

Der Holcomb, FCS Agent
Alexander County

The Cut Flower Garden





Don't want to cut
your flowers in the
gardens?

Start a cut flower garden!

What is Specialty Cut Flowers?

- "Garden Flowers"
 - Rustic look
 - Any flowers other than traditional cut flowers such as chrysanthemum, roses, and carnations.
 - Includes: Annuals, Perennials, Bulbs, and Woody cuts



Things to considers...



- Good Stem Length (at least 18 inches)
- Flower presentation on the stem
- Hardy in the region
- Disease and insect resistance
- High yield
- Additional options: dried or preserved floral opportunities

Getting Started:

- Choose a full sun location with good drainage
- Plant like you would a vegetable garden and not like landscaping
- Plants closer together like be taller but trade off in flower sizes
- Soil test and split applications
 - Once pre-plant, and after growth



Spring Flowers:

- Tulips
- Irises
- Ranunculus
- Sweet Williams/Dianthus
- Daffodils
- Snap dragons
- Flowering branches/woody cut_s





Tulips

- Soil pH: 6.0-6.5
- Plant in fall (October)
 - Vernalization (need night temps: of 32-34 with limited sunlight)
- Replant every year to reduce disease pressure
- 6-8 inches deep in trenches; 4-6 inches apart

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Snap Dragons

- Crop time: 9-12 weeks from plant
- Must trellis
 - Hortonova (square netting)
- Spaced: 2-3 inches apart
- Soil pH: 5.0-6.0
- Biggest pest issues:
 - Disease: Botrytis, Mildew, Ruse
 - Pest: Leaf miners, aphids, thripes





- Dahlias
- Zinnias
- Sunflowers
- Tuberoses
- Baptisias
- Lisianthus
- Gomphrenias
- Herbs (Basils, rosemary, etc)
- Larkspur
- Statics
- Delphinium

Summer Flowers

Dahlias

- Hundreds of varieties
- Continuous bloom
- Plant after first frost
- 16-24 inches apart
- 6-8 inches deep
- Tubers can be propagated for more plants
- Must be staked
 - Florida Weave



Lisianthus

- Soil pH: 6.5-7.2
- Crop time: 14-16 weeks from plugs
- Require netting
 - Spacing: 3-6 inches apart
- Long shelf life



Sunflowers

- Generally 50-70 days to maturity
 - direct seeds because of central tap root
- Size of bloom is affected by space
 - Wider spacing = larger bloom, thicker stem
- Downy mildew
 - Select resistant varieties
- Suggested Companies:
 - Sunflower Selection
 - Sakata



Fall Flowers

- Celosias
- Golden Rods
- Asclepias (Oscars)
- Pumpkins on a stick
- Mums
- Echinacea
- Ornamental Cabbage/Kale
- Black-eyed Susans



Ornamental Kale/Cabbage

- Start seeds inn Mid summer (3 months before first autumn frost)
- Kale: 12-18 inches
- Cabbage: 4-6 inches (encourage stem growth)
- Requires netting
- Pest: Aphids & Cabbage Loopers



Harvesting

- Timing is crucial for each species
- Early morning best
- Minimize diseases
- Avoid high light and temperature
- Shade to cool temperatures



Selecting cut flowers

- Ask yourself these two questions:
 - Is the flower at the correct stage of maturity for harvest?
 - Is this flower and stem sufficient quality to justify harvest?



Stage of Maturity

Table 1

Guidelines for Optimal Harvest Stage of Maturity of Specialty Cut Flowers for Direct Sale to the Final Consumer.

Common Name	Stage of Maturity
Aster	flowers fully open
Astilbe	one-half of the florets open
Bachelor's Button, Cornflower	flowers just beginning to open
Calendula	flowers fully open
Cockscomb	one-half of florets open
Coreopsis	flowers fully open
Dahlia	flowers fully open
Delphinium	one-half of florets open
Dutch Iris	when flower buds are colored
Freesia	when first bud is fully open
Gladiolus	one to two florets fully open
Globe Thistle	when flowers are half open
Goldenrod	one-half of florets open
Heather	one-half of florets open
Hollyhock	one-third of florets open
Larkspur	two to five florets open
Lisianthus	three to five open flowers
Liatris, Gayfeather	one-half of florets open
Love-in-a-Mist, Nigella	when flowers are open
Marigold	when flowers are almost fully open

