

delphinium



BOTANICAL NAME

Delphinium spp.
(del-FIN-ee-um)

COMMON NAME

Delphinium (plural: Delphiniums)

care and handling

PROMPT ATTENTION Unpack *Delphiniums* immediately upon arrival, and check flower quality.

STEM PREPARATION AND CUTTING

Remove any foliage from the lower portions of the stems that will be under water in storage containers. Then thoroughly rinse the stems — especially of field-grown *Delphiniums* — under tepid running water to remove dirt, sand and other debris.

Then recut stem ends with a sharp, sterile blade, removing at least 1 inch of stem, to eliminate dried-out stem ends and accumulated dirt, debris and microbes in the stem ends.

HYDRATION Immediately after cutting, dip or place stem ends into a hydration solution to help the flowers absorb water more quickly and easily.

NUTRITION Following the hydration solution treatment, place *Delphinium* stems into containers partially filled with a properly proportioned nutrient solution prepared with cool water.

REFRIGERATION Immediately after processing, place *Delphiniums* into a floral cooler at 33 F to 36 F. Allow them to hydrate in the cooler for at least two hours before arranging or selling them. Except for design time, keep these flowers refrigerated until they're sold or delivered.

CARE EXTRAS *Delphinium* stems can callous over quickly, so recut them daily to maximize water uptake. In addition, change the flower-food solution and clean the storage containers every other day or so. Finally, remove flowers and foliage from the stems as they fade.

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Delphiniums* are extremely sensitive to ethylene gas, which causes premature petal drop. Make sure your purchases are treated with an ethylene inhibitor at the grower level or during shipping. In addition, keep these flowers away from sources of ethylene in your facilities such as fruit and other produce, tobacco smoke, decaying flowers and foliage, and vehicle exhaust.

CONSUMER ACTION Provide consumers with packets of flower food so they can change the nutrient solution in their containers every other day or so. Advise them to recut the stems, as well, removing at least one-half inch of stem, and to display *Delphiniums* out of direct sunlight, away from air/heat vents and out of cold drafts. Encourage consumers to place the flowers in the coolest room at night to prolong vase life.

delphinium types

Within the *Delphinium* genus, there are two main hybrid groups that are grown as cut flowers:

■ *Delphinium X Belladonna* (Belladonna Group)

This species is a hybrid of *D. elatum* and *D. grandiflorum* and is considered a spray *Delphinium* (it has side shoots/branched stems). The stems are typically shorter (24 inches to 36 inches in length, as cut flowers) and the blooms, which can be single or double, are smaller than Pacific Hybrid *Delphiniums*; however, the new 'Japan Blue' and 'Waltz' series have taller stems and larger florets, and they're not as prone to shattering. 'Japan Blue' has clusters of florets at the tops of the stems rather than the more traditional spike formations.

The backs of Belladonna *Delphinium* florets are shaped like dolphins' noses; in fact, the genus name "*Delphinium*" is derived

from the Greek word "*delphis*," which means dolphin.

■ *Delphinium Pacific Hybrids*

These hybrid *Delphiniums* are the tallest and largest *Delphiniums* (cut flower stems typically range from 24 inches to 60 inches in length), and they can have single, double and semidouble blossoms. They were initially bred in California, and all have *D. elatum* as the main parent.

colors

Delphiniums are among nature's few true blue flowers, and all hybrids are available in a range of blues, from light to dark.

Belladonna *Delphiniums* also are available in white, light lavender blue, pink and lime yellow, with either dark or white centers (eyes, bees).

Pacific Hybrid *Delphiniums* also are available in white, cream, mauve, light blue-lavender, lavender and purple, with dark or white centers (eyes, bees).

toxicity alert

Delphiniums can be toxic to humans and other animals (especially cattle). Contact with the skin can cause irritation, and ingestion of any parts of the flowers, leaves or stems can cause inflammation of the mouth, lips and tongue followed by numbness as well as stomach disorders. Communicate this to buyers with small children and pets.

fun facts

FAMILY MATTERS As members of the *Ranunculaceae* (buttercup/crowfoot) family, *Delphiniums* are closely related to *Aconitum* (monkshood), *Anemone* (windflower), *Aquilegia* (columbine), *Clematis* (virgin's bower), *Helleborus* (hellebore), *Nigella* (love-in-a-mist) and *Ranunculus* (buttercup).

HOME SWEET HOME *Delphiniums* are native to regions from southern and central Europe northwest to Siberia. **sf**



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new varieties



Delphinium Pacific Hybrid
Ocean View Flowers



Delphinium X Belladonna
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Delphinium X Belladonna 'Sea Waltz'
Ball SB



Delphinium X Pacific Hybrid
Ocean View Flowers



Delphinium X Belladonna 'Sky Waltz'
Ball SB