

## What Every Homemaker Needs to Make a Beautiful, Loving Home.

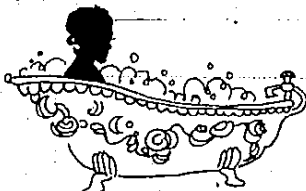


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## Choose now, dry later

When the crocuses are barely in bloom, thoughts of fall are generally a long way off.

But dried flower enthusiasts have already begun thinking ahead to fall as they purchase seeds and plan ahead for trips which may take them near fields of dock and goldenrod and cattails for fall arrangements.

Now is the time to begin planning, Mrs. Julian Gailey of Bloomfield Township advises. Mrs. Gailey specializes in the traditional Williamsburg dried flower arrangements.

She has already begun plans for drying a large portion of flowers for arrangements to be sold at the Christmas boutique of the Goodwill Antique Show in the fall.

Through the summer, she snips bundles of yarrow, daisies, mums, heather, baby's breath, status and cockscomb which are preserved either by drying in silica gel or by hanging in a dark dry cupboard.

TRY ANY plants, she said, but pick the best specimens.

### To dry flowers:

- Pick them after noon on a dry day.

- Strip off all the leaves.

- Trim off all but one and one-half inch of the stem.

Pour granular silica gel, a drying agent, available at gardening centers, into a tin box with tight-fitting lid, to a depth of one-quarter inch.

- Place the flower face down in the silica gel and with a tablespoon sift the substance over it being careful not to completely bury the flower.

- Add other flowers to the container in the same manner but avoid overlapping them.

- Cover tightly and place masking tape around edge of lid to form a seal that will keep out dampness.

- Put the container aside for about four days.

- Check after the fourth day; if the flowers are soft leave them in the silica gel for a longer period of time but avoid overdrying as it can cause the flower to crumble.

- After flowers are sufficiently dried remove them to another tin box which has enough silica gel in it to cover the bottom, tape lid and store until fall when you are ready to begin doing the arrangements.

Roses dry well, but require special care. Buds should be laid on their sides while open rose blooms should be placed face up and gently cover with silica gel.

Mrs. Gailey advises that consideration must be given to the room in which the arrangement will be placed.

Choose materials with this in mind, she said. The silica gel helps the flower to retain the same brilliant color that it had before it was dried.

Scour the countryside for foliage to serve as filler in an arrangement.

**DOCK, A WEED,** may be picked three times a year to achieve color variation. In early summer it appears along the roadside as green clusters on long spikes. In mid-summer it is pink and in the fall, a reddish-brown.

Beech leaves will retain their natural green color while magnolia leaves will turn a grayish green. Both may be dried flat with no leaves touching one another, between paper towels and newspapers which are placed under rugs for several weeks.

Ivy picked in the fall will also remain green. This is dried in the same manner.

Yarrow, both yellow and white, also fill in well as do many common weeds found in fields along road sides.

**ALWAYS DRY** more than you expect to use, Mrs. Gailey said.

A solution of two parts hot water and one part glycerine will achieve a soft leathery feel for magnolia leaves.

To prepare the magnolia leaves, place the branch on a cement floor and pound the stem for about four inches starting at the base. Place stem in six inches of the solution. Remove when the leaves have a soft leathery feel.

When ready to create an arrangement, choose a container that will be in keeping with the spot where it will be displayed.

**"REMEMBER** that the container is only the background for the flowers," she said. "It should coordinate with the room, but should not be the dominant feature of the arrangement."

A container with a dull matte finish will coordinate better with an informal arrangement, she said. Silver should be reserved for very formal settings.

Size is another important consideration.

"Don't put an eensy teensy arrangement on a grand piano," she said.

**THE ARRANGEMENT** should be done according to the principles of proportion, design, color and size and based on the seven basic forms of flower arranging.

Florist oasis is fitted tightly into the container and should extend about an inch above the top.

Darker colored materials are placed toward the bottom of the arrangement while lighter, airier colored foliage and flowers are placed toward the top.

The result is a lasting arrangement which will add color on bleak winter days.

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