



weekend 04.13.12

# lookout

Think  
outside  
the vase

Hit the garden or farmers  
market to DIY lush and  
lovely bouquets **40**



# outside in



## Bouquets go natural with garden blooms, herbs and simple vessels

Click on the FTD website, and you can still order a snoozy bouquet of daisies or — distressingly — a dozen roses that seem to have been scribbled on with rainbow markers.

But increasingly, nesters and florists are channeling Henry Thoreau, getting back to natural arrangements, seasonal blooms and simpler vases. “Floral design was stuck in a tight, contemporary feeling for so long, but I think people have started gravitating toward a more organic style,” says Nicolette Owen, the co-owner of Brooklyn’s Nicolette Camille Floral Design, who arranged lush, local dahlias, hydrangeas and ferns for the book “Bringing Nature Home” (\$45, Rizzoli).

This wild-at-heart look means thinking beyond traditional flower-shop fare, and mixing farmers market stems with leaves clipped from your house plants or snapdragons plucked from the garden.

### pick 'em

“Look at a flower’s bud,” says Brooklyn florist Nicolette Owen. “If it’s already open, it won’t last.”

“It’s all about textures and a romantic, not-forced look,” says local floral designer Sarah von Pollaro, whose website, Flowerempowered.com, details easy, in-season arrangements like a fall stunner with mini pumpkins, autumn leaves and orange roses or a spring centerpiece of front yard daffodils, tulips and a mess of greens. “You don’t even have to have lots of blooms if you mix things with plants,” she says. “Roses look great with mint from a window box.”

## Plot Summary

*Flowers came from a Vienna, Va. private garden. Use farmers market blooms, grocery-store stems or yard clippings for a similar vibe. All arrangements by Sarah von Pollaro of Flowerempowered.com; details next page.*

1. A mini vase goes glam with azaleas and hellebore.
2. Gran’s soup tureen can hold a springy centerpiece of greenery — eunonymous, climbing hydrangea (not blooming), deutzia, viburnum — combined with grocery-store tulip and ranunculus posies.
3. Reuse perfume flasks as vases for epimedium, sedum, Jacob’s Ladder, Lily of the Valley, muscari and hellebore.
4. Go green by filling empty cans with yucca, euphorbia cyparissias, cat mint, hosta, eunonymous and hellebore.

## keep 'em fresh

“You wouldn’t drink dirty water, and neither do flowers,” says D.C. floral designer Sarah von Pollaro. “Change the water daily, and trim the stems.”

You can go for Martha Stewart-esque mounds of one sort of flower (peonies, maybe), but the craftier approach is to try three or so plants or posies in one vase. “Maybe you’ve got a vine, some interesting greens and a few showy flowers,” says von Pollaro. Think about which way the flowers grow outside, but also don’t be afraid to cut stems shorter than you usually would or have them cascade over the rim of the vessel, since this often makes arrangements appear lush.

Bringing the outdoors in is easier if you have some space to plant posies in. Land barons can grow blooms like fragrant peonies, showy dahlias or zinnias, says Mary Cole, co-owner of Falls Church City’s Sam’s Farm garden center (7125 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church; 703-534-5292). “Just cut your flowers in the morning, bring them in and they’ll last and last,” she says. “It’s nice, because bringing things in and arranging them lets you show off





## dig in

See how D.C. flower designer Sarah von Pollaro created these arrangements at [Flowerempowered.com/?cat=6](http://Flowerempowered.com/?cat=6) or use the QR code at left.

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## branch out

A climbing vine, when combined with spikey sticks, can make a dramatic design. Here, we used hosta, arum, Harry Lauder walking stick and honeysuckle.

something you've made yourself. It's a conversation starter."

Even if your "garden" is a windowsill (or a fantasy), you can still try your clippers at the trend. "Get to know the growers at your farmers market," says Owen. "Or plant some things in containers. Dahlias are great in pots." You can also volunteer to prune a friend's plants in exchange for a few blooms or visit a pick-your-own farm (see the sidebar at right).

Vases can be as unorthodox as the mixes you're plopping in them. "I love to use antique soup tureens," says Owen. Other less-stuffy-than-Grandma's-Wedgewood options: midcentury earthenware crocks, Mason jars or even tin cans with the labels pulled off.

"You don't have to even spend money on vases, you don't have to spend much on flowers," says von Pollaro. "So that means you've got no excuse not to make your own arrangements."

JENNIFER BARGER (EXPRESS)



in "Bringing Nature Home," similar shades of posies add up to elegant, easygoing arrangements.

## Blooms to Go

Prefer to buy cut flowers and greens? You can find garden varieties at many farmer's markets as well as at Whole Foods, which often sources locally. Here are some other petal-powered spots:

### »» Fresh Farm Market

([Freshfarmmarket.org](http://Freshfarmmarket.org)) boasts multiple local markets in Dupont Circle, Penn Quarter and more which sell grown-nearby blooms. Many other farmers markets also offer in-season flowers.

»» **Blue Iris Flowers** at Eastern Market (225 7th St. SE; 202-547-3588) offers both local and imported posies.

»» **Pick your own** in the Va. countryside at Wollam Gardens ([Wollamgardens.com](http://Wollamgardens.com)); also sold at farmers markets and Whole Foods) or **Fields of Flowers** ([Fields-of-flowers.com](http://Fields-of-flowers.com)).

»» **The National Cathedral Flower Mart** hawks plants and inspiration. Free. May 4-5; info at [Allhallowsguild.com](http://Allhallowsguild.com).