

Native Beauty

Flower Arranging with Native Plants

Why *Native* Cut Flowers?

Many native plants can be used as cut flowers to create beautiful floral arrangements. In addition, a garden of native flowers and shrubs will bring bees, butterflies, and birds to your yard. Native plants have co-evolved with our native wildlife and can best provide them with the food, habitat, and cover they require for survival.

You can cut some flowers for your own use and share the rest with wildlife. Plants will often bloom again after their first flowers are harvested, providing a new supply of pollen and nectar for pollinating insects. Shrubs also benefit from pruning, as they usually flower and fruit on new young branches.

Many of our bees, butterflies, birds and mammals are declining as a result of lost habitat and the lack of nutritious food offered by native plants. Many animals, in fact, cannot survive on non-native flora. On a global scale, the earth is on the brink of the 6th mass extinction. By planting native wildflowers and trees, gardeners can enjoy indoor bouquets of gorgeous native wildflowers and, at the same time, insure that native flora and fauna continue to grace their lives.

Ten Best Native Plants for Flower Arranging

1. Prairie Blazing Star
Liatris pycnostachya
2. Purple Coneflower & Pale Purple Coneflower
Echinacea purpurea and *Echinacea pallida*
3. Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa
4. Black-eyed Susan, Brown-eyed Susan and Sweet Black-eyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta, *Rudbeckia triloba* and *Rudbeckia subtomentosa*
5. Foxglove Beard Tongue
Penstemon digitalis
6. Goldenrod
Solidago species
7. Aster
Symphyotrichum (Aster) species
8. Blue Wild Indigo
Baptisia australis
9. Sneezeweed or Helen's Flower
Helenium autumnale

10. Yellow Coneflower
Ratibida pinnata

Five Best Grasses for Bouquets

1. Side-oats Grama
Bouteloua curtipendula
2. Prairie Dropseed
Sporobolus heteroleus
3. Indian Grass
Sorghastrum nutans
4. Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardii
5. Bottlebrush Grass
Elymus hystrix (Hystrix patula)

Tips on Harvesting & Care of Cut Flowers and Grasses

1. Clean tools, pails & vases.
2. Harvest early in the day (or at dusk).
3. Water Quality: Avoid hard, softened and chlorinated water.
Instead, use distilled water, water from a dehumidifier or rainwater.
4. Floral Preservative: Many flowers do not do better with preservatives.
I recommend conditioning with distilled water with 1-teaspoon chlorine bleach per gallon to initially reduce bacteria, but recommend using only distilled water in the vase.

Sources of Native Plants

See dnr.wi.gov; search for “Native Plant Nurseries” and “Restoration Consultants”

Other sources:

Ask local nature centers & chapters of Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes. They often have plant sales at which you can purchase native plants and also can provide information on local nurseries that carry native plants of excellent quality.

Mariette Nowak, February 2018