

## **Floral Design & Cutting Garden Tips: Seasonal, Local & Sustainable with Debra Prinzing | [www.debraprinzing.com](http://www.debraprinzing.com)**

During each month of the year the garden has something wonderful to offer floral designers. Enhance your cut flower arrangements with ingredients harvested from your own backyard, the flowers grown and sold by farmer's market vendors and even the "weeds" gleaned from wild places. Flowers featured today are gathered from mine and friends' gardens and Northwest flower farms; projects are from *The 50 Mile Bouquet*, my book with photographer David Perry.

### **The basic elements of a floral arrangement**

**FOLIAGE/GREENERY:** Since I don't use florist foam in my designs, I like to start the arrangement by adding foliage first. Use the foliage texture to fill the opening of your vase and stabilize the stems added later.

**DIVA FLOWER:** These blooms are the leading stars of a bouquet. Look for flowers that the eye reads as a distinct shape or form (they can be feminine or graphic; circles, petals arranged around a bold center, floret-shapes or balls). I work with uneven numbers (3 or 5, depending on the size of the vase) and the arrangement usually looks more appealing if the stem lengths are varied. *\*In the winter*, when flowers are quiet, the "divas" tend to be mostly green, even dramatic foliage. If you have flowers at all, they are fleeting but beautiful (hellebores, camellias, forced branches).

**LINES/VERTICAL:** Can be created with flowers, branches or foliage. The idea is to add Line and Vertical elements as the design's 'exclamation point' to break up the texture of Diva Flowers.

**SECONDARY/FILLER:** This is the embroidery -- the arrangement's lacy and ruffled textures. These tiny, dreamy blooms, herbs and perennials fill gaps and spaces between the Diva Flowers.

**SPILLERS/COLLARS:** Flowers, vines and foliage play the role of connecting the overall floral arrangement to the look and feel of your vessel. Romantic Spiller ingredients drape and cascade over the rim of the vase. Collar ingredients are like a "ruff" that encircles the vase's opening and gives the arrangement a tailored, finished look.

### **Color ideas:**

**Tonal/Monochromatic:** One single color theme or variations of one color theme (foliage can be part of this or you can just use green foliage)

**Contrasting:** Color "pairs" that reside across from one another on the classic artist's color wheel. Such as: Red and Green (in the plant world, this can be slightly reinterpreted, such as maroon flowers with blue-green foliage); Yellow and Purple; Blue and Orange

**Analogous:** These are colors that are next to one another on the color wheel. Red, Yellow and Orange are analogous; Blue, Green and Violet are analogous. Remember that the vase color can also play a role in this scheme.

### **Care tips:**

1. Always use fresh, room-temperature or slightly cooler water in a clean vessel.
2. Cut flower, foliage and other stems with clean floral shears or a sharp knife. Cut at a 45-degree angle to increase the surface area that will "drink" vase water.
3. Remove foliage from the portion of the stem that will be under water.
4. Display the vase in a cool area away from direct sunlight. Change the water every day or two. Re-cut the stems (only cut 1/4-1/2 inch from the bottom) and remove random spoiled stems. *A note about flower preservative. I don't use it myself, because I'm trying to avoid chemically-based products. But you may wish to experiment with a small amount of water-soluble preservative.*

Following is a partial list – by month – of seasonal flowers you can grow for floral design:

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**January~** Lady Slipper Orchids, Amaryllis, Snowdrops, Witch hazel, Filbert branches (contorted, standard), Willow branches (curly and colored), Birch branches, *Abeliophyllum distichum* (white forsythia), *Sarcococca* (sweet box)

**February~** Cymbidium orchids, Leucojum, *Chimonanthus praecox* (wintersweet) Pussy Willow, Forsythia, Edgeworthia, Corylopsis (winter hazel), Quince, *Stachyurus praecox*, Choisya (Mexican orange), *Daphne odora*, Forsythia branches, Eleagnus foliage, Cardoon foliage

**March~** *Helleborus foetidus*, *H. argutifolius*, *H. orientalis*, *Euphorbia robbiae* or *E. 'Fireglow'*, Quince, Flowering Plum branches, Wallflowers, Anemones, Daffodils, Icelandic Poppies, *Lunaria annua*, Rosemary, Artichoke blooms, Dianthus, Deutzia, Iris, Lady's Mantle, Lupine, Ninebark foliage, Ranunculus, *Anchusa azurea* (Italian bugloss)

**April ~** *Helleborus orientalis*, Hyacinth, Fritillaria, Muscari, Ranunculus, Peony/Lily Tulips, Lilacs, Icelandic Poppies, Scilla (bluebells), *Viburnum x burkwoodii*, Bleeding Heart, Spiraea

**May~** Peonies (tree and herbaceous), Parrot Tulips, Lily of the Valley, Allium, Eremurus (foxtail lily), Columbine, Lupine, Campanula, Foxglove, Snowball Viburnum, Mock orange, Flowering Dogwood

**June~** Garden Roses, Sweet Peas, Lilies (Trumpet), Allium, Calla Lilies, Delphinium, Astilbe, Queen Anne's Lace, Unripe Raspberries/blackberries on the vine, Unripe fruit (apples, plums,

peaches) on the branch, Alpine Strawberries, Calendula, Helenium, Hosta leaves, Nigella, Ornamental Grasses, Phlox, Scabiosa, Sanguisorba (Burnet), Yarrow

**July~** Oriental Lilies, Clematis, Calla Lilies, Butterfly Gladiolas, Snapdragons, Lisianthus, Perennials (every variety), Stephanotis, Delphinium, Echinops, Eupatorium, Grape Vines/Foliage, Monkshood, Queen Anne's Lace, Rudbeckia

**August~** Sunflowers, Agapanthus, Zinnias, Celosia, Tuberoses, Cardoons, *Hydrangea 'Limelight'*, Currant tomatoes, Rubus foliage, Baptisia foliage

**September~** Dahlias, 'Aged' Hydrangeas, Monkshood, Hypericum, Grasses, Amaranth, Chocolate Cosmos, Ornamental Peppers, Viburnum Berries, Smoke bush, Sweet Autumn Clematis, Hops, Beautyberry, Caryopteris, Celosia, Chestnut branches, Currant, Helenium

**October~** Bittersweet, Broom Corn, Grasses, Snowberries, Mums, Rose hips, Helenium, Fall Leaves, Crabapples, Chinese Lanterns, Heirloom squash, Gourds, Beautyberry, Nerine, Gourds, Pumpkins, Squash (fruit, vines, foliage), Crabapple branches

**November~** Mums, Flowering cabbage, Kale, Crabapples, Rosehips, Coralberry, Heirloom apples, Quince, Snowberry, Twig Dogwood, Weigela foliage, Viburnum foliage and berries

**December~** Paper whites, Cattleya Orchids, *Camellia sasanqua*, Evergreen

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boughs, *Magnolia grandiflora* leaves,  
Cardoon leaves, Rosemary

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