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flower Farm, a wildflower-seed producer based in Coldwater, Ontario. "I myself have been absolutely besotted with cutting gardens for 25 years. I love the endless amount of creativity it gives me, and the way it helps me bring nature inside my home."

Flowers in the landscape. Flowers in the home shouldn't be reserved for special occasions alone. Head outdoors to find ingredients for a freshly picked bouquet. Shrubs and perennials from the garden offer a creative palette of design choices. Look for classic favorites such as forsythia, red-twig dogwood, hydrangeas, peonies, lilies and dahlias, beginning now and continuing through the entire growing season; all are perfect vase ingredients.

When you clip blooms and greenery from the garden, use clean, sharp pruners and plunge the cut stems into a bucket of room-temperature water until you're ready to start arranging. Extend a bouquet's vase life by stripping off any leaves that will be in water. And keep things fresh by changing the vase water every few days.

Mix and match. Gardeners and foodies have embraced the seasonal aspects of what they grow, cook and eat. But depending on where you live, it might be a challenge to enjoy seasonal flowers all year long. That's when everyday garden foliage can be a useful addition to a mixed bouquet or a single bunch of blooms.

You can stretch the potential of the bunch you buy and make it more local with cuttings from your garden, says Susy Wingate, owner of Wingate Interiors on Bainbridge Island, Washington. Wingate begins with a large bouquet of roses and regroups them, using foliage and other flowers to create even more arrangements. "Use your imagination," she suggests. "Figure five roses per vase—you always want to use odd numbers of stems—and add greens [and other flowers] to create multiple bouquets."

Bring springtime indoors with fresh flowers and garden cuttings: It's an easy way to celebrate the season. Simply gather a cheery bouquet to enjoy on your desk or create a lavish centerpiece for your next dinner party. Either way, there is a flower option that will express your sentiments and alter the moment's mood. Channel your inner floral artist and create a bouquet that reflects you, the occasion and your personal style. [E]

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Flower power

Bringing outdoor beauty inside

By Debra Prinzing

ANYONE WHO HAS received or given flowers knows that a bouquet will put a smile on your face in an instant. What seems like common sense has even been confirmed by the academic world. According to behavioral research conducted at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, the presence of flowers triggers happy emotions, heightens feelings of life satisfaction and affects social behavior in a positive manner far beyond what is normally believed. When the university's social scientists explored the link between flowers and life satisfaction, they found that flowers are a natural and healthful moderator of moods.

If you need some mood-enhancing floral therapy—and who doesn't?—this is the perfect time of year to plant perennials and shrubs with attractive flowers and foliage. If your space is limited or if you aren't a gardener, you can still appreciate nature's abundance in your home by combining greenery with cut blooms.

Backyard bouquets. The age-old prac-

tice of picking and arranging flowers in a vase was popularized by the Victorians, but now, according to many gardening experts, cutting gardens are returning to the domestic landscape.

"As I travel the world in search of new plant breeds, I've noticed cutting gardens are coming back," says Anthony Tesselar, co-founder and president of Tesselar Plants, with U.S. offices in Lawndale, California. "I've noticed that Europe tends to be a bit ahead of the U.S. in terms of garden trends, and, based on what I've seen there, I suspect cutting gardens will begin to gain momentum here in the U.S. once again."

A recent survey by the National Gardening Association (NGA) suggests 10.8 million households in the U.S. buy flower seeds (along with vegetable seeds) annually. And, according to NGA research director Bruce Butterfield, "34 million households—nearly one in three U.S. households—have a flower garden." That's a lot of flower power.

"I think the cost savings, self-expression and powerful connection to interior design's popularity in the media make cutting gardens a coming trend," says Miriam Goldberger, president and co-founder of Wild-

The Costco Connection

Look for Rainforest Alliance-certified roses, plus garden bunches, mixed bouquets with gerbera daisies, tulips, alstroemerias and carnations, as well as shrubs and perennials ready for planting, bagged bulbs and perennial assortments in Costco warehouses. Visit Costco.com for plants, special-occasion floral arrangements, bulk flowers and overnight delivery.

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