

## Express Yourself With Floral Blooms

*Bring Blooms Indoors To Decorate*

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Don't underestimate flower power -- especially the fresh cut variety.

From a single stem to a bouquet to a roundy-moundy of flowers cut at the same length, they can be hard to miss as a design accessory.

### Why We Like Flowers

"People gravitate toward flowers because it has the unique power to make people feel comfortable," said Stan Pohmer, executive director of the [Flower Promotion Organization](#).

He said people feel more comfortable in a natural setting and flowers provide that setting.

But people might not feel at ease with bringing fresh cut flowers into their homes in the first place. Getting over the hurdle of formality is a first step.

"People are intimidated by flowers. They are so used to getting flowers as gifts and they see the professional arrangements and say, 'I can't do that.' They get the idea it has to be professionally done," Pohmer said.

He said you don't have to use a bud vase or crystal vase.

"If it will hold water, it will hold flowers," he said.

The organization's Web site has "recipe" ideas for displaying and making containers to hold fresh flowers.

Once people have conquered the fear, they can open their eyes to a huge variety of flowers.

### Go Beyond Roses

Pohmer said most people think of roses when they think of fresh cut flowers. But he loves calla lilies, calling them "the most elegant looking flower in the world."

Some may think of carnations as "low-brow" flowers, but Pohmer said they have a wonderful light scent.

"They come in hundreds of different colors and they last forever," he said.

He pointed out that homeowners can spend \$100 to change out the accent pillows in their room to give it a different look, but you can spend \$5.99 for flowers and achieve the same thing.

"The fun thing about fresh cut flowers is a single stem can change the whole personality of a room," he said.

Along with personality, fresh flowers can reflect seasonal changes and tastes -- even in the winter.

"It's just one of those things you can change them every week. It reflects the mood you're in," he said.

### Petal Pushers

Getting in the floral mood can be as easy as grocery shopping.

Mindy Miles Greenberg, an interior designer who runs [Encore Décor](#), said buying fresh flowers can be as simple as adding them to your shopping cart when you're at the supermarket.

"I would vary the types of flowers. I wouldn't buy the same flower twice," she said.

At the same time, she added that people shouldn't think flowers always have to be a mixed group.

Flowers also don't have to be a mix of different colors.

Pohmer said a trend with flowers and home décor is using flowers that are all the same color, but he pointed out they don't all have to be the same flower.

"We're also seeing a lot more of the earth tones are popular right now, and it goes along with the way people are decorating their homes," he said.

### The Effect Of Flowers

Whether flowers are an accent or part of a table setting, make sure they're visible for all to enjoy.

"You want them to have some light and you want them not to be forgotten," Greenberg said.

She said don't be afraid to cut the stem to make the flower fit in the container and divide flowers up into two or three bunches around the home.

"This doesn't have to be an arrangement that you would see at a wedding," she said.

Once homeowners start placing them around the house, using fresh flowers could become contagious.

"There's something real enhancing about living well for yourself and not just for others," Greenberg said.

### Care Tips

- **Trim stems** -- Always cut about 1 inch on the bottom of the stem before putting in water. The stem works like a straw, getting water to the bud.
- **Flower food** -- Always use the packet of flower food that comes with a bouquet.
- **Keep water clear** -- Change water every third day or when it gets cloudy. Take the flower out, refill with water and recut stems.
- **Make sure none of the foliage is under the water line** -- Decaying leaves breed bacteria and can clog the stem.

### Buying Tips

- Make sure flowers are in water.
- Flowers don't have to be bought from a cooler.
- Don't buy flowers if the stems have a bacteria smell. It means they have probably been in dirty water. If the water is dirty, it plugs up the stem and the flower can't get water.
- Ask for flower food if it's not part of the bouquet.
- Make sure flowers aren't wilting or have droopy leaves. Those are signs they have been out of water for a long time.

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