

- Develop your Website to be more than an online brochure. For example, your site can be used as a lead generator, education to customers, or to sell your products. Determine what you want it to do for you.
- Plan your site on paper before you spend any money – this will help you determine what features you need when developing the site and what content will be required to create it.
- Lead generation, capturing the contact data of your visitors should be a major objective – especially for new businesses.
- Research - Look at other Websites to find the look, content and navigation you like. Check your competitor's sites as well as Websites from other industries to get ideas on what you like, and what you don't.

## Developing the Site

Choosing the right Website developer depends on the goals you want to reach. While price plays a role, other factors should weigh in. A few things to consider before hiring a Website developer:

**Portfolio** – Ask your potential Web Developer to show you their portfolio to gauge their creative ability. Also, navigate the Websites of their current clients to ensure the navigation and functionality of the site makes sense. Take notes to ask them your questions about other sites you have researched.

**Design** - One method used by developers to create Websites quickly is to use pre-fabricated Website templates. This makes sense if it offers you the most functionality within your budget. However, it can create confusion for your customer especially if many of your competitors are using the same template. Make sure your developer has an in-house artist who can create designs unique to your company.

**Self-Editing** - Effective Websites are regularly maintained, so ask your developer if your Website can be created with an easy-to-use built-in software to allow for self-editing. Hiring your Web Developer to make frequent edits can be costly.

**Growth** - Continuous Website development is a must to compete in today's business world. Ask your potential Web Developer if in-house programmers are on staff to ensure they can meet your needs when you are ready to upgrade your Website to the next level.

**Price** - Optional items affect pricing for Websites. Understanding what is included in the base price is important to make a fair comparison of Website development costs. Ask for specific examples of Website designs and layouts, learn what elements were included in the base price, and find out the final price paid.

## Functionality - Successful Websites generally get your visitors to do something.

For example, a "Join Our Mailing List" or "Customer Sign Up" function gives visitors an opportunity to be updated on any new material added to your Website. Ask your Website designer about creative ideas that gain customer involvement.



**Hosting** - In order for a Website to be available on the Internet, it must be "hosted" on a server or computer that is connected to the Internet. Most Website developers offer hosting, but hosting services vary. Learn about your developer's hosting service, price, technical support, and get their backup plan in writing to ensure the safety of your data in the case of a server issue. Also, make sure you are not "locked in" to only use them for your hosting services. Read the fine print to ensure the data and coding you paid for, belongs to you should you choose to leave the hosting company.

**Statistics** - "Website traffic" refers to the statistics behind who, what, and why visitors are on your Website. Total visitor counts give a measure of success, and you'll want to watch for a general upward trend in the numbers. Ask your Website Developer what kind of statistic tracking tools they offer with the completed site.

## Promoting Your Website

Too many businesses fall for the "Field of Dreams" myth – build it and they will come. Unfortunately, this is not the case. You will need to implement a Promotional Strategy for your Website to encourage and entice people to visit.

Search engine placement is important but **your Website address should be on all marketing and general business materials you send out** – delivery slips, stickers on delivery boxes, customer receipts, business cards, your electronic signature (E-mail), your answering machine message, all advertisements, promotional items, newsletters, even consider signage on your store.

You could help drive "hits" to your Website by creating a contest give away or giving out a promotional product with your new Web address on it. Electronic newsletters (via E-Mail) are a great way to remind customers of updates to your Website and will keep them visiting over and over again.

As an entrepreneur it is important to constantly re-evaluate your business strategies from pricing and staffing to marketing. So even if you have a Website, plan to upgrade and change the content in order to stay current with the times.

Keep it "**Fresh**" to keep your customers coming back!

## Nanaimo Spring & Wedding Design Show

Florists Supply Ltd. brings you the Spring & Wedding Design Show

### Nanaimo

Sunday, February 24, 2008

Design Commentator:

Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

## Weddings For Profit

Mark Your Calendar

For An In Depth Day of Education & Wedding Design Techniques

### Saskatoon

Sunday, March 2, 2008

Design Commentator:

Ardith Beverage, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA

### Winnipeg

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Design Commentator:

Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

### Vancouver

Sunday, March 30, 2008

Design Commentator:

Ardith Beverage, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA

### Edmonton

Sunday, April 6, 2008

Design Commentator:

Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

## Upcoming Hands-On Seminars

Join Us For Florists Supply Ltd's

Creating Armatures & Designing with Greens Hands-On Seminar

### Saskatoon

Monday, March 3, 2008

Educator:

Ardith Beverage, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA

### Winnipeg

Monday, March 10, 2008

Educator:

Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

### Vancouver

Monday, March 31, 2008

Educator:

Ardith Beverage, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA

### Edmonton

Monday, April 7, 2008

Educator:

Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

Visit us online [www.floristssupply.com](http://www.floristssupply.com) for details

## Why Accreditation?

By: Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA

Will it get me a bigger pay cheque? Will it give me an edge over another designer in the job market? Will I have more recognition or respect in the workplace or floral community? Will it be worth the time, effort and expense?

