Cut Flower Gardens

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Driving Force
- Consumers are wanting to know how, where and who their goods are produced. Flowers are no exception!
- Cut Flowers are Fun!

Getting Started
- Questions to Consider
  1. How much space do you have?
  2. What is the sunlight like?
  3. Water source

*You may not have a perfect spot. Aim for the best location YOU can manage.
1. Stake your plot
   • Keep production and efficiency in mind.
   • Choose a width that allows you to reach the center when standing on each side.
   • 48 inches wide.
   • Permanent pathways

2. Perform a Soil Test
   • Help to better understand what is going on underground.
   • Will indicate what minerals your plots are lacking.
   • County OSU Extension office will be able to assist you with sampling and where to send the sample.

3. How many plants can be planted?
   • Weeds will be an issue.
   • Plant seeds tightly for vigorous vertical growth.
   • Depending on the size of a full grown annual will determine how many to plant.
   • 9x9 inch the most common spacing. Works for most annual cut flowers.
   • 12x12 inch best for bulkier growing plants that branch out.
1. TenderAnnuals
   - Great for beginners.
   - Minimal investments.
   - Fastest growing plants.
   - Sow in early Spring, bloom in the summer, will set seed and die when the weather cools in autumn.
2. Hardy Annuals
• Short lived plants.
• Handle some frost.
• Fade when the weather gets too hot.
• Plant in the fall for early spring blooms.

What to Plant?

3. Biennials
• Plant in late Summer.
• Grow foliage to aid in making it through the winter.
• Will bloom in 6-8 weeks. Set seed for another crop, then die off.

What to Plant?

Johnnyseleceeds.com
Sweet Pea Yarrow Larkspur Poppy Scabiosa
What to Plant?

4. Bulbs, Corms and Tubers
- Slightly different in structure.
- Grow the same way.
- Corms and Tubers generally are not winter hardy.

What to Plant?

5. Perennials
- Plants that die back to the ground during cooler weather. Lives through the winter and returns each spring.
- Gain in size and flowering ability each year.
- Bloom from early summer through autumn.
What to Plant?
6. Others
• Vines
• Shrubs
• Flowering Trees

Succession Planting
• Sowing multiple smaller sets of annual seeds a few weeks apart.
• Spreads out planting and harvesting over a much larger window of time.
Succession Planting
• Stagger blooming throughout the season.
• Types of Blooms:
  1. Cut and Come Again
     - Plant a month apart
  2. Medium Producers
     - Shorter blooming window
  3. One- Hit Wonders
     - Bloom rapidly all at once
     - Need planted every 2 weeks.

Maximizing Small Spaces
1. Plant continual bloomers.
2. You don’t have to always follow the plant label for spacing.
3. Trellis vining growers.
4. Grow plants in containers, wooden boxes or in a raised bed.

Plot Management
1. Fertile Soil
   • Everything begins with your soil!
   • Soil preparation is an investment into the future.
   • Compost
2. Water
   • Key to happy flowers!
   • Evenly moist soil, but you don’t want them soggy.
   • Drip irrigation and soaker hoses.
3. Weeds
   • Weeding is one of the biggest time draining problems when growing plants.
   • Landscaping fabric or mulch for beds and pathways.
Starting Seeds

- Know the frost dates
- Choose the right containers
  - Seed Flats/Cell Packs
    - Perforated ones are handy.
    - Numerous sizes
  - Plastic Covers
  - Drainage trays

3. Use Good Soil
   - When starting seeds you want to use a seedling mix.

4. Provide Bottom Heat
   - Heating mats provide consistent heat to the bottom of the tray.
   - Trays need to be kept warm and moist.
   - If you are using hothouse/greenhouse you will not need to provide bottom heat.

5. Plenty of Light
   - Ideal: greenhouse or sunroom
   - Florescent light ballast
   - Cool and warm bulbs
   - 14-16 hours of light
   - 2-3 inches above plants
Flower Support

- Creating some type of support will help the flower from being knocked down during heavy rain or strong winds.
- 4 Common Methods
  - Corralling
  - Netting
  - Staking
  - Trellising

Flower Support

1. Corralling
- Good for tall bulky plants.
- Post and string corral around plants.
- May have to use several strings at various heights.
2. Netting
   • Good for plants that produce an abundance of branching stems.
   • Install netting before plants are 1 foot tall.
   • Secure netting at about 18 inches above the ground.

3. Staking
   • Good for large, bulky plants.
   • Stake when plants are 1 foot tall.
   • Use 3 to 4 foot tall stakes. Place them in the ground a few inches from the base of the plant.
   • Loosely tie the stems to the stake using twine.
   • As the plant grows continue to stake.

4. Trellising
   • Great for vigorous climbers.
   • Use
     – Wooden structure
     – Metal fencing
Caring for Cut Flowers

1. Clean and Sanitize the buckets and vases before use.
   1. Clean enough to drink from.
2. Harvest during the coolest hours of the day.
   1. Early morning or late evening when the plants are the most plump and hydrated.
3. Pick blooms at the right stage.
   1. Harvest before the flower is fully open and the bees have gotten to them.
   2. Once pollinates the flower is triggered to go to seed and the vase life decreases.
4. Place stems into cool, clean water.
   1. While harvesting remove the lower leaves from the stem.
   2. Minimize wilting and there is less foliage to rehydrate.
5. Let the stems rest.
   1. Place in a cool spot out of direct sun.
   2. Rest for a few hours to allow the foliage to rehydrate.
6. Add floral preservatives.
   1. Floral Food!
7. Recut stems.
   1. At an angle with sharp pruners.
   2. Encourages the flower to continue to drink.
Resources
- Floret Farm’s Cut Flower Garden
- The Right Size Flower Garden
- Cool Flowers