



THE FLOWER ARRANGER'S GARDEN

By Brenda Visser

Flowers and greenery add to the quality of life. Perhaps this is why so many of us love the summer months. We enjoy warm temperatures, green leaves and grass, and the wide array of colour that we see outside. Gardeners, especially, delight in the abundance of the season. It is a pleasure to bring your own cut flowers indoors to cheer up a dull corner or brighten a space on a rainy day.

Many cut flowers are easy to grow in your own backyard.

If you wish to grow flowers to be enjoyed indoors, gardeners rely on species they can count on year after year, such as Sunflowers (*Helianthus*), Cosmos and

Zinnias. These plants can be started from annual seeds directly sown in the garden once the danger of frost is passed. They have strong stems, cheery faces, and good longevity, all qualities that contribute to their long lasting appeal. There is a wide variety to choose from. Some fun examples are Teddy Bear Sunflowers, Sunset Cosmos, or Green Envy Zinnias. These are a great place to start if you have never grown cut flowers before. Other annuals that need a sunny location like these, and can be directly sown in the garden, include Snapdragons (*Antirrhinum majus*), Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), Larkspur (*Delphinium Consolida*), Candytuft (*Iberis amera*), and Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella damascena*).

I love growing Calendula in their bright yellows and oranges. Sometimes called "Pot Marigold," they are a different species than the common Marigold (*Tagetes*). Calendulas have longer stems and larger flowers, and none of the characteristic scent. They are similar in appearance to the hothouse-grown Gerbera Daisy, and look fantastic in any bouquet.

For some flair in autumn, try growing Amaranthus, Cockscomb (*Celosia*) or Ornamental Grass.

Don't stop at annual seeds, there are many other plants to grow for cut

flowers. Perennials to grow could include Coneflowers (*Echinacea*), Sweet William (*Dianthus*), Shasta or Painted Daisies (*Chrysanthemum*). Some perennials that work well in bouquets are understated, such as the spring-blooming Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*). I often use Hosta leaves in my cut flower bouquets. They are great fillers, and last a long time. Most seed catalogues will note which plants are good for cut flowers, and a local garden center can also provide helpful tips.

Many flowering bulbs are excellent choices to bring indoors. My personal favourites are the long-stemmed Allium (in the onion family), late-blooming Tulips, or Daffodils (*Narcissus*). These would be common choices, but do not be afraid to try something less mainstream. The best way to know if it works, is to try it! So much of gardening is trial and error, and site conditions can vary considerably. What works in your garden may not thrive in mine.

Having some plants specifically for cutting and bringing indoors extends the beauty of the season. When it comes to cutting for indoors, none of my flowers or plants are safe! I will use sprigs of branches from my shrubs, such as Spirea (*Spirea japonica*), Lilac (*Syringa*), or Hydrangea. Dogwood (*Cornus*) branches are beautiful in the autumn with their distinctive bark, and Willows (*Salix*) can offer year-round interest as well. These kinds of cut flowers are called woody ornamentals, and have wonderful appeal. Sometimes branches of flowering shrubs can be cut before the blossoms come out and brought indoors to continue their bloom. Forsythia cut in early spring is one example. Try some today! [LH](#)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gardening is one of the pure joys of spring! Each year we all want to improve what we offer in our garden or try something new. If you are not sure of a species of a plant or bush/tree that may work in your garden, get advice from a local gardening club in your area or visit one of the many garden centers that can offer advice. Landscape companies can also help depending upon your needs as well.