

STAR

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Inside

Nature: Goldfinches signal spring. E3

GARDENING

Arrangements have a just-picked look

By Kathy Huber

The locavore movement has popularized the notion of eating organic food grown close to home. The idea of safe, tasty produce has sparked backyard vegetable gardens and markets that sell harvests from nearby farms.

Now, green floral design is popping up in the sustainable living lexicon, says Debra Prinzing, author of *The 50 Mile Bouquet: Seasonal, Local*

and *Sustainable Flowers* (St. Lynn's Press, 144 pp., \$17.95, available April 1).

We go local for veggies, why not flowers?

Prinzing interviewed flower farmers and designers in her journey through the sustainable/organic cut-flower industry. She found we're altering our flower-buying habits, opting more often for blooms from nearby growers rather than ones that have been imported. These fresh, seasonal flowers cre-

ate just-picked-from-the-garden bouquets.

The 50 Mile Bouquet is packed with DIY arrangements of organically grown blooms illustrated by David E. Perry's beautiful photos.

Prinzing offers these tips for creating ecofriendly designs.

1 Use blooms and foliage from your own garden or a nearby flower farm to create a seasonal, naturalistic bouquet.

"For gardeners especially, it's easy to view arranging floral ingredients in a vase as you would designing and planting a container," Prinzing says. "The same elements are needed: something tall, something fluffy, something that drapes over the rim of the container."

This creates the proven thriller, filler, spiller look.

For a modern arrangement, use one type of flower, or create a mono-
Floral continues on E3



David E. Perry

Dahlias, amaranth, roses and Northern sea oats create a peach-burgundy theme in Stacie Sutliff's floral arrangement in *The 50 Mile Bouquet*.

Try an all-green arrangement

Floral from page E1

chromatic arrangement with a single color or tone.

If you don't have access to seasonal flowers, create a foliage-only bouquet, Prinzing suggests.

"The trick to making an all-green or mostly green arrangement look attractive is to vary the texture by leaf size and shape," she says.

Broad-leaf and needle evergreens, ornamental grasses and herbs are options.

"Don't forget houseplants," she says. "They can add unexpected sizzle to an arrangement."

2 Use ecofriendly components in an arrangement, including recycled vases and containers, and vintage or new flower frogs as alternatives to green foam block, which stabilizes stems in a vase. The formaldehyde-based foam does not break down in landfills, and some have concerns about breathing and exposing their skin to the material, Prinzing says.

Pebbles, glass beads and marbles also will hold flowers and greenery in place.

Excelsior fibers or wood aspen, a packing material found at craft stores or wine shops,

also does the trick. Place a tangle of the fibers in a vase, and insert stems through the fibers to stabilize. When the arrangement is spent, toss everything but the vase into the compost pile.

Chicken wire is another stabilizer option, particularly for people

Prinzing presentation

Debra Prinzing, president of Garden Writers Association, will present "A Year in Flowers: Seasonal, Local and Sustainable Floral Ingredients" at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Cy-Fair Home and Garden Show, Berry Center, 8877 Barker Cypress. At 3 p.m., she'll present *Garden Getaways*, based on her book *Stylish Sheds and Elegant Hideaways: Big Ideas for Small Backyard Destinations* (Clarkson Potter, 224 pp., \$30). More information on the Saturday-Sunday Cy-Fair show is available at www.cyfairhomeandgarden.com.

who arrange flowers often. Snip an approximate 12-inch square and form into a loose ball that fits into the container's interior. If the container is shallow, Prinzing suggests sticky clay (available at craft stores) to anchor the chicken wire.

Or go all natural and create a framework of decorative twigs and branches to hold flowers and foliage in place. To build the framework, place each twig at an angle over the previous in the vase; insert flower and leaf stems.

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The 50 Mile Bouquet: Seasonal, Local and Sustainable Flowers by Debra Prinzing, with photos by David E. Perry