

GREEN THUMB GARDENING



CUIT FLOWERS

Get double pleasure out of your garden flowers - cut some for arrangements in your house. Carnations and chrysanthemums tend to naturally last a long time in plain water, but others don't. With a little effort it is not difficult to have a wide assortment of flowers that last a long, long time.

The first rule is to cut the flowers during the cool of the evening, and allow them to soak overnight in a pail of water before arranging them the following day. To reduce shock and prevent air pockets in the stem, take a pail of water to the garden and place the flowers immediately in the water. Always cut the flower stems on a slant with a knife, not scissors because they crush the stem too much.

Poppies, poinsettias, maidenhair fern and gladiolus need to have their stem ends seared with a match to destroy the sap that exudes when they're cut. Also, gladiolus are best cut when the second flower is opening. Place peonies, dahlias, heliotrope, and stocks in an inch of boiling water for two or three minutes, and then put them in a pail of cold water overnight. Carnations last even longer than normal if they are cut between the nodes (swelling on stem) and the stem split about half an inch.

When arranging the flowers in a vase (after soaking in plain water overnight) add four teaspoons of sugar to one quart of water for aquilegas (colombine), asters, petunias, sweet peas and roses. In addition, roses last longer in metal vases and containers (copper, brass, silver, pewter) rather than glass.

Violets like a 1/4 teaspoon salt in half a quart of water. If the flowers have a short stem, then place the stem in a drinking straw and cut the straw to the desired length.

Cut flowers will also last longer if they are not placed in direct sunlight or drafts. And the water will not sour as quickly if the foliage is removed before arranging them. Check the water level in the vase daily and top it up or change it.

Add a little elegance to any room with cut flowers and with these few techniques they will last longer too.

Each week Christine Cole of Tuitman's Garden Centre and Landscaping, Highway 25, 1 mile south of Acton, 853-2480, will be presenting helpful tips and information to assist you in creating your garden show-place!

TUITMAN'S
GARDEN CENTRE

ACTON 853-2480