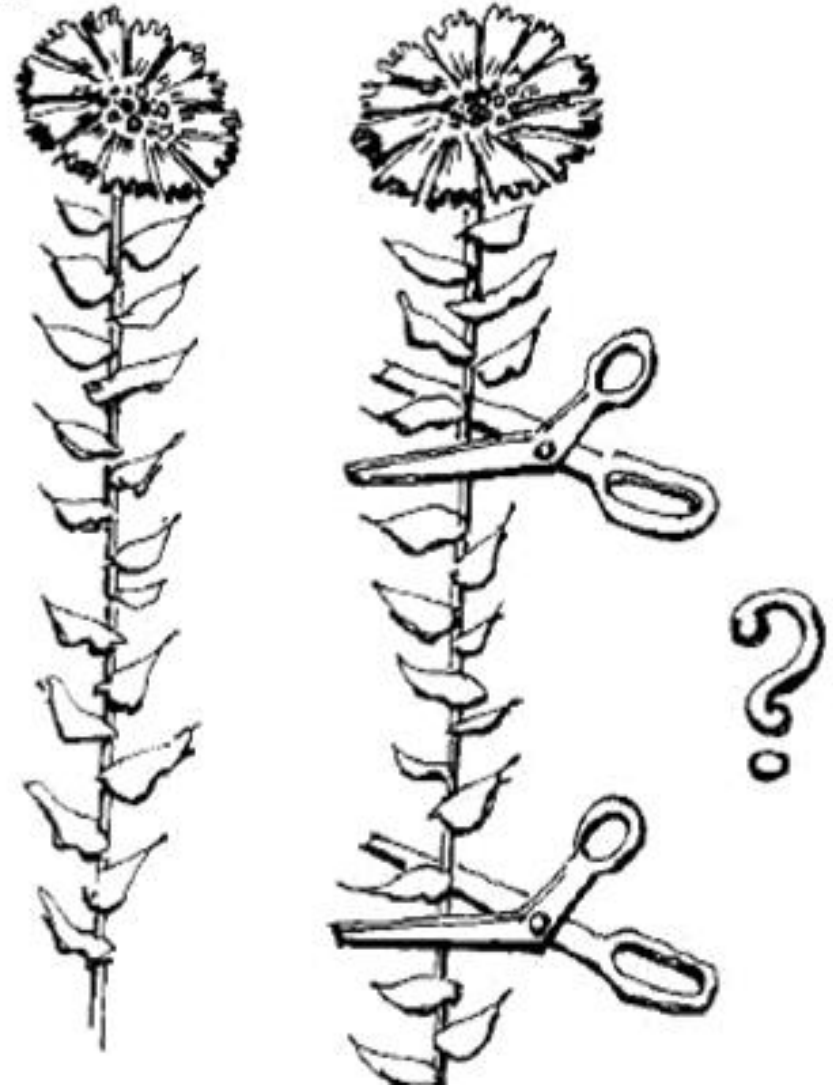
Peony	puffy, colored buds
Peruvian Lily, Alstroemeria	one to three florets open
Phlox	one-half of florets open
Pincushion Flower, Scabiosa	flowers half open
Purple Cone Flower	flowers almost fully open
Sea Holly	flowers fully open
Snapdragon	one-third of florets open
Statice—annual	one-half of bracts open
Statice—Sea Lavender	when majority of flowers are open
Sunflower	flowers almost fully open
Sweet Pea	one-third of florets open
Tuberose	one-half of florets open
Yarrow	when flowers are almost fully open
Zinnia	when flowers are almost fully open

*extracted from: Commercial Specialty Cut Flower Production "*Harvest System: The Collection of Activities for Gathering and Handling Field-Grown Specialty Cut Flowers*" - Kansas State University

Cutting

- Where do you cut?
 - Longer stem with flower VS Longer Stem with plant?
 - Longer stem with flower: increase salability and increase income
 - Longer stem with plants: allows multiple cutting
- Always use a sharp knife or shear to harvest

Figure 3. Where Should This Flowering Stem be Cut?



Post Harvesting

- Make nice clean angular cuts
- Condition flowers
 - Stripping leaves and leaving in water before re-cutting stems
 - Split woody stems
- Use proper tools
- Use clean vase
 - Wash with 10% bleach water



Floral Preservatives

- Floral preservative is a mixture of:
 - Sucrose (sugar)
 - Acidifier
 - An inhibitor of microorganisms
 - A respiratory inhibitors
- Floral Preservative packets—mix with one quart water
- DIY:
 - 2 tablespoon of lemon juic
 - 1 table spon of sugar
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of bleach
 - One quart of waarm water





Sanitation – Clean Buckets



Arranging Flowers

- Color Selections
 - Color Theory
 - Harmonious Colors
 - Contrasting Colors



Vases/Containers



QUESTIONS?

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