

Cut Flowers for Garden-Style Arrangements: Growing Flowers, Foliage & Edibles for the Vase

By Claire Jones

Claire Jones Landscapes | The Garden Diaries

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This guide highlights reliable, beautiful plants grown specifically for cutting—flowers, foliage, seed pods, and herbs. These selections are chosen for productivity, vase life, and their ability to create loose, natural, garden-style arrangements straight from your own beds. I garden in zone 7 in Northern Maryland.

How to Use This Guide

- Plants are listed in alphabetical order
- Includes **annuals, perennials, bulbs, and herbs.**
- Notes focus on **when to cut, how to cut, and why they work**
- Many plants reseed or rebloom when cut regularly
- Growing for cutting is different than growing for display—cut early and often

Book Resources

Starting & Saving Seeds by Julie Thompson-Adolf

Cool Flowers by Lisa Mason Ziegler

Cut Flower Garden by Erin Benzakein

Floret Farm's A Year In Flower by Erin Benzakein

From Seed to Boom by Eileen Powell

Martha's Flowers by Martha Stewart with Kevin Sharkey

The Art of Flowers by Victoria

Seed/Bulb/Plant Catalogs

[Johnny's Selected Seeds](#)

[Burpee Seeds](#)

[Select Seeds & Plants](#)

Swan Island Dahlias

[Sunflower Selections](#)

Park Seeds

The Gardener's Workshop- free videos

Botanical Interests

[Renee's Garden Seeds](#)

Baker's Rare Seeds

The Whole Seed Catalog

Adelman Peony Farm

Longfield Gardens

Old House Gardens

Transplants Available in Baltimore Area

[Valley View Farms Nursery](#)

[White House Nursery](#)

[Maryland Flower & Foliage](#)

[Blooming Hill Nursery](#)

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[Thanksgiving Farm](#)

[Putnam Hill Nursery](#)

Plugs by Mail Order

[Farmer Bailey](#)

Cut Flower Planting & Design Guide

Plant Name	Type	Zones (US)	Design Role	Growing Notes
Ageratum houstonianum	Annual- Warm Season		Filler	Soft, tufted annual prized for its true blue to lavender, pink, or white blooms and gentle, cloud-like texture in arrangements. Excellent as a filler flower, adding cool color and fullness to small bouquets and mixed bunches. Best used fresh; stems are shorter and more delicate than many cut flowers. Thrives in full sun to light shade and fertile, well-drained soil. Harvest when flower clusters are fully colored and open for the longest vase life. Suggested varieties: Blue Planet, Blue Horizon, Red Flint.
Ammi visnaga- <i>Bishops Flower Green Mist</i> and Ammii majus-Bishops Flower	Annual- Cool Season		Filler · Movement	Elegant annual producing large, domed umbels of pure white blooms on tall, sturdy stems. More structured and architectural than <i>Ammi majus</i> , making it exceptional for fresh arrangements and a standout for drying, where the flower heads retain their form beautifully. Adds lightness and scale to bouquets while also serving as a strong focal-filler. Thrives in full sun and well-drained soil; direct sow for best results. Harvest when most florets are open but before seeds begin to set.
Ammobium alatum- <i>Winged Everlasting</i>	Annual- Warm Season			Airy Australian annual grown for its crisp white, papery blooms with golden centers. Excellent as both a fresh cut and an exceptional dried flower, holding color and form for months. Long, wiry stems branch freely, making it ideal for bouquets, wreaths, and everlasting

