



Bouquets of flowers you grow yourself are a beautiful way to bring a bit of your garden inside or to share it with others. You can put almost any bloom into a bouquet, including wildflowers, but the most popular cutting flowers have long, sturdy stems and they hold up well for days (or even weeks) after they've been harvested. Many cutting flowers are also fragrant, treating you to another sensory experience from your garden. **Cutting flowers can fit into almost garden or even in containers.** And with a little planning, you can have a steady harvest of vase-worthy cutting flowers from spring to fall.

Keys To Success

Full Sun

Most cut flowers grow strongest, bloom most profusely, and stay blemish-free in full sun and well-drained soil. To ensure all of them get plenty of sun, set the shortest plants at the front of the bed and the tallest at the back.

Water Wisely

Plants that are dehydrated produce smaller and fewer flowers, but soggy soil can cause root rot. Once cut flowers are established, water them deeply but infrequently. Soak the soil, not the leaves, because wet foliage is susceptible to disfiguring fungal diseases.

Succession Planting

To extend the harvest time for spring and summer annuals, plant a second and even third batch of fresh seedlings two to three weeks after you put in the first.

Pick Often

Use sharp, clean pruners or scissors to cut flowers for bouquets. Make the cuts on a slant to increase surface area for water uptake. The best time to harvest is when the first few buds are open but not all of them. That lets the remaining buds continue opening in the vase. Be sure to cut off all of the blooming flowers each week to prevent them from going to seed, which signals the plant to slow or stop production of new blossoms.

10 Cutting Garden Favorites

Bishop's lace (*Ammi majus*)

Flowers: Clusters of tiny white blossoms

Bloom time: Late spring to fall

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden after frost.

Tip: The delicate foliage and flowers (*like wild Queen Anne's lace*) fill in around bolder blooms in bouquets.

Cosmos (*Cosmos*)

Flowers: Single layers of red, pink, and white petals around yellow centers

Bloom time: Late spring to fall

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden after frost.

Tip: Help keep the stems straight as they grow taller by enclosing them with twine tied to stakes.

Gladiolus (*Gladiolus*)

Flowers: Orange, pink, purple, red, white, yellow, and multicolor frilled petals around tubular blooms

Bloom time: Late spring to early summer

Start: Plant corms (*like small bulbs*) in spring when nighttime temperatures average above 45 degrees F.

Tip: Taller varieties can reach 5 feet tall or more and need to be staked.

Globe Amaranth (*Gomphrena*)

Flowers: Lilac, pink, red, or white ball-shaped clusters

Bloom time: Early summer to frost

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden after frost.

Tip: Plant as close as 8 inches apart to encourage growth of long stems.

Love-in-a-Mist (*Nigella*)

Flowers: Frilly blue, purple, red, pink, or white petals in single or double rows

Bloom time: Late spring to early summer

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden in fall or after frost.

Tip: If you let a few plants go to seed at the end of the growing season, love-in-a-mist will replant itself for the following season.



CUTTING FLOWERS *continued*



10 Cutting Garden Favorites cont.

Shasta Daisies (*Leucanthemum*)

Flowers: White petals around yellow centers

Bloom time: Late spring to fall

Start: Plant seedlings in spring or early fall

Tip: Daisies are perennials, so plant them where you want them to stay from one season to the next.

Statice (*Limonium*)

Flowers: Pink, purple, or white funnel-shaped flowers open facing up on stems that reach 2 to 3 feet tall

Bloom time: Late spring to early summer

Start: Buy transplants or sow seeds indoors about six weeks before last frost and then transplant outside after last frost.

Tip: Statice works well in dried as well as fresh arrangements.

Sweet Peas (*Lathyrus*)

Flowers: Frilly blue, pink, purple, or white petals with a sweet fragrance

Bloom time: Early to late spring

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden 4 weeks before last frost. Seedlings survive light frost.

Tip: Old-fashioned varieties are attractive but can burn out quickly when temperatures rise. Newer, more heat-tolerant varieties last longer into late spring.

Winged Everlasting (*Ammobium*)

Flowers: White petals form cups surrounding yellow centers

Bloom time: Late spring to early fall

Start: Buy transplants or sow seeds indoors about six weeks before the last frost in spring and then transplant outside after last frost.

Tip: Plant in soil that's low in fertility but drains well.

Zinnias (*Zinnia*)

Flowers: Orange, red, yellow, or white petals with yellow centers

Bloom time: Late spring to early fall

Start: Sow seeds directly in the garden after frost.

Tip: Look for mildew-resistant varieties that hold up when humidity levels rise and plant them where air can circulate through and keep the leaves dry.

SHARING IS CARING

Cut flower gardens often produce more flowers than you can bring into your home. Bring extra bouquets to senior communities, hospitals, and nursing homes. Your homegrown flowers are sure to brighten someone's day.

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[PHS McLean Library Cutting Gardens Subject Guide](#)

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