Homebrewing craft beers is all the rage, but homebrewing flower food solutions? That’s a bad deal for everyone.

Homebrewed flower solutions are attractive to your customers because the solutions appear inexpensive and have a certain DIY-appeal. But allowing your customers to craft their own solutions can have negative repercussions on your business. At the Floralife lab in Walterboro, N.C., Anil Ranwala, Ph.D., chief scientist, tested home-made brews. He found that some yield worse results than just adding water. By concocting their own solutions, your customers are cutting short the lifespan of their flowers and making your shop look bad in the process (even if you’ve faithfully followed all care and handling best practices) How bad are they? Let’s take a look.

Home Solutions Breakdown

Aspirin, by far, is the biggest under-performer, shortening flower life by as much as five days, or more than 60 percent. Aspirin is an acid, so it provides one component of a proper flower food — but it’s not balanced for flowers, and unless you have the other two key components (sugar and stem absorption enhancers), the combination won’t work.

Sugar, bleach and lemon or lime juice provide the food, absorption enhancer and acid, but it’s impossible to properly balance these three ingredients. Doing so would be like trying to make a favorite recipe by substituting every ingredient with a “similar” item.

7-Up and water provide the food and a sort of an acid, but not the absorption enhancer. So bacteria thrive in this mix.

Home Schooled

The graph shows the vase life of flowers, in number of days, with different homebrew solutions. Source: Floralife Lab

Leave it to the Pros

Customers need one simple instruction when flowers are sent home: Leave the homebrewing to the beer-lovers. Professional flower food solution, in the proper dosage, will make flowers perform better and last longer. Make sure your care tags are up-to-date and consider a resource for your website with additional flower care information.

Thank you for choosing ABC Flower Shop. Your arrangement has been treated with fresh flower food. We have attached a flower food packet which should be mixed separately with one quart/pint of water and added to your arrangement when the solution gets low. By using flower food at the recommended amount, you can help contribute to the longevity of your floral arrangement.

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