				arrangements. Easy to grow in full sun and well-drained soil; drought tolerant once established. Harvest just as flowers fully open for drying or slightly earlier for fresh use.
Anemone	Tuber- Cool Season	7-10	Focal	A striking tuber-grown perennial often treated as an annual, producing bold, poppy-like flowers in vivid shades of red, purple, blue, pink, and white with dark contrasting centers. Long, wiry stems make it one of the most valued spring cut flowers, prized for its clean form and excellent vase life. Soak tubers for several hours before planting; plant in fall in mild climates or late winter/early spring in cold regions. Prefers full sun to light shade and very well-drained soil; protect from hard freezes and waterlogging.
Basil (Lemon)	Annual- Warm Season		Foliage · Fragrance	Start indoors or transplant after frost into warm soil. Pinch often.
Bells of Ireland	Annual- Cool Season		Line · Foliage	Cold stratify seed. Direct seed in fall or late winter. Flowers in May and June and has wonderful foliage and can be dried. Full sun; provide support.
Bupleurum	Annual- Cool Season		Filler · Foliage	Direct sow early spring. Slow to germinate; thin well. Long-lasting when cut and excellent in floral design for adding lightness and structure without visual weight. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; best direct-sown, as it dislikes root disturbance.
Celosia	Annual- Warm Season		Focal · Texture	Start indoors or transplant after frost. Heat-loving; full sun. Crested and feather types are great cuts Cut when heads are fully developed but before seeds form Long vase life and dries beautifully
Clary Sage	Annual- Warm season/ Biennial		Line · Dried	Start indoors 6-8 weeks before frost. Prefers cool spring conditions. Or plant transplants out 1 week before last frost Start harvest when at least 8 inches high and cut the flower stalks when at least ¾ of the flowers are open Dries beautifully and lasts long in a vase.

Corn Cockle	Annual- Cool Season		Filler	A tall, slender annual with narrow gray-green foliage and silky, rose-purple flowers that float lightly above the stems in early summer. Once common in grain fields, it brings an airy, meadow-like elegance to borders and cutting gardens and is valued for its long, straight stems and soft movement in arrangements. Best direct-sown in fall or very early spring, as seedlings dislike transplanting. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; tolerant of poor soils and light drought.
Cornflower	Annual- Cool Season		Filler	A classic annual producing fringed, thistle-like blooms—most famously clear blue, but also pink, white, and burgundy—on slender, branching stems from late spring into summer. Adds bright color and a light, cottage-garden character to borders and cutting gardens, where it serves as both a cheerful focal flower and useful filler. Best direct-sown in early spring or fall, as seedlings dislike transplanting, though starts can be transplanted carefully. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; deadhead or cut often to extend flowering.
Cosmos	Annual- Warm Season		Filler	Direct sow after frost in lean soil. Cut often for more blooms Provide support and pinch when a foot tall. Cut for both foliage and flowers. Cut just as the buds swell at base of plant Delicate stems can be brittle and fragile; handle with care. Pinch at 12 in for branching.
Daffodil	Bulb- Cool Season	3-8	Focal	Plant bulbs in fall. Allow foliage to die back naturally. Cut or pull it at the “gooseneck stage” when it is showing color and the neck is bent. Can be placed with other flowers, but need to change water frequently.
Dahlia	Tuber- Warm Season	8-11	Focal	Plant after frost. Stake early; lift and store tubers in cold climates. Grown from tubers Start in warm soil in full sun and don’t water until the plant sprouts Pinch in July to force branching

				<p>Provide support – tomato cages, heavy cattle fence, or rebar</p> <p>Cut when the flower starts to open</p> <p>Ball varieties have the longest vase life</p> <p>Dig up tubers in late fall and store in dark cool space for next spring</p>
<i>Daucus carota- Dara</i>	Annual- Cool Season		Filler	<p>A dramatic annual selection of wild carrot featuring large, intricate umbels in deep plum, burgundy, blush, and smoky mauve, often with a dark central floret. Tall, branching stems and finely cut foliage give it a light, architectural presence in borders while providing outstanding material for cutting gardens and floral design. Functions as both a filler and soft focal flower, adding depth and movement to arrangements. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; best direct-sown in early spring or fall, as it dislikes root disturbance. May self-seed gently.</p>
Dill	Annual- cool Season		Filler	<p>A fast-growing annual herb with fine, feathery blue-green foliage and airy yellow flower umbels that add height and light texture to herb gardens, borders, and cutting beds. Both leaves and seeds are culinary staples, while the flowers are valued in floral design as a soft, natural filler. Best direct-sown after frost, as plants dislike transplanting, though seedlings can be started indoors in biodegradable pots. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; succession sow every few weeks for a continuous harvest.</p>
Dusty Miller	Annual- Cool Season / Tender Perennial	7-10	Foliage	<p>A tender perennial usually grown as an annual, prized for its velvety, silver-white foliage that provides striking contrast in borders, containers, and cutting gardens. The deeply lobed leaves add cool-toned structure and texture to floral arrangements, pairing especially well with bright or pastel blooms. Start from seed indoors 8-10 weeks before last frost or transplant outdoors after frost; plants establish quickly in warm soil. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; heat and drought tolerant once established.</p>

