

Flower Styling In Arrangements

A good idea at any time of the year, flower arrangements to freshen up the home are especially practical now — with an inexpensive source of cut flowers right in your own garden!

What's more, these arrangements can be prettier and last longer than any you've done before, if you make use of a few simple tricks.

CUTTING FLOWERS

Cut off tips or stems at an angle, using a very sharp knife. (No scissors, please.) Dull instruments crush stems, making it hard for them to absorb water.

It's a good idea to scrape woody or heavy stems at the base with a sharp knife to allow greater intake of water. Thick stems can be split upward from the base for an inch or so. Just be sure that the split or scraped ends are not exposed to the air in finished arrangement.

Camouflage branch cuts by rubbing a piece of the clipped branch over the cut surface. Bark "dye" will disguise the cut beautifully.

Some garden flowers — zinnias, dahlias, and hydrangeas, for example — wilt quickly unless you sear their stems right after cutting. Use the hot flame of a candle or plunge stem tips into boiling water for 30 seconds. If you use the second method, tissue paper must be wrapped around the leaves and flowers to protect them from the steam.

WATER TEMPERATURE

Right after cutting put flowers in warm water, not cool or cold (its absorbed more quickly). For better-looking, longer-lived arrangements, "condition" flowers by placing them in deep, warm water in a cool place for several hours (even overnight) before you use them. When you water your cut flowers, always use tepid water.

ARRANGING AIDS

In place of chicken wire, mesh and other "underpinnings," many florists are using foam plugs which not only hold hard-and-soft-stemmed flowers in place at any angle, but double as non-spillable water holders. The product, called Oasis, is sold at garden, florists' and variety stores in the form of three-inch diameter plugs which can be cut or molded to fit any container — including baskets, platters, pedestals and anything else a search of attic or imagination reveals.

When using this product, remember that it is not a substitute for water; you still must regularly replace the moisture lost by evaporation or consumed by the flowers. If the flowers in arrangement are unusually soft or weak-stemmed, make an opening in the foam with a pencil or a toothpick before inserting the stems. Neither hard nor soft stems need to be pinned in place, however.

Another highly useful tool is a rubber bottle with a spray cap. With this, you can freshen an arrangement with a fine mist of water, keeping it attractive longer.

SUMMER ARRANGING

Many will no doubt be suggested to you by the flowers in your garden and the size and shape of the containers you've collected. To start your imagination working, the Smithers-Oasis Company, makers of Oasis foam, has these suggestions:

FLOWER FIRECRACKER

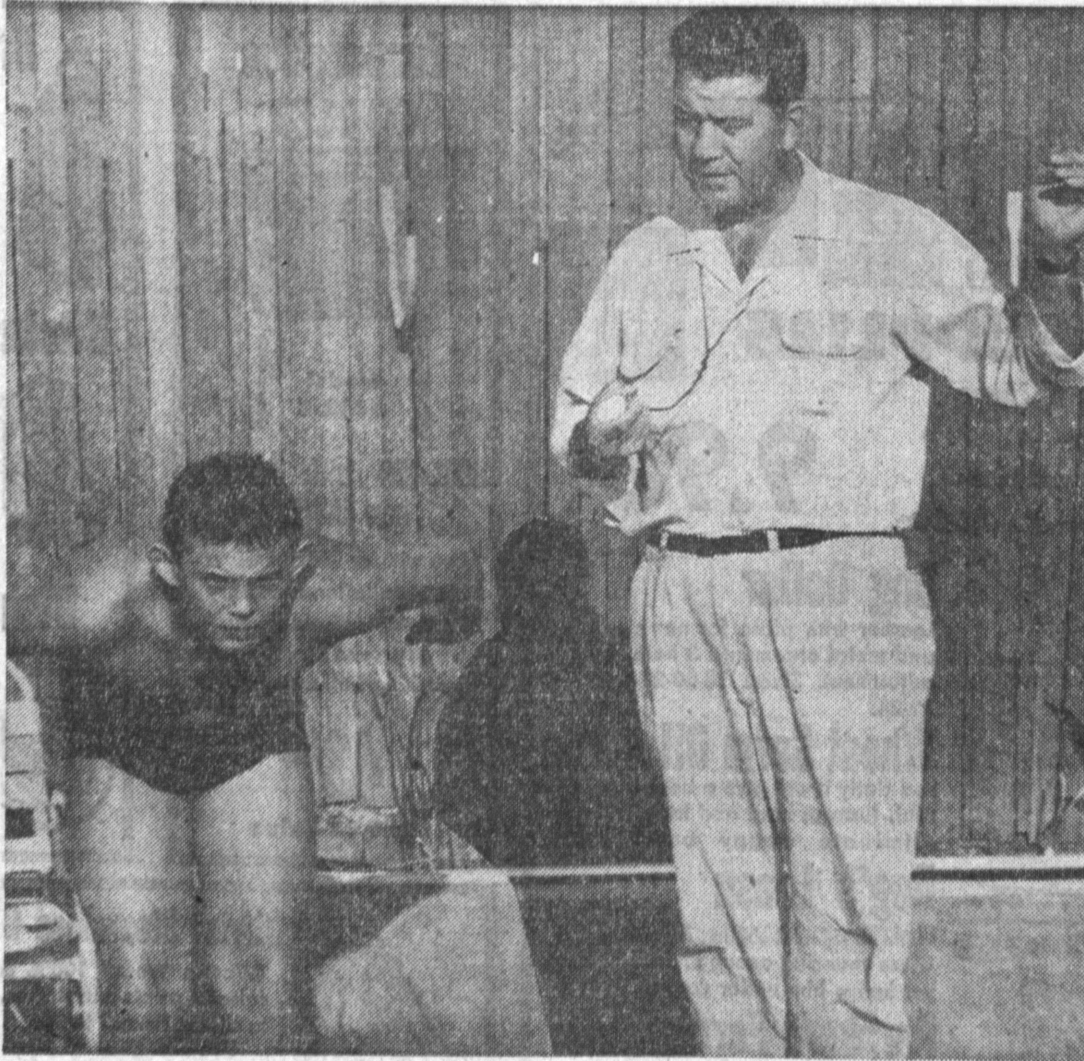
To celebrate holidays in style, make this festive centerpiece. Using two empty tin cans of the same diameter — place one on top of the other and cement together. Cover both cans with a sheet of red paper and fill the top one with one or two saturated Oasis flower holders. Insert red zinnias or geraniums in Oasis, adding ivy or geranium leaves. One or two large red candles complete the picture.

STRAWBERRY BASKETS

A row of these little baskets make a charming decoration for a luncheon or party. Save the splint wood baskets in which strawberries are packed. Line basket with foil. On this foundation place a saturated Oasis flower holder. Arrange pink or red short-stemmed miniature roses in the Oasis. For the final touch, add fresh strawberries to the basket, making stems by inserting pipe cleaners in the berries.

BREAD BASKET BOUQUET

A bread basket of any shape makes an unusual flower container for a family supper or any informal occasion. Place a saturated Oasis flower holder in an empty shallow tin can or plastic holder (or line with foil as you did the strawberry basket).



SWIM STAR Philip Houser, 13, of 3206 Antonio St., Torrance, waits for the starting signal from his father, Roy Houser, while working out at the South Bay Swim Club in preparation for the coming Olympic Games.

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Many Uses For Guavas

Pineapple Guava is not only good enough to eat, it's good enough to look at. So whether you acquire a taste for the tangy tropical fruit or not, it comes highly recommended as