

Title An alternative postharvest handling strategy for cut flowers – dry handling after harvest
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Abstract

The most traditional first step after harvesting flowers is to place the cut stems into water or a postharvest solution. Although this step is thought to reduce desiccation, and thereby extend postharvest life, there has been no detailed study of this hypothesis. We harvested rose flowers from commercial farms near Bogotá, Colombia and Quito, Ecuador. Flowers were either hydrated as per conventional practice, or not provided with immediate postharvest hydration. They were then processed and transported to Davis, California, following standard commercial practices. Despite substantial loss of water during transport, dry-handled flowers rehydrated fully, and performed at least as well in the vase as flowers handled according to the standard protocol. Our data suggest that the value of immediate hydration of harvested flowers should be carefully examined, not only for roses, but for other important species.