

Title Shelf- life studies on three *Heliconia* varieties
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Abstract

The usage of the *Heliconia* as cut flowers in Malaysia has not been widely adopted compared to orchids and chrysanthemums. However, its vibrant colours and shapes had made a significant niche in the floral industry. The potentials of selected varieties used as cut flowers is highlighted in this study. Three varieties of *Heliconia* as namely; *H. wagneriana* (c. Rainbow), *H. rauliana* and *H. rostrata* (cv. Ten-days) were studied for its shelflife at room temperature (27°C). The inflorescences were harvested at marketable size in the morning as to maintain turgidity. All stalk-ends were cleaned-cut under running tap water to avoid embolisms. The stalks were dipped in distilled water of a measured quantity in beakers and analysed. Data were collected at every other day for two weeks. Results showed the leaves changed green to yellow in *H. wagneriana* and *H. rostrata* at day 7; while *H. rauliana* at the 10th day. Similarly, the bracts of the inflorescences dropped at day 5 in *H. wagneriana* and *H. rostrata* compared at 10th day in *H. rauliana*. Stem stalk colour turned green to brown in *H. wagneriana* at day 5 compared to *H. rauliana* and *H. rostrata* at 12 day. Average water absorption in all three varieties was 131 ml at day 3 compared to 44 ml at 14 day; however, water absorption had no significant effects on varieties. It was found that *H. rauliana* had most hardy and longest shelflife at room temperature compared to *H. wagneriana* and *H. rostrata* as reflected in its longevity in leaves, stems and inflorescences.