



Cutting Garden Planting Guide:

To have the most productive plants for cut flowers, you'll want to make sure the plants have:

- Enough light - all of these like "full sun" – at least 6 hours direct sun a day.
- Get plenty of water - you want them to put on strong growth to pump out the stems.
- Fairly rich soil amended with compost or other organic matter.

You can plant the eco-pot in the ground without removing the plant as the pot will compost over time. To encourage that I normally score or tear off the bottom and rip off any of the rim that sticks up over surrounding soil when planted. I make sure the plants have a good drink before I plant them and then I also water them into get the surrounding earth wet to a depth of 4 inches. Baby the plants for their first week in the ground and water them so they don't get stressed especially if it's hot and sunny.

Many plants benefit from "[pinching](#)" where you snip off the growing tip just above a set of leaves to encourage the plant to produce more branches. It seems counter-intuitive to cut your 8-inch plant down to 4 inches but do it! You'll get lots more stems to cut. If a plant needs to be pinched, I state it below.

When you harvest stems, you'll generally want to cut pretty low on the plant. This gives you the longest stem and it also encourages the plant to put out more stems from the base of the plant. For best vase life and to keep flowers from wilting, I always harvest when its cool, either in the morning or evening and plunge the stems immediately into water and keep in a cool, dark place for several hours or overnight before arranging. Remove the bottom leaves on the stem that will be below the waterline in a vase.

Tips for specific plants:

[Ageratum "Blue Horizon"](#) – a very tall (24") ageratum that should continue to pump out blooms all season. Pinch. Harvest when flower spikes 3/4 open.

[Ammi Visnaga "Green Mist"](#) – This looks like Queen Anne's Lace on steroids (in a good way) with frothy foliage. This one gets big (3 feet tall) so give it a foot between other plants. Harvest when 80% of the flowers on a stem are open. If you harvest too early, it might wilt. The sap is irritating to some people so I normally wear gloves when handling.

[Ammobium Winged Everlasting](#) – a darling flower fresh and great to dry. I love this one. Cut low to the base, before yellow centers show when flowers are half opened for both fresh and dried flowers. Hang upside down in a dark, warm place to dry. Blooms continue to open as they dry.

[Carnation "La France"](#) – a pale pink carnation with a glorious clove-scent, worth growing for the fragrance alone. Harvest when the first flower on a spray is open. This should continue to pump out blooms if you keep them cut. The flowers are edible too.

[Craspedia](#) – Yellow drumsticks, a super trendy flower. Great fresh or dried, harvest when flower heads are fully open and uniformly golden. Hang to dry.

[Clarkia Elegant Salmon](#) – a Northwest native and long-lasting cut flower – did you say 2 weeks vase life? Yes! This one does benefit from a pinch (see above) and will get about 24 inches tall. Harvesting stems when the lower set of blooms is just beginning to open. Older blooms will drop off the stem. Unopened buds on the stem will continue to open up in the vase.

[Cosmos Double Click Cranberries or Violet](#) – extra frilly cosmos that pump out blooms for months. Give it a pinch when 8-12” tall. Harvest when the petals just start opening, but not yet flattened. Deadheading is required to have blooms all summer.

[Daucus Carota “Purple Kisses”](#) – Chocolate Queen Anne’s Lace. This will grow about chest high, with lovely long stems. Harvest when 80% of the flowers are open – it might wilt if you cut too early. I also like it as a dried flower after its gone to seed.

[Dusty Miller “New Look”](#) – terrific silver foliage makes an elegant bouquet filler. If you crowd it a bit with other plants it will produce a longer stem. Harvest when stems reach desired length.

[Eryngium “White Glitter”](#) – a cute thimble-sized thistle to add texture to arrangements. A perennial that often flowers in its first year. Fresh or dried: Cut when the entire flower head and bracts turn white. Can be hung to air dry.

[Eucalyptus Gunni Silverdrop](#) – this one gets big – it’ll be 5 feet by the end of the season – smells good too. Pinch so it will branch. Harvest anytime after leaves start to feel leathery, normally around mid-August. If you want to over-winter it, mulch the soil with straw or leaves to give it an extra blanket of insulation.

[Feverfew Tetra White](#) or [Vegmo Sunny Ball](#) – one of my favorite fillers. Harvest when ¾ of the flowers are open. Cut low on the plant to get maximum stem length. It will produce a big crop in June-July and if you remove all those flowering stems you’ll get a second shorter crop in August-September.

[Feathertop Grass](#) – super useful and productive filler. Harvest just before seed heads shed pollen. Seed heads harvested once they have shed pollen have a tendency to shatter. A great accent in arrangements and a really attractive garden plant. Grows 24” high.

[Scented Geranium “Attar of Roses”](#) or [“Orange Fizz”](#) – elegant foliage with lovely scent. Scented geraniums are one of my favorite foliage plants. Pinch. Cut when the stems feel woody as they need to harden up a bit not to wilt as cut foliage.

[Gomphrena](#) in White, Rose or Purple – also known as “Globe Amaranth” this is a cute little clover like flowers in white, pink or magenta. The flowers also dry well. Pinch to get lots of stems. Cut low to the base of the plant for longest stem length.

[Mondarda Lambada](#) - Whorl-shaped pale-purple blooms fade to greenish-silver at the tips – a great filler that smells like oregano. Pick when the flower whorls begin to turn purple. Prone to wilting in heat, so harvest during the coolest part of the day.

[Rudbeckia “Indian Summer”](#) or [“Gloriosa”](#) – Big, productive Black Eye-Susan. Cut when blooms are fully open. Has a long vase life.

[Scabious Fama Blue or White](#) – this one’s a perennial, will give you years of lovely flowers. Starts blooming in its first year. Produces all summer long, cut when the petals are ½ open.

[Snapdragon Chantilly in Purple, White or Salmon](#) or [Potomac Lavender](#) or [Madame Butterfly Bronze](#)— elegant snaps in great colors. Flowers early and benefits from a pinch. Harvest when florets on lower 1/3- 1/2 of the spike are open.

[Stock Quartet Rainbow](#) – a classic gorgeously scented cut flower. Pinch this one as it's a branching type. Harvest when florets on lower 1/3 of the spike are open.

[Strawflower in Copper, Pomegranate, Apricot or White](#) – a classic cut flower that's great to dry. Cut when 2-3 layers of petals have unfolded but before flowers fully open. Hang to dry. Continue to harvest and more stems will be produced.

[Statice in Iceberg or Pink](#) – another one that does dual duty as a fresh and a dried flower. Cut when the individual flowers are mostly open and showing color. Hang to dry.

[Sweet William in Cherry and White](#) – A classic, long lasting cut flower. Harvest the stems when just a few (20%) of the florets have opened.

Zinnias – one of the easiest and most productive cuts, selection might include [Benary's Giant](#) (4-inch blooms) or Oklahoma (cute 2-inch blooms). Pinch when 6-8 inches tall. Don't cut until the stem is stiff or the flower head might flop over– this could be a day or two after the flower has fully bloomed. Here's a [how-to video](#).

Any questions? Ask me, I want your plants to grow: heather@heathersflowerfarm.com or (541) 490-5225.