

## **CREATING A CUTTING GARDEN AT HOME**

**By Jan Garrett**

**If you have a nice, sunny area in your yard, why not devote some space to a cut flower garden? In our fantastic San Diego climate, you can grow your own flowers for arrangements year-round.**

**Here are some tips:**

**Try to choose flowers that have long stems, such as Lily-of-the Nile (Agapanthus), kangaroo paws (Anigozanthus), or roses. But if you really love some of the short-stemmed varieties, you can arrange them in low containers using floral foam. Grow what pleases you!**

**Perennials may not produce abundant blooms the first year, or even the second year. So plan on filling in with annuals for those first few years, while giving the perennials time to mature. Once they establish, they will give you considerable “flower-power.”**

**Prepare your soil for good drainage and mulch well to keep the soil from drying out too quickly. Fertilize regularly and remove any spent blooms to prevent the plants from going to seed. Cut your flowers when it’s cool—they’ll last longer. Remove any foliage that will be beneath the water in the vase. A drop of bleach or a commercial preservative in the water will improve staying-power.**

**Most flowers will last longer if cut at the proper time. In most cases this is when the buds are just beginning to open and showing a bit of color. Flowers will vary in how long they last after cutting, of course. In many cases, you can expect them to last for about a week indoors, sometimes longer. When you’ve grown them yourself, you know they will be fresh.**

**Use your flowers—that’s why you’re growing them! Cut them regularly. Pruning will encourage a steady stream of blooms. If you start with the idea that these flowers are set aside to be enjoyed indoors, you will not feel guilty about taking away from your outdoor**

**display. If you have the room, it might be a good idea to set aside a specific bed just for cutting. A raised bed is ideal, allowing for easy access when tending or cutting. If your space is limited, of course you can go ahead and incorporate your cutting flowers in your regular beds, between whatever else you might have growing.**

**Select plants that will offer blooms in all seasons, providing some color all year long. Do some research, or see what is available at Briggs at various times of the year. Mix in a few scented flowers, such as tuberose (*Polianthes*) or lavender (*Lavandula*). Consider adding flowers that dry well, such as strawflowers (*Helichrysum*), Statice (*Limonium perezii*), and even roses. Make some potpourri!**

**And don't forget about 'filler' foliage. Many shrubs, or even tree-cuttings, are suitable for adding to your flowers, especially when they are blooming also. Think how impressed the visitors from "back-east" would be with an arrangement of birds-of-paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) with some foliage from one of your hedging plants, perhaps *Pittosporum*.**

**Many sun-grown shrubs and perennials offer contrasts in arrangements. Dusty Miller (*Senecio cineraria*) gives a silvery look. Tea tree (*Leptospermum*), a winter bloomer, comes in various colors and is long-lived in a vase. Wax flower (*Chamelaucium*) is a delicate addition to roses, lilies or ranunculus.**

**Here is a partial list of suitable-for-cutting flowering plants offered by Briggs:**

**Achillea (Yarrow)**

**Agapanthus (Lily of the Nile)**

**Ageratum (Floss Flower)**

**Alstroemeria (Peruvian Lily)**

**Anemone (Wind Flower)**

**Anigozanthus (Kangaroo Paw)**

**Antirrhinum (Snapdragon)**

**Argyranthemum (Chrysanthemum, Marguerite)**

**Boronia**

**Calendula (English marigold)**

**Camellia**  
**Chamaeaulaucium (Waxflower)**  
**Clematis**  
**Clivia (Kaffir lily)**  
**Coreopsis**  
**Cosmea (Cosmos)**  
**Dianthus (Sweet William)**  
**Diosma (Breath of Heaven)**  
**Digitalis (Foxglove)**  
**Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)**  
**Gardenia**  
**Gerbera (Gerber Daisy)**  
**Godetia (Satin Flower)**  
**Hebe**  
**Helichrysum (Strawflower)**  
**Hemerocallis (Daylily)**  
**Heuchera (Coral Flower)**  
**Hibiscus**  
**Hydrangea**  
**Iberis (Candytuft)**  
**Iris**  
**Kniphofia (Red-Hot Poker)**  
**Lavatera (Mallow)**  
**Lavendula (Lavender)**  
**Leonotis (Lion's Ear)**  
**Limonium (Sea Lavender)**  
**Papavar (Iceland Poppy)**  
**Romnea (Matilja, Fried Egg Poppy)**  
**Rose**  
**Rudbeckia (Cone Flower)**  
**Salvia**  
**Scabiosa**  
**Stephanotis (Madagascar Jasmine)**

**Stock**

**Strelitzia reginae (Bird of Paradise)**

**Polianthus (Tuberose)**

**Zantedeschia (Calla Lily)**

**Additionally, here are some shrubs and ferns suitable for combining with cut flowers.**

**Most likely, many others will work as well—try experimenting.**

**Acacia**

**Asparagus setaceus (Asparagus Fern)**

**Buxus (boxwood)**

**Camellia**

**Cordyline**

**Hedera (Ivies)**

**Nephrolepis cordifolia (Sword Fern)**

**Podocarpus**

**Rhumora adianiformis (Leather Fern)**

**Strelitzia reginae (Bird of Paradise)**

**We are fortunate to have so many varieties of plants from which to select in our area. We all enjoy the sight of a beautiful garden. And it can be especially satisfying to be able to bring some of that beauty indoors, or to share it with others by bringing a “home-grown” arrangement to a friend or relative.**

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