

Repurposed plastic shines in Xmas window display

Large flower artworks made from recycled plastic waste are the focal point of Woolworths' Christmas window displays in the retailer's top 15 stores.



The designs feature striking, oversized effigies of iconic Proteas including King Proteas and Pincushions, all handcrafted by South African women out of recycled plastic bottles, plastic cutlery and plastic hangers.

“Our aim was to create a visual representation of Woolworths’ zero packaging to landfill journey over the holiday season,” says Errol Solomon, Woolworths head of visual and store design. “We wanted to align with our Good Business Journey objectives and show how creativity and innovation can be applied to avoiding the excesses of the end of year festivities, which is something that many Woolies customers feel concerned about.”

With a Christmas design theme centred on handmade, indigenous flowers, the Visual Merchandising team saw the opportunity to partner with a local empowerment project to raise awareness of the importance of re-using, re-purposing and recycling plastics.

Facing the new challenge of designing and producing the artworks from scratch, Woolworths Visual Merchandising partnered with Essay Gifts, a South African small business, connecting artists and crafters from disadvantaged communities with no other income to high-quality corporate gifting projects.

Solomon says, “Our team worked closely with Beatrice Delpierre and the designers to develop the patterns, and it soon became apparent that we were going to need significant volumes of plastic waste.

Each King Protea flower is fashioned out of 20 used plastic bottles and 20 hangers and each medium Protea design comprises in total of more than 40 plastic bottles, forks, knives, spoons or hangers!”

2-litre milk bottles; 5 and 1.5-litre water bottles, as well as many common single-use plastic items such as cutlery and hangers, were cleverly incorporated into the designs. The plastic waste was collected at Woolworths Head Office, neighbouring schools, recycling and sorting facilities as well as via social media appeals and neighbourhood newsletters.

The festive season flowers with an important waste-free message will be on display until just after Christmas. The flowers will then be delivered to local recyclers for their next life as reusable shopping bags, duvet and pillow fillers, packaging or T-shirts.



Sylvia Rasmeni with one of the proteas.

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