These were some of the questions among others that I had. It was suggested that I attend the AIFD Symposium, which was to be held in Greenville, North Carolina. I arrived in the dark of the night, but as dawn was breaking I looked out of my hotel room window and saw the most beautiful dogwood trees, both pink and white in full bloom. What a wonderful way to start what would be the biggest career move of my life.

Here was a group of people drawn together by their love for flowers and appreciation for beautiful design in a spirit of sharing. These people all operated or worked in flower related businesses, looking for a way to make a buck. But at the same time, most importantly, working to achieve excellence in design.

I was the only one from Canada and was very warmly welcomed. I experienced a sense of belonging and camaraderie, that I had never felt before in the industry. We spent three days viewing some of the most spectacular designing with professional commentary. The symposium was comprised of workshops on colour trends, sales techniques, marketing, display for merchandising as well as my talented motivational speakers. There were many handouts and many opportunities to speak to and question the presenters.

I returned to Canada determined to become part of this wonderful organization. Within a year and a half, I had achieved my goal of achieving the AIFD accreditation. Since then I have not looked back, as it has provided me with all the things I was asking about and so much more.

Accreditation requires the highest standards in design, work ethics, integrity and willingness to share. The process is quite rigorous and demanding, but well worth it.

As we all move toward accreditation, we raise the bar for all designers. We raise the standard of design to the point that the public at large recognizes that what we do is a learned science and art form. Those who achieve these high standards will be sought after by shop owners, and will in time be able to command a commensurate wage.

A business person recognizes the value of having an accredited designer on staff and can advertise this in the wire service directories. Sending flower shops can send orders out knowing that a high standard of design can be expected where such has been advertised.

Accreditation benefits us all whether it be AIFD ([www.aifd.org](http://www.aifd.org)), CAFA ([www.cafachat.com](http://www.cafachat.com)), AAF, FTD Master Designer or Flowers Canada's Master Florist ([www.flowerscanada.org](http://www.flowerscanada.org)).



## Holiday Glamour, 2007 Fall & Holiday Design Show

Thank you to everyone who attended "Holiday Glamour", our Fall & Holiday 2007 Design Show.

All of our branches had great attendance and the feedback you provided was very positive. We value your feedback and use it towards the betterment of our product and educational offerings.

A special thanks to our Designers: Ardith Beverage, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA, Becky Lindstedt, Kevin Ylvisaker, AIFD, PFCI, CAFA, Roy Jackson, CAFD, FTD Master Designer, In-House Designer, Derrick Hollar, AIFD, CAFA & James M. DelPrince, Ph.D., AIFD, PFCI

These designers inspired and impressed us all with their breathtaking creations.

### "A Day At The Spa" Grand Prize Winners



#### Winnipeg

Donna Cheung of UFloria, shown with Laurie Nesbitt.

#### Edmonton

Debbie Bottomley of Elyson Flowers, shown here with Colleen Hemmingway.

#### Saskatoon

Tammy Stigen of Green Brier Flowers & Gifts, shown here with Sandra Mierau

- Vancouver Branch: image of winner unavailable at time of printing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JANUARY 2008

January 1 - New Year's Day

### FEBRUARY 2008

February 6 - Ash Wednesday

February 14 - Valentine's Day

February 18 - Louis Riel Day (MB), Family Day (AB, SK, ON)

February 24 - Nanaimo Spring & Wedding Design Show

### MARCH 2008

March 2 - Weddings For Profit - Saskatoon

March 3 - Creating Armatures & Designing with Greens Hands-On Seminar - Saskatoon

March 9 - Weddings For Profit - Winnipeg

March 10 - Creating Armatures & Designing with Greens Hands-On Seminar - Winnipeg

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 21 - Good Friday

March 23 - Easter Sunday

March 30 - Weddings For Profit - Vancouver

March 31 - Creating Armatures & Designing with Greens Hands-On Seminar - Vancouver

### APRIL 2008

April 6 - Weddings For Profit - Edmonton

April 7 - Creating Armatures & Designing with Greens Hands-On Seminar - Edmonton

April 23 - Administrative/Professional Day



Florists Supply Ltd.

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