

banksia

From the land down under, these long-lasting blooms lend an otherworldly distinctiveness to contemporary floral designs.

name dropping The botanical name “*Banksia*” (pronounced “BANK-see-uh”) was given to these unusual blooms in honor of English botanist and naturalist Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), who is credited with introducing them to the Western world from their native Australia.

physical attributes These distinctive flowers have large, fuzzy inflorescences, cylindrical or conical in shape and resembling large bottle brushes, that are made up of hundreds of small, densely clustered flowers. The flower heads range in length from about four to 10 inches. Leaves are long (up to 20 inches in length) and stiff and have serrated (saw-toothed) edges. Stems are thick and woody.

earthy palette Most *Banksia* blossoms have earth-toned colors of orange, yellow, red, pink and green. The flower colors of some species and cultivars change over time in vase solutions. *Banksia* hues also can be altered with both absorption-type floral dyes and spray-on colorants.

always on *Banksias*, in general, are available year-round from both domestic and foreign growers; however, some species are produced only during specific months, and there are periods when they are more plentiful, particularly during the cooler seasons in the regions where they are grown.

best buys Purchase *Banksias* when approximately one-third of the florets are showing stamens or pollen. Watch for blackened foliage or florets and for any sign of fungus or rot inside the flower heads. (*Banksias* rot easily if they get wet.)

on arrival Unpack *Banksias* upon their arrival in your store, and check flower quality. Remove any foliage that would be under water in storage containers as well as any that may be concealing the blossoms.

If you cannot attend to these flowers immediately, open the box(es), and place it/them into a floral cooler until you can process them.

food and drink Recut the woody stems on an angle with a sharp blade, removing at least 1 inch of stem. Do not break or smash the stem ends because this will damage the vascular system and inhibit water uptake.

Immediately after cutting the stem ends, place them into storage containers partially filled with properly proportioned flower-food solution (see “*Leaf Blackening*”). Recut stems, change the vase solution and clean the storage containers every other day.

cold care Immediately after processing, place *Banksias* into a floral cooler at 34 F to 38 F, and allow them to hydrate for at least two hours before using or selling them.



Banksia prionotes
Acorn banksia, Golden banksia,
Orange banksia, ‘Orange Frost’ banksia

Photo: Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers LLC

leaf blackening *Banksia* foliage can turn black due to lack of carbohydrates and low light, so use properly proportioned flower food solution (one with glucose rather than sucrose), and provide light during storage for these flowers.

not an issue These botanicals’ sensitivity to ethylene is low; however, always take precautions to reduce levels of the harmful gas in your cooler(s) and throughout your shop.

facts of life Vase life at the consumer level is usually seven to 14 days, depending on species, environmental conditions and care, and maturity at the time of sale.

life goes on Most *Banksias* will air-dry nicely, without shedding leaves or florets, either standing upright in a container or hanging upside down in a cool, dry, airy, dark room.

family matters *Banksias* are members of the *Proteaceae* family, which also includes *Protea*, *Leucospermum* (pincushions), *Leucadendron* (cone-bush), *Telopea* (waratah) and *Grevillea* (spider flower, silky oak).

home sweet home Most *Banksias* are native to subtropical Australia, including southern Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

(SEE VARIETY GLOSSARY ON PAGE 22)



*Banksia ashbyii**
Ashby's banksia



Banksia attenuata
Coast banksia,
Slender banksia



*Banksia baxteri**
Bird's-nest banksia,
Baxter's banksia



Banksia burdettii
Burdett's banksia
Golden banksia,
Golden acorn



*Banksia 'Candles'**



*Banksia coccinea**
Scarlet banksia,
Albany banksia,
Waratah banksia



*Banksia ericifolia**
Heath banksia,
Heath-leaved banksia



Banksia hookeriana
Hooker's banksia,
Acorn banksia



*Banksia integrifolia**
Coast banksia pods



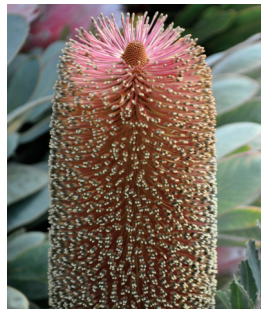
*Banksia menziesii**
Menzies' banksia,
Firewood banksia,
'Raspberry Frost' banksia



*Banksia occidentalis**
Red swamp banksia,
Waterbush,
'Indian Summer' banksia



Banksia plagiocarpa
Dallachy's banksia,
Hinchinbrook banksia



*Banksia praemorsa**
Cut-leaf banksia



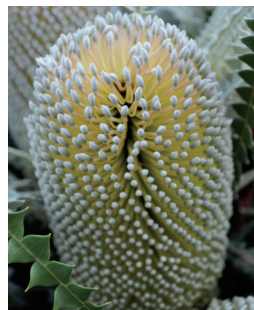
*Banksia prionotes**
Acorn banksia,
Orange banksia,
Golden banksia,
'Orange Frost' banksia



*Banksia robur**
Swamp banksia,
Broad-leaved banksia



Banksia sceptrum
Sceptre banksia



*Banksia speciosa**
Showy banksia,
Rickrack banksia,
Green banksia,
'Mint Julep' banksia



Banksia victoriae
Woolly orange banksia

* Photos: Resendiz Brothers Protea Growers LLC