

CUT FLOWER STAND

A cut flower stand is a great way to earn some money while beautifying your neighborhood! Locally grown cut flowers are a specialty item and can be sold in a variety of places including farmers' markets, directly to florists or caterers, or in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Some flowers, such as sunflowers, can be sold by the stem, however, most flowers are sold as bouquets. Flowers can also be sold as wreaths, bouquets of dried flowers, or edible flowers. A cut flower stand is generally an annual treatment which means flowers must be replanted every year. This leaves room to learn and experiment with different varieties every year!



PROJECT STEPS



LAND TENURE

- Ownership is not required for a cut flower stand since it is an annual project.
- A permit or lease with the owner of the lot is recommended.

IDEAL LOCATION

- The size of the stand depends on the desired workload.
- A sunny, highly visible location is beneficial for the plants as well as the surrounding community.

SOIL REQUIREMENTS

- Well-drained, loamy, and slightly acidic soil is ideal.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

- Having water on site is recommended because flowers require 1 inch of water per week.
- An irrigation system can be installed using drip tape or a sprinkler. Drip tape is ideal because it prevents water from landing on blossoms which causes disease and rotting.



CUT FLOWER STAND

SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

- Compost
- Seeds or transplants
- Shovel
- Rake
- Trowel
- Hand pruners
- Rainbarrel or hose
- Buckets
- Sod-kicker (optional)
- Tiller (optional)
- Straw (optional)
- Drip tape (optional)

PLANNING

- If planting transplants or perennials, lasagna beds (layers of cardboard, compost, and leaves) can be made in the fall that will be ready for planting in by spring. Do not seed directly into lasagna beds!
- When deciding what to plant, keep in mind that bouquets typically contain three types of flowers: spiky, showy, and filler. An example of a spiky flower is *Liatis*, while Thai Basil, a very fragrant herb, is an option for a filler flower. Zinnias are very common showy flowers and are easy to grow. See the Cut Flower Appendix for more recommendations and details on specific varieties.
- After flower varieties are chosen, create a planting plan. Keep flower beds at least five feet from all property lines and ten feet from roads and sidewalks. This will help to create a buffer from vehicle and pedestrian traffic and keep plants healthy.
- Order seeds as soon as possible for the best selection.
- For creating bouquets, flowers with long stems are more versatile. Flowers with short stems, like the delicate Larkspur, are not ideal for arrangements but could be sold individually as bud vase flowers.
- If planting sunflowers, plant additional seeds every two weeks. Planting in successions helps to reduce risk of disease spreading among flowers and ensures continuous blooms for harvest and sale.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Follow directions on seed packs for individual flowers. Many flowers need to be started indoors in February or March and transplanted outdoors after the last frost.
- To prepare soil, remove sod using a shovel or sod-kicker. If desired, leave strips for walking paths. Till or loosen the soil 8 to 12 inches beneath the surface. Add compost or other amendments. A soil test will help determine what's needed.
- Plant seeds and transplants according to the planting plan. If desired, add straw to help retain moisture.
- Be sure to water immediately after planting.
- If installing drip tape, two rows of flowers can share a tape. A tape diameter of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch with 6-9 inch spacing is ideal. The drip tape should be connected to your water source, either a rainbarrel or a hose.

ON-GOING CARE

- Daily maintenance: After seeds are planted but before emergence from soil, check daily to ensure they have enough moisture. On hot days daily watering may be necessary.
- Weekly maintenance: After plants emerge from soil, they should receive about 1 inch of water per week by totally soaking the root zone twice a week. Watering early in the day is ideal. It is a good idea to observe soil moisture and plant behavior to learn about plants' water needs. While plants are less than six inches tall, weeding is especially important. Flowers will most likely out-compete weeds past this height. Keep an eye out for vining weeds, as they pose the biggest threat. Debris should be removed weekly and diseased plants should be removed as soon as possible to prevent disease from spreading. Deadheading, the removal of old flowers, helps to ensure flowers bloom as long as possible. Use hand pruners to cut off old flowers.
- Harvest: Cut flowers before morning dew has dried or in the early evening. Using hand-pruners, make the cut on an angle and place in a bucket with water immediately. This technique helps increase water absorption which preserves flowers.
- After harvest: Proper storage conditions are important to the vase life of flowers; keep out of the sun and in low temperatures with plenty of water. Flowers can be stored in water or a preservation solution to help extend vase life. Leaves left on the stem should remain out of the solution.
- End of season: Remove plants and put beds to rest for the winter by covering with chopped or shredded leaves or straw. Drip tape should also be removed and stored for the winter.

CUT FLOWER APPENDIX

ARRANGING BOUQUETS

The top elements to keep in mind when creating bouquets are:

Proportion & Balance

- The height and width should be appropriate for the container.
- Use an odd number of flowers for those that stand out more than others.
- After arranging, hold the bouquet out in front of you to ensure it has a rounded, well-balanced shape.

Texture & Form

- Create contrast with various petals, leaves, and shapes.

Color

- Include neutrals such as soft green, light yellow, or grasses.
- Try pairing complementary colors together: Blue with orange, purple with yellow, and red with green.



