

fresh

focus



From sturdy statice to wispy caspia, limoniums cover a wide range of moods and colors.

Limonium, statice, caspia
Limonium spp.

Availability: year round, but variety dependent

Bunch size: grower bundles

Vase life: 10 to 21 days or can be dried

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What would we do without the workhorse flowers in the genus *Limonium*? Colors and textures vary widely, from bright and bold to muted hues and from crunchy *Limonium sinuatum* (annual or English statice) to feathery *L. latifolium* (caspia).

But one thing all limoniums have in common—aside from their use, almost without exception, as filler flowers—is their toughness and longevity. Many species are well adapted to grow near the sea, weathering harsh sun and wind (hence the common names “sea lavender” and “marsh rosemary”). The genus name is derived from the Greek word *leimon*, meaning meadow. You can find limoniums growing all over the world in meadows near the ocean as well as in desert environments of the interior, their strong stems rising from a clump of leaves at the base.

An even better clue to their hardiness, however, is hidden in the flower’s anatomy. What we may casually call the “flowers” of limonium species are actually colorful, papery calyxes (often blue), which surround the true flowers (often white) and which remain, still bright and beautiful, long after the true flowers have fallen.

Chasing the blues

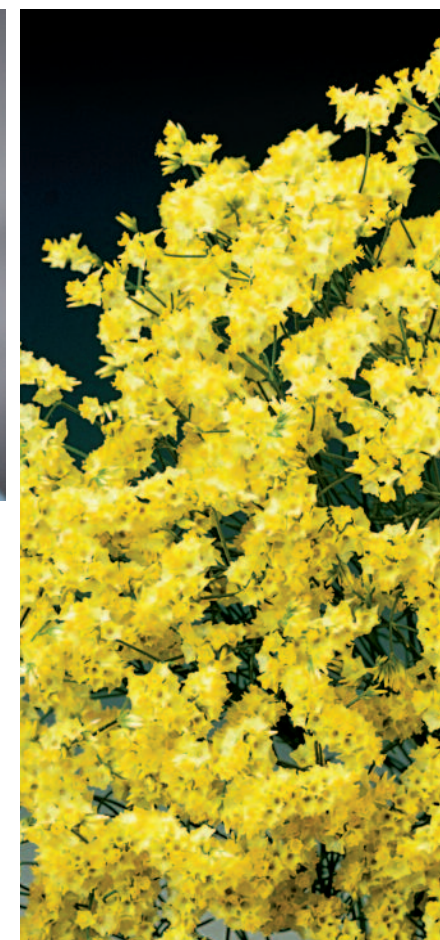
Blue and purple come first to mind when we think of statice or limonium, but breeders have also brought to market varieties in other hues, including white, pink, and yellow. Diamond statice (*Limonium sinensis*), a newer and medium-sized addition to the limonium group, is

currently available in white, blue, yellow, pink, silver, and golden colors. These colors are remarkably consistent and uniform, as are other features of Diamond statice, thanks to the fact that varieties in the series are propagated solely by tissue culture.

Although hardy, limoniums are vulnerable to botrytis. They should be removed immediately from shipping boxes to release any buildup of heat and allow air circulation around the flowers. If proper care and handling procedures are not followed, limoniums may be more likely than other flowers to release an unpleasant smell. But that problem would only arise in the case of a florist who uses less than immaculate hygiene and careful mixing of flower foods in the processing of limonium—and that would never happen in your shop, now would it? 🌿



Among the newer varieties of limonium are those in the Misty and China series, which span the spectrum of limonium hues to include Misty White® (opposite page, far left), China Cerise® (top of this page) and China Yellow® (right). Misty and China photos are courtesy of Royal Van Zanten, a Dutch supplier of plant material to growers, also known for statice varieties in the Sun Bird series. Above and at near left is Maine Blue, a hardy variety from Hilverda with long laterals on exceptionally long, strong stems and a unique deep blue color.



Care tips

- Purchase limoniums in full color (70% open), but with a few new florets left to mature. Avoid stems that have yellow or discolored leaves, an indication of improper shipping or holding temperatures.
- Re-cut stem ends, removing at least one inch. Place in a tepid floral food solution and let condition at room temperature for one to two hours or overnight. If stems are severely wilted or dehydrated, treat with a citric acid hydration solution following manufacturer’s recommendations.
- Research has shown that the proper use of flower foods can increase the vase life of some limoniums by 300 percent!
- Most sources recommend treating limoniums with an ethylene inhibitor for longest vase life.
- Store limoniums in a 36-degree floral refrigerator at 85 percent humidity. Good air circulation (remove sleeves and bundling) is recommended to prevent botrytis mold from forming on the stems or flowers.
- Most limoniums may be air-dried by hanging them upside down in a low-humidity, low-light area. Bundle the stems with rubber bands into small bunches to allow for free air circulation. Drying time should be about one to two weeks, then coat with a moisture barrier sealant.

Common Name	Botanical Name	Colors	Size
Statice, annual statice, sinuatum	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	Blue, purple, lavender, pink, yellow, peach, white	1-inch colored heads on branched, 12-to-24-inch, fleshy stems
German statice	<i>Limonium tartaricum</i>	Gray to off-white	1/4-inch flowers on short 4-to-6-inch stems
Seafoam statice	<i>Limonium perezii</i>	Purple to lavender	1/4-inch flowers clustered into 2-to-4-inch heads atop 12-to-20-inch stems
Caspia, Misty limonium	<i>Limonium latifolium</i>	Light blue, light pink, lavender	1/8-inch flowers profusely adorn 18-to-30 inch stems