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Jill Moser wraps a bouquet of flowers for a customer at Rhythm and Blooms.

Adam Amato Emerald

Planting the seeds of love

■ Flowers are a great gift, but keep in mind the nature of the relationship and the recipient's tastes

By Kara Cogswell
For the Emerald

Creamy white carnations, fuchsia tulips and crimson roses will be popping up in store windows everywhere this week.

It may still be winter outside, but inside floral shops, spring has arrived just in time for Valentine's Day.

And with the big day less than a week away, the flower business is now in full bloom.

"Valentine's Day is our single busiest day of the year," said Laura Lewis, owner of Daisies Flowers and Gifts.

Year after year, flowers remain a popular Valentine's Day gift because of their universal appeal, said Pat Brooks, owner of Eugene's Flower Home.

"Flowers are one of most everyone's favorite things to get."

With the many different options that florists offer for Valentine's

Day, finding just the right arrangement can be tricky, said Brooks' daughter and store co-owner Laurie Brooks-Headley.

"It's a constant challenge to figure out what the customer has in mind," she said.

Picking out the right flower depends on who will be receiving it, Lewis said.

One factor to consider is whether the recipient is male or female. Although men often enjoy getting flowers, they can have different tastes the women, Lewis said.

"Brighter, bolder colored flowers are good for guys," Lewis said.

To ensure a gift that is both meaningful and appropriate, it is also important to consider the nature of the relationship, Lewis said.

"For a brand new relationship, I try to steer them away from the big, red dozen roses." Instead, she suggests to them a less extravagant arrangement, such as tulips or a mixed bouquet.

When giving roses, the color of the flower traditionally symbolizes the sender's feelings, Brooks-Headley said. Red represents love,

pink stands for sincerity, white indicates purity and yellow denotes friendship. But these definitions are not set in stone.

"There isn't just one language of flowers," Brooks-Headley said. Rather than following these rules, she encourages customers to simply buy a color that they like.

For those for whom roses may be too expensive, there are many other more affordable options available, said Linda Fair of Rhythm and Blooms. She suggested mixed bouquets and other less-traditional arrangements.

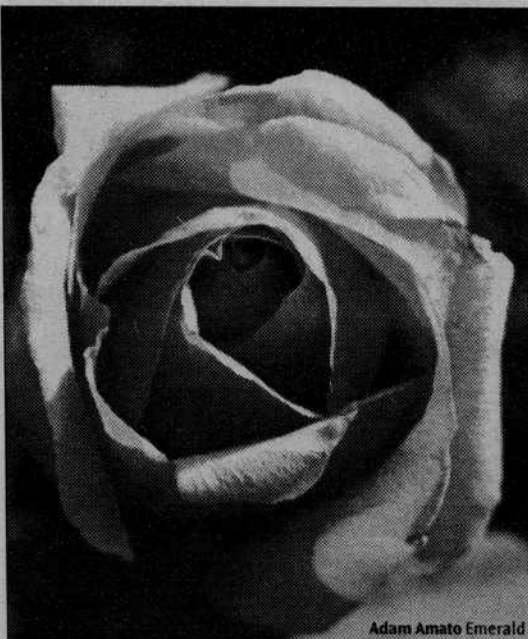
"We encourage people to use their imagination on Valentine's Day," Fair said.

For the best selection, it's best to order early. Ideally, delivery orders should be placed by Monday, Feb. 12, Lewis said.

But for procrastinators, all is not lost. Floral shops will have a variety of prepared arrangements available to buy on Valentine's Day itself.

Fair said she is used to the last-minute rush.

"On Valentine's Day, we set up a tent in the parking lot, and we'll sell hundreds of mixed bouquets."



Adam Amato Emerald

