

Bringing in beauty from the outside



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Master Gardener

Question: I love the look of cut flowers in my home but don't want to destroy the look of my landscape. Any tips or ideas for having my cake and eating it too?

Answer: Yes! Have you considered having a cutting garden?

This garden would exist exclusively for the purpose of bringing beautiful cut flowers inside and would not interfere with the flowers in your landscape.

Considerations for a cutting garden are the location, the types, sizes and colors of flowers, their care and maintenance and maximizing production.

Usually, a cutting garden is planted in an inconspicuous and/or out-of-the-way area. This eliminates the problem of spoiling the look of the flowers in your landscape by frequent cuttings.

Find an area of your garden that is inconspicuous. Where do you keep your garbage cans? Do you have an area with storage sheds? An area where a boat or RV is parked? A neglected corner you keep meaning to do something with, but haven't got around to developing?

Putting your cutting garden close to areas like this will help disguise and possibly enhance them. Most of us have some less-than-scenic



PHOTO BY BONNIE COURTER

Dahlias are considered excellent cutting flowers.

areas of our yards that are necessary but do not contribute to the landscaping.

If you do not have an out-of-sight or inconspicuous area, it's easy to create one. Consider planting a few fast-growing shrubs, climbing roses or other lovely flowers to either block or improve the view of your cutting garden.

If you do not have a large enough yard to dedicate part of it to cut flowers, consider planting them in between your vegetables.

When the location question is answered you are ready to put your ideas on paper. What flowers to select? Well,

my first selections would be my favorites. After that, choose colors and types to complement these.

Draw a plan of what your garden will contain. Consider perennials, annuals and bulbs. The plan should include the size, color and bloom time of each type of flower. Group plants with similar needs together.

When planting a lot of the same type of flower, stagger planting times. The reason for this is that as the first planting dies out, the next will be ready to cut.

Now to prepare the soil. After weeding the area completely, work some compost into the soil.

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After planting, it is a good idea to mulch. Mulching helps retain moisture and will significantly cut down on weeding.

These final tips will help you extend the life and maximize the beauty of the flowers you have grown.

- To maximize blooms, dead-head regularly, water and fertilize well.

- Do not cut flowers when it's hot outside. Flowers are best cut early in the morning or in the cool of the evening.

- When cutting stems,

use clean, sharp tools. Tools that are not clean spread bacteria and cut flowers will not last as long.

- Take buckets of water with you while harvesting to put stems in immediately after cutting.

- Keep stems in warm water for at least an hour before arranging. Use a flower preservative to prevent the growth of bacteria.

- Only the stems should be under water. Remove any leaves or

other foliage that will be submerged.

Excellent cutting flowers include: yarrow, bellflowers, carnations, iris, roses, salvia, dahlias, zinnias, gladiolus, marigolds, sunflowers and bachelor buttons just to name a few.

Do you have a gardening question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners via email at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, by phone at 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.