Sweet peas as a single variety bouquet



Sunflowers & statice, a complementary color bouquet



Lupine in a bud vase



This document is part of a series of vacant lot treatment

EXTENDING VASE LIFE

Use these tips to preserve the life of your cut flowers:

- Keep flowers in water for a few hours before arranging. A preservation solution (1 quart water, 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice, 1 tbsp sugar, & $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp bleach) can also be used to help extend the vase life.
- After arranging, cut the stem of the bouquet on an angle and place in water. Rubber bands are useful to keep bouquets together.
- Flowers should be stored in a cool location and out of the sun. Keep them away from fruits and vegetables such as apples, avocados, bananas, cataloupe, kiwi, mangoes, peaches, pears, plums, and tomatoes. These fruits and vegetables produce ethylene (a gas that makes flowers ripen more quickly).
- When flowers are arranged in their vase, change the water every couple of days. Some flowers emit sap that can be toxic to other flowers. If flowers look droopy, recut the stem.
- Bring samples of cut flowers home to test how long they last in a vase and to learn what steps to take to extend their life.

HARVEST TIPS

- Cut all flowers before pollen emerges. Flowers will not last as long if cut after pollen is present. In the first year, take note of when different flower varieties begin to produce pollen to improve harvest.
- For spiky flowers, cut when only some of the flowers on the spike are blooming. The rest will open while in the vase, which will keep the bouquet visually interesting and healthy for longer.
- For sunflower-type flowers, harvest when blooms have just fully opened.

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

Best Garden Plants for Michigan
by Tim Wood & Alison Beck

Cutting Gardens
by Barbara Pleasant

The Flower Farmer
by Lynn Byczynski

Flower Confidential
by Amy Stewart

Specialty Cut Flowers
by Allan M. Armitage & Judy M. Laushman

ONLINE:
Association of Specialty Cut
Flower Growers
www.ascfg.org

Dripworks
(800) 522-3747
www.dripworks.com

Green Sinner
www.greensinner.com

High Mowing Organic Seeds
(802) 472-3201
www.highmowingseeds.com

The Homeless Garden Project:
Santa Cruz, CA
www.homelessgardenproject.org

Johnny's Selected Seeds
(800) 854-2580
www.johnnyseeds.com

My Luscious Backyard
www.mylusciousbackyard.ca

Rodale Institute: New Farm
[newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/
columns/cut_flowers/2003/
jan_2003/index.shtml](http://newfarm.rodaleinstitute.org/columns/cut_flowers/2003/jan_2003/index.shtml)



CUT FLOWER APPENDIX

FLOWER VARIETIES & PLANTING GUIDE

Common Name	Botanical Name	Spacing ("=inches)	Preferred Seeding	Days to Harvest	Bouquet Type
Annuals: live for only one growing season					
Ageratum	<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>	9-12"	Transplant	80-110	Filler
Basil	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	2-8"	Either	60-80	Filler
Celosia*	<i>Celosia argentea plumosa</i>	6-12"	Either	Varies	Filler, Drying
Cosmos	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	9-12"	Direct	75-120	Showy
Drumstick Flower	<i>Craspedia globosa</i>	12"	Transplant	140-160	Drying
Dill Flower	<i>Anethum graveolens</i>	2-4"	Either	40-105	Filler
Globe Amaranth	<i>Gomphrena globosa</i>	6-8"	Transplant	85-100	Filler, Drying
Gruppenblau	<i>Salvia farinacea</i>	12-18"	Transplant	Varies	Spiky
Marigold	<i>Tagetes patula</i>	8-18"	Either	50-90	Showy
Ornamental Kale	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	6"	Either	90-110	Showy
Red Broom Corn*	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	12"	Direct	85-110	Filler, Drying
Snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>	9-12"	Transplant	100-120	Spiky
Statice	<i>Limonium sinuatum</i>	12"	Transplant	110-120	Filler, Drying
Strawflower	<i>Bracteantha bracteata</i>	10-12"	Either	75-85	Drying
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	9-24"	Direct	Varies	Showy, Single Variety
Sweet Peas	<i>Lathyrus odoratus</i>	6-12"	Direct	74-98	Bud Vase, Single Variety
Zinnia	<i>Zinnia elegans</i>	9-12"	Either	75-90	Showy
Perennials: live for more than two growing seasons					
Black Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	12-18"	Either	100-120	Showy
Buddleia	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	3-6"	Transplant	85-90	Spiky
Larkspur	<i>Consolida ambigua</i>	4-6"	Direct	100-120	Bud Vase, Spiky
Pincushion Flower	<i>Scabiosa atropurpurea</i>	9-15"	Either	75-110	Showy
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	9-12"	Transplant	90-110	Filler, Spiky
Biennials: live for only two growing seasons, flowering in the second year					
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	12"	Transplant	135-150	Bud Vase
Lupine	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	18-24"	Either	365	Bud Vase, Spiky

*This is an aggressive self-seeding plant, so keep a close eye on them so they do not spread uncontrollably.



Ageratum



Celosia



Craspedia



Globe Amaranth



Gruppenblau



Orn. Kale



Scabiosa



Yarrow



Digitalis



Zinnia



Statice



Strawflower



Snapdragon

Vacant lot treatment guides in the series include clean + clear, creative mowing, cut flower stand, tree stand, tree nursery, community garden, market garden, orchard, native planting, and pocket park. Treatment guide appendices for cut flowers, trees, orchards, native plants, and hardscape are also available. For more information contact Keep Growing Detroit at keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com.