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## Blue roses to go on sale in Japan



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Think that red roses are predictable? In Japan, gift-givers soon will also have the option of blue roses.

The Japanese company that created the world's first genetically modified blue roses said Monday it will start selling them next year.

Suntory Ltd., also a major whisky distiller, hopes to sell several hundred thousand blue roses a year, company spokesman Kazumasa Nishizaki said.

"As its price may be a bit high, we are targeting demand for luxurious cut flowers, such as for gifts," he said. The exact price and commercial name for the blue rose have not been decided.

The company is also growing the rose experimentally in Australia and the United States to get approval for sales, but no timing has been set for commercial launches in the two countries.

Suntory in 2004 unveiled the world's first genetically modified blue rose after 14 years of study which also involved Australian researchers.

It created the flowers by implanting the gene that leads to the synthesis of the blue pigment Delphinidin in pansies. The pigment does not exist naturally in roses.

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