Fennel	Perennial	6-10	Line	A tall, airy perennial herb (often grown as an annual) with feathery, blue-green foliage and broad yellow umbels that bloom in summer, bringing movement and a soft, architectural quality to borders and cutting gardens. Seeds, foliage, and bulbs (in Florence fennel) are edible, while the flowers are valued in floral design as a delicate filler and backdrop for brighter blooms. Start from seed sown directly in the garden after frost, as plants dislike root disturbance; transplants should be handled gently. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; drought tolerant once established.
Feverfew	Perennial	4-9	Filler- better than Baby's Breath	A cheerful short-lived perennial often grown as an annual, producing clouds of small, white, daisy-like flowers with yellow centers over soft, ferny foliage from early summer into fall. Adds a light, meadow quality to borders and is excellent as a filler flower in cutting gardens and arrangements. Start from seed indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost or direct sow in spring; transplants easily. Prefers full sun to light shade and well-drained soil; deadhead or cut regularly to extend blooming and encourage bushy growth.
Globe Amaranth	Annual- Warm season		Focal · Dried	A tough, heat-loving annual producing round, clover-like flower heads in shades of magenta, purple, pink, white, and red from early summer to frost. Long-lasting in both fresh and dried arrangements, the blooms hold their color exceptionally well and are a staple of cutting and everlasting gardens. Start from seed indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost or transplant after frost; direct sowing is also possible in warm soils. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; highly tolerant of heat and drought once established. Suggested varieties are 'Fireworks', 'Bicolor Rose', 'Carmine'
Holy Basil - <i>Tulsi</i>	Annual- Warm Season/		Foliage · Line · Fragrance	A fast-growing aromatic annual (tender perennial in warm climates) valued for its clove-like, spicy fragrance and small purple-pink flower spikes. Widely used in

	Tender Perennial			herbal teas and traditional medicine, and attractive to pollinators in the garden. Start from seed indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost or sow outdoors after frost; transplants easily into warm soil. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; pinch regularly to keep plants compact and productive.
Larkspur	Annual- Cool Season		Line	A classic cool-season annual with tall, elegant spires of blue, lavender, pink, or white flowers that add height and vertical line to borders and cutting gardens. Produces long, graceful stems prized in floral design for their light texture and cottage-garden character. Best direct-sown in fall or very early spring, as seedlings dislike transplanting; thin well for strong stems. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil, and blooms in late spring to early summer.
Lisianthus	Annual- Warm Season		Focal	Grow from transplants and set out when danger of frost is over Needs full sun and support. Pick when the flowers just start to open Long vase life of a week+
Marigold	Annual- Warm Season		Focal	A cheerful, fast-growing annual producing abundant pom-pom or daisy-like flowers in warm shades of gold, orange, and red from early summer until frost. Compact, well-branched plants are easy to grow in borders, containers, and cutting gardens, where they provide reliable color and useful filler stems. Start from seed indoors 4–6 weeks before last frost or direct sow after frost; transplants readily. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; deadhead or cut regularly to keep plants flowering heavily.
Milkweed (Balloon Plant)	Annual- Warm Season		Structure • Seed Pod	Start indoors 6–8 weeks before frost. Transplant after soil warms. Set out when warm and pinch the stalk to encourage side shoots Blooms for a long time in late summer and the large pods start to form soon afterwards Pick the pods when fully mature (bronzing will appear on the pods)

