

July 24, 2019



Dry Your Garden Flowers
Summer Brasuel
UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County

We tend our gardens with tender love and care. Why not preserve some of our flowers and plants to enjoy year round?

Many plants are naturally dry, while others need processing to remove moisture. Naturally dry plant materials include grasses, pine cones, cattails and seed pods. Grasses should be harvested after they open, but before they go to seed. Cattails should be cut when they first turn brown. To prevent the more fragile plant materials from shattering, spray them with hair spray or lacquer.

Most flowers and plants will need to have moisture removed. Several methods of drying can be used. The simplest method is air drying.

Many flowers can be air-dried simply by hanging them upside-down in a warm, dry, dark place. Some can be dried singly or in bunches, depending on their natural moisture content.

Air-drying is easy, with just a few simple steps. Use cut flowers of good quality in prime condition or slightly immature. Remove foliage from stems. If stems are weak or become brittle after drying, remove them and wire the flowers. Group the stems into small bunches and tie with a rubber band. The bunches will pull tighter as the stems shrink during drying. Hang upside down in a warm, dry, dark area such as a closet. Avoid damp rooms or direct sun on the flowers, but provide good air circulation. Allow to hang until thoroughly dried, which normally takes two to three weeks.

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Some flowers that are suitable for air-drying: acroclinium, baby's breath, bachelor's button, bells of Ireland, cockscomb, globe amaranth, larkspur, lavender, peonies, dcarlet sage and blue sage, statice, strawflower, and yarrow (yellow varieties best).

Other methods of drying flowers and plants involve using desiccants, pressing flowers, and even using a microwave oven!

Desiccants are especially good for flowers that have a high moisture content such as roses and dahlias. These products also produce more vibrantly colored dried flowers. Desiccants made from silica can be purchased at many hobby stores. Another method is to use a combination of borax and sand or cornmeal.

Have some fun with your homegrown flowers this year. Make some pretty bouquets and enter them in the El Dorado County Fair next year in the dried flower category.

Here are some resources about drying flowers with step-by-step instructions:

<https://extension2.missouri.edu/g6540>,

https://www.extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/_images/programs/hgic/Publications/non_HGIC_FS/FS556.pdf

Join UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County Wednesday, August 14, 2019 for our class, [Culinary Herbs: From Garden to Gourmet](#), at the Cameron Park Community Center, 9:00 a.m. to noon. We have another class, [Fall and Winter Vegetables](#), on Saturday, August 17, 2019, 9:00 a.m. to noon, at Government Center Hearing Room, Bldg. C, in Placerville.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512, or send us an email using the Ask a Master Gardener option on our website. Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. We also encourage you to visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College, El Dorado Center. See http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden for more information and days and hours of operation, or call us to schedule a tour. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. Master Gardeners are also on Facebook and Instagram; we hope you enjoy our postings and will share them with your friends.