

Dried Flowers

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Dried flowers and plants have been used for hundreds of years to enhance the quality of life of those who live in permanent structures. This use initially was an attempt to make dwellings smell better, (Before vacuum cleaners, weekly garbage pickup, regular bathing and housebroken pets). Certain plants and flowers were given human characteristic meanings such as long life, faithfulness, charity etc. Today bouquets and flower arrangements are given or exchanged to express the feelings of the sender.

Today people have chosen a more traditional nature-involved lifestyle. This has resulted in homes being decorated with all sorts of living and dried plants and flowers materials. With the ending of summer this is a great way to extend the summer colors, smells and textures, by bringing some of that indoors.

Much of this material is readily available in craft stores, department stores, plant nurseries etc. However, such material is expensive to purchase. However, with limited effort, the home gardener in Wyoming has the ability to grow many plants that are used in dry arrangements. These come in perennial and annual varieties. Many plants lend themselves to drying, so it is mainly up to the gardener or individual as to what is appealing.

When the home gardener begins planting what, he or she wants to grow; it is helpful to decide what one wishes to end up within the way of dried materials. One might begin with perennials like gold yarrow, white German statice and baby's breath and blue delphinium and red roses to have a base or foundation to work with every year. A known color and plant material to add to this maybe adding annuals, of varying colors and texture which can be purchased from a local nursery. Most nurseries and catalogs still have a nice selection of plants.

Harvesting of flowers is an ongoing process. Flowers should be picked before they are fully opened and tied in small bunches and hung head down in a cool, dry, draft free, sunless place. A person may hang a line in their garage or basement. The tied bunches of flowers are hung on or over the line. (Bunches of tied or rubber banded flowers may be divided in two to hang over the line or has a curtain hook attached to the area to hang on the line, snap clothes' pins also work.)

To these flowers' one may add poppy pods, evergreen cones, dried grasses and branches with leaves or other interesting material. Dried herbs are another option one could use and these could be used later for cooking or other uses. These arrangements can be expressed in

either many ways to decorate walls, traditionally on tables, or any other way your imagination will take you. Pressing flowers are another way of preserving and displaying them.

A good source of inspiration would be the many magazines that may have articles about home decorating, or other general topics. The library would be a good place to start and any place that sells magazines. The local bookstores would also be glad to look for reference material for you also. By this time of year, the home gardener should have a large, showy, arrangement whose color can be expected to last for many years. This time of year when many of us are starting to prune our perennials, this material could also be used in many arrangements.

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