				<p>Sear the ends with a propane torch or lighter to stem the white sap.</p> <p>Long lasting in arrangements and save the seed for next year</p>
Mint	Perennial	3-10	Foliage · Fragrance	<p>A vigorous perennial herb valued for its intensely aromatic leaves and rapid growth, producing upright stems with small lilac or white flowers in summer. Essential in culinary gardens and herbal uses and widely used in floral design as a fragrant foliage filler that adds freshness and movement to arrangements. Start from transplants or cuttings in spring, as seed is slow and variable; plants establish quickly. Prefers full sun to partial shade and moist, well-drained soil. Highly spreading—best grown in containers or confined beds to control growth.</p>
Nasturtium	Annual- Warm Season		Filler · Trailing	<p>Direct sow after frost. Prefers poor soil and full sun. A fast-growing annual with round, lily-pad leaves and vivid, jewel-toned flowers in shades of orange, red, yellow, and cream. Both the blooms and foliage are edible, offering a peppery flavor prized in salads and garnishes. Plants trail, climb, or form compact mounds depending on variety, making them useful for borders, containers, hanging baskets, and vegetable gardens as a living mulch. Also valued as a companion plant that can help attract aphids away from crops. Prefers full sun and lean, well-drained soil; overly rich soil encourages leaves at the expense of flowers.</p>
Nigella damascena _ <i>Love in a Mist</i>	Annual- Cool Season		Filler · Seed Pod	<p>Direct sow late winter or early spring. Do not transplant. A delicate yet distinctive annual with finely divided, feathery foliage that forms a soft mist around starry blue, white, or pale pink flowers in late spring to early summer. After flowering, ornamental balloon-like seed pods develop, prized for both dried arrangements and garden interest. An excellent filler and texture plant for borders and cutting gardens, adding lightness and movement.</p>

				Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; Readily self-seeds to create natural drifts.
Oregano	Perennial	4-10	Filler	A hardy perennial herb grown for its aromatic foliage and, in ornamental forms, for its delicate hop-like bracts and soft pink to purple flowers. In the garden it forms low, spreading mounds that thrive in hot, dry conditions and attract pollinators when in bloom. In floral design, flowering oregano is prized as an airy filler and textural green, adding softness, movement, and a subtle herbal fragrance to bouquets and arrangements; stems are long-lasting fresh and excellent for drying. Prefers full sun and sharply drained soil; drought tolerant once established and benefits from regular cutting to maintain a compact habit and encourage fresh growth. Transplant spring or start seed 8 weeks before frost.. Harvest before flowering for best stems.
Orlaya	Annual- Cool Season		Filler · Lacey	Direct sow fall or early spring. Thin generously. Exceptional as a cut flower and filler, adding brightness and elegance without overpowering focal blooms. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; best direct-sown in early spring or fall, as plants resent transplanting. Long-flowering and lightly self-seeding in favorable conditions.
Parsley	Biennial	3-9	Filler · Foliage	Start indoors 3 months before frost or transplant spring. Very slow to germinate. Soaking seeds helps. A versatile biennial herb usually grown as an annual, valued for its fresh green, finely divided leaves that bring clean flavor and bright color to both the kitchen and the garden. Forms tidy mounds of either curly or flat foliage and works equally well in herb beds, borders, containers, and cutting gardens, where it doubles as useful filler greenery for arrangements. Prefers full sun to partial shade and consistently moist, well-drained soil. Regular harvesting encourages continuous new growth.
Peony	Perennial	3-8	Focal	A long-lived herbaceous perennial treasured for its sumptuous, often fragrant blooms in shades of white, blush, pink, coral, and deep red, produced in late spring to

