

Australian Standard™

AS 4689.6

Fresh cut flowers and foliage—Australian and related flora

Part 6: *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* syn. *Helichrysum diosmifolium* (rice flower)

PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee CS-090, Horticulture.

The Standard is based on an industry standard developed by the Australian Flower Export Council and the Queensland Wax and Native Flower Association.

The aim of this series of Standards is to improve the quality of fresh cut flowers and foliage of Australian and related species for export by setting minimum specifications to maintain the potential of the product at the point of export.

The AS 4689 series of Standards sets out general and product packaging requirements in Part 1. Part 1 includes a postharvest vase life test, the aim of which is to provide a test that can be used to compare batches of flowers or foliage. The remaining Parts contain specific requirements for particular flowers or foliage. This series of Standards is intended for use by flower producers and exporters within Australia.

This is Part 6 of AS 4689 series which comprises 7 Parts as follows:

AS

- 4689.1 Part 1: General and postharvest vase life requirements
- 4689.2 Part 2: *Anigozanthos* (kangaroo paw)
- 4689.3 Part 3: *Banksia*
- 4689.4 Part 4: *Caustis blakei* (koala fern)
- 4689.5 Part 5: *Chamelaucium* (waxflower)
- 4689.6 Part 6: *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* syn. *Helichrysum diosmifolium* (rice flower)
- 4689.7 Part 7: *Telopea* (waratah)

1 SCOPE

This Standard sets out particular requirements for *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* syn. *Helichrysum diosmifolium* (rice flower), to be applied in addition to the general requirements of AS 4689.1, in order to specify quality and consistency criteria for product for export. It includes one category only in order to achieve the consistency in quality required by overseas markets. The Standard does not apply to dried or preserved rice flower nor does it include information on operational or market-specific matters.

2 OBJECTIVE

To provide growers, suppliers, exporters and purchasers with minimum specifications for *Ozothamnus diosmifolius* syn. *Helichrysum diosmifolium* for export, and enable use of these criteria to assist in evaluating, selecting or achieving the consistency in quality required for export.

3 REFERENCED DOCUMENT

The following document is referred to in this Standard:

AS

4689 Fresh cut flowers and foliage—Australian and related flora

4689.1 Part 1: General and postharvest vase life requirements

4 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Standard the definitions below apply.

4.1 Bracts

Visible protective structures making up the outermost covering of the capitula of rice flower.

4.2 Capitulum

A small flower head, approximately match-head in size on rice flower.

4.3 Corymb

A terminal flower head made up of a collection of capitula.

4.4 Floret

Small flower protruding from opened bracts, clearly visible with a hand lens.

4.5 Flowering stem

In commercial harvests of rice flower, an array of corymbs.

4.6 Immature

No bract separation or floret extension. See Figures 1(a) and 2(a).

4.7 Mature

Less than 10% (2% for top quality product)* of capitula in the centre of the most advanced corymbs show bract separation and floret extension. Stalks (peduncles) supporting the corymb do not wilt causing capitula to droop after harvest. This is a result of picking too early.

4.8 Overmature

More than 10% of capitula in the centre of the most advanced corymbs show bract separation and floret extension. Stalks (peduncles) supporting the corymb do not wilt causing capitula to droop

4.9 Peduncles

Stalks supporting the flower head.

5 CONSISTENCY AND QUALITY

5.1 Maturity and quality for harvesting

Stems shall be harvested at the mature stage described and illustrated below (see Figure 1(b) and Figure 2(b)). Flowers shall be harvested no earlier than at the stage of corymb and capitulum maturity illustrated in Figure 2(b) and earlier than that illustrated in Figure 2(c).

NOTE: Postharvest treatments that delay wilting may advance the earliest harvesting stage.

* Peter Beal, Lois Turnbull and Leif Forsberg, Data on the harvest window for rice flower and the use of postharvest preserving solutions were sourced from *Development of rice flower as a cut flower crop. 127 A Final Report*, RIRDC, 1995.

5.2 General characteristics

The stem shall have the following general characteristics after careful harvesting at the appropriate state (see Clause 5.1):

- (a) Capitula are of a clean, distinct colour, such as white, cream, light pink, mid pink or dark pink.
- (b) Foliage at the top of the stems is fresh, clean and green.
- (c) Stems shall be strong, reasonably straight and derived from current season's wood.
NOTE: Strong, low side-branches growing at an angle greater than 45 degrees should be removed.
- (d) Meet the requirements detailed in AS 4689.1.

NOTE: If requirements in Part 1 conflict with those in this Standard, then the requirements in this Part will apply.

6 EXPORT GRADE CLASSIFICATION AND APPEARANCE

6.1 Export criteria by specific agreement

Specific prior agreements between the grower or supplier and purchaser may vary from the specifications detailed in Clause 6.2. The intention of this Clause is to enable flower/foliage products to be purchased that vary from the export grade classification in some way, but are not deficient in the quality required for export.

6.2 Export criteria

Each bunch or carton of product for export shall meet the criteria below unless other specifications are agreed to between the grower or supplier and the purchaser (see Clause 6.1):

- (a) Give a balanced appearance of high flowering density, produced by a combination of stem number, stem length and size, number and distribution of capitula.
- (b) Be true to type for described hybrids/cultivars.
- (c) Have uniform foliage colour.
- (d) Be of uniform weight compared to others in the same order or shipment.
- (e) Have a consistent stem diameter $\pm 10\%$.
- (f) Be cooled to approximately 2–5°C with forced air cooling, preferably within 3 hours of cutting in the field.
- (g) Meet the requirements detailed in AS 4689.1.

NOTE: If requirements in Part 1 conflict with those in this Standard, then the requirements in this Part will apply.

7 TOLERANCE

There shall be no more than 5% of the product (stem, bunch or carton) affected by any of the characteristics listed in Clause 5.2 or Clause 6.

8 POSTHARVEST TREATMENT

Postharvest treatment and disinfestation shall be implemented.

At the time of publication of this Standard the recommended treatment is to cool stems picked in warm climates to remove field heat. If stems are not cooled they should be rehydrated in water containing a chlorine germicide (10–50 mg available chlorine per litre e.g. as dichloroisocyanurate, sodium salt). Flowers should be cooled before dispatch.

Further information is available from the Department of Agriculture or Flower Associations in your state.



(a) Immature

FIGURE 1 (in part) CLASSIFICATION OF MATURITY