



Beauty frozen in time

Tonia Dixon from African Floralush in Muldersdrift truly has a rose-tinted life — she is surrounded by fresh roses every day. Interesting enough, these roses last for up to six months and prefer no water! She chats to us about how they keep the ‘life’ in their flowers.

Whether you are interested in flowers or not, you are instantly captivated by this fiery red-head’s knowledge and joy for marketing and selling heaven’s perfume. “After completing a degree in Industrial Psychology and working in a corporate environment, I came to realise my passion for creativity was untapped. Because my grandparents and aunt were involved with flowers and gardens, I decided to carry on the tradition. Working as a florist for two years in London, I was exposed to great variety and opportunities to further develop my passion for flowers”.

Not long after this, the opportunity presented itself for Tonia to become part of the African Floralush team. Their patented treatment process extends the vase life of fresh-cut flowers and foliage from days to months, offering a beautiful and natural alternative to artificial flowers and a cost-effective, maintenance-free and eco-friendly substitute for fresh flowers.

“The idea originates from the Eastern Cape where a farmer’s wife was searching for unique ways to preserve her roses. She then approached the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) to assist her and it was developed from there. We are privileged to be partnered with the Industrial Development Corporation and the NMMU.

“African Floralush only selects premium grade flowers and foliage, grown locally (in the Cradle of Humankind) under internationally recognised good-farming practices. Our products are preserved through a process that involves early harvesting, storing the flowers at optimal temperatures and by using innovative technology.

“This process is eco-friendly and involves the use of inert chemicals and recycling all waste products. Our naturally preserved flowers also

leave a smaller carbon footprint than artificial and fresh-cut flowers, because they don’t require refrigeration during distribution and needn’t be air freighted. The flowers can be shipped for exporting.

“With minimal care and under normal indoor conditions, our flowers and foliage will remain in pristine condition – looking as fresh as if they were picked this morning, for at least six months and you needn’t water them at all”. All good and well, but how is it possible?

“Because of the unique preservation technique African Floralush developed,

A thing of beauty is a joy
forever – It’s loveliness
increases, it will never pass into
nothingness... John Keats

we are able to ‘mummify’ the roses and foliages. By placing a chemical moisture back into the roses and foliages it prolongs their lifespan. If you do water our flowers, their stems will rot, just as fresh-cut flowers would over time”.

African Floralush’s colour range consists of electric pink, black, plum, chocolate brown, burnt orange, lime green and fire red to name a few.

“The natural pigment in fresh-cut flowers fades and becomes brown with time — therefore we treat them with natural dyes to reinforce their colour and ensure that they will last longer and remain crisp and beautiful. To preserve the flowers, we make use of the same chemicals and preservatives that are commonly used in the commercial manufacture of cosmetics.

“We are constantly doing research to

improve our preservation technique to ensure the flowers and foliages stay pristine and fresh looking for months. At the same time, we provide care instructions to the buyer.

“We cannot give an absolute guarantee that the flowers will last for up to six months. Since our products are made from completely natural flowers, they are just as fragile and delicate as fresh ones.

“Like their fresh counterparts, they are subject to wear and tear, and require careful and minimal handling. The vase life of our flowers is dependent on how the user handles them. However, over the three-year period that they have been commercially available, our flowers have been proven to last for well over six months”.

Today’s roses have very little fragrance, if any at all, so you might expect the same from this fascinating product.

“The first thing anyone does when they pick up roses, is to smell it. So, we add a natural rose fragrance (extracted from roses) into the

treatment process”.

In case you were wondering, their flowers and foliages are safe — especially, for kids that like to put ‘unusual’ objects in their mouths.

“Our products are natural, biodegradable and completely safe. The chemicals used in the preservation technique are used in certain food products as well as cosmetics”.

At this stage, African Floralush only focuses on roses and a variety of foliages. In the future they would like to add gerbera’s, lillies and carnations to their product list.

“This product is something unique and has so much potential in a variety of applications to the South African market”.

Details: African Floralush on 011 461 6391 or visit www.floralush.co.za