				early summer. Plants form sturdy clumps of glossy, dark green foliage that remain attractive well into autumn, making peonies valuable both as flowering and structural garden plants. A classic focal flower in borders and cutting gardens, prized by florists for its large, romantic form and excellent vase life. Prefers full sun to light shade and fertile, well-drained soil; plant crowns shallowly and avoid disturbance once established, as plants improve with age and can thrive for decades.
Poppy	Annual- Cool Season		Focal · Flowers and Seed Pod	A diverse group of annual and perennial plants admired for their luminous, tissue-thin flowers in shades of scarlet, coral, pink, white, and plum, often with dramatic dark centers. Blooms appear from late spring into early summer, followed by distinctive sculptural seed pods valued for both garden structure and dried arrangements. In borders and cutting gardens, poppies provide fleeting but unforgettable focal moments and a light, naturalistic character. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; best direct-sown, as seedlings resent transplanting. Annual types readily self-seed, returning year after year in favorable conditions.
Ranunculus	Annual- Cool Season/ Corm		Focal	Soak corms 3–4 hours before planting. Plant in fall in warm climates, late winter/early spring in cold climates. Full sun, excellent drainage. Protect from hard freezes; lift and store in very cold regions. Cut often to extend bloom.
Sage	Perennial	4–8	Foliage · Line	An aromatic herb and ornamental perennial grown for its soft gray-green foliage and, in flowering types, tall spikes of blue, purple, red, or pink blooms that attract pollinators. Useful as a structural garden plant and as foliage or line material in cutting gardens. Start from seed indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost or sow outdoors after danger of frost; transplants establish easily in warm soil. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; drought tolerant once established.
Scabiosa – <i>Pincushion flower</i>	Annual- Cool Season		Focal · Filler	A graceful annual producing long-stemmed, pincushion-like blooms in shades of burgundy, plum, lavender, pink,

				and cream from early summer to frost. Light, branching plants add movement and a romantic meadow quality to borders and cutting gardens, where they are prized for excellent vase life and continuous production when cut regularly. Start from seed indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost or direct sow after frost; transplants readily. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; deadhead or cut often to prolong flowering.
Statice- Sea lavender	Annual- Warm Season		Filler · Dried	A reliable annual grown for its papery, brightly colored flower clusters in shades of purple, blue, yellow, apricot, rose, and white, held above neat rosettes of gray-green foliage. Excellent for fresh and dried arrangements, where the blooms retain color and form for months, and useful in the garden as a filler and texture plant in sunny borders and cutting beds. Start from seed indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost or sow outdoors after frost; transplants easily. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; tolerant of heat, wind, and light drought.
Strawflower	Annual- Warm Season		Focal · Dried	A heat-loving annual producing stiff, papery blooms in bright shades of yellow, orange, red, pink, and white, held on strong, upright stems. Indispensable for drying and long-lasting arrangements, and equally effective as a bold color accent in cutting gardens and sunny borders. Start indoors or transplant after frost; plants establish quickly in warm soil. Support netting is helpful to keep stems straight. Harvest early—just as the yellow centers begin to show—and cut frequently to encourage continuous flowering. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil.
Sunflower	Annual- Warm Season		Focal	Direct sow after frost or use small transplants. Rabbits will chew these up without protection. Stake tall varieties; succession plant. Cut when the petals start to unfurl from central disk. Suggested single stem varieties: Procut series, Sun-Fill, Sunrich, Sunbright. .Suggested branching varieties: Lemonade, Moulin Rouge, Italian White, Strawberry Blonde

Tulip	Bulb- Cool season	3-8	Focal · Line	Plant bulbs in fall. Grow as annuals for best stem length. Pull up the bulbs so you have a longer stem to work with. Can be planted in soil-filled crates outside over winter.
Xeranthemum annuum	Annual- Warm Season			A refined annual everlasting with papery, star-shaped blooms in shades of lavender, rose, purple, and white, centered with silver-gold disks. Valued for its stiff, branching stems and excellent performance as a dried flower, retaining color and structure for months. Also attractive fresh in airy, meadow-style bouquets. Thrives in full sun and lean, well-drained soil. Harvest when flowers are just fully open for best color and form in dried arrangements.
Yarrow	Perennial	3-9	Filler	A hardy perennial valued for its flat-topped flower clusters in shades of white, yellow, pink, red, and apricot, held above finely divided, aromatic gray-green foliage. Blooms over a long summer season and is excellent for both fresh and dried arrangements, providing strong color blocks and long-lasting stems in cutting gardens. Easy to grow from seed or transplants; sow seed indoors 6-8 weeks before last frost or plant nursery starts in spring or fall. Prefers full sun and well-drained soil; drought tolerant once established.
Zinnia	Annual- Warm Season		Focal	Direct sow or transplant after frost. Needs heat, sun, and airflow. Flowers all summer until frost. Cut when the flowers are just starting to open, and the more cuts, the more it flowers.