



Cutting Gardens : Growing a Bouquet

The flowers you choose for your cutting garden will be a unique reflection of you! Plan and plant your own cutting garden so that you will have an ample supply of just the right blooms to fill your home without emptying your outdoor space.

Become Your Own Favorite Florist

- Spend some time researching flower images before even thinking of selecting seeds or plants. What immediately catches your eye and draws your attention? Is it a flower's color, shape, texture or some combination of the three?
- Some of the flowers that appeal to you may be difficult to grow or hard to find. Don't give up! Try to isolate the qualities you loved and replicate them in the color, shape or texture of a more accessible plant. Look over our *Cutting Garden Plant List* to find flowers that fit the bill. Now it's time to go shopping – for seeds and/or plants.
- Consider the habit of the stems and foliage as well as the color and shape of the flower. Keep an eye out for variety in textures and styles: from very fine and feathery to large and tropical; stiff and upright to coarse and leathery.
- Provide your home with a signature scent by growing the fragrant flowers that most appeal to you.
- Consider starting the bulk of your annual flowers from seed or buying in 6-packs. With more plants, you can set them out more densely which will encourage taller stems and discourage weeds and, of course, finish with more flowers.
- Don't crowd your flowering shrubs and perennials, however. These long term investments need appropriate space.

Site Location: Incorporated or Dedicated?

- When space is at a premium, you may wish to simply **incorporate** cutting garden choices into existing garden beds.
- The disadvantage with this plan is the mass of plain old green when all the flowers have been plucked. In an existing garden you must plant multiples each flower so you can cut what you want without leaving obvious holes in the garden.
- Pay close attention to soil fertility and ample water if you want plentiful plants as well as spectacular blooms.
- Most perennial and annual cut flowers will need full sun but shady beds will happily provide lots of lush foliage fillers.
- Another option is to add flowers to your herb or vegetable garden, as these are “working” rather than display gardens.
- A **dedicated** cutting garden should be sited away from your landscape focal points, but still close enough to harvest.
- The actual layout and care of a dedicated cutting garden will be very similar to a vegetable garden. Make the beds narrow enough to reach into for weeding and harvesting. Surrounding paths should be wide enough for space to work.
- Plant flowering shrubs at the north end so as to not shade out the other plants, then lay out rows of perennials grouped by expected height. Leave ample space to fill in each year with annuals by height.
- As with any garden, prepare the bed by having a soil test and adding appropriate amendments. Add a high quality compost such as *Dr. Earth Mother Land Compost*, and *Turface* improve drainage and nutrient absorption.
- Regular watering is essential to flowering, so investing in drip irrigation is a good idea. Once your plants are somewhat established, a 2” layer of mulch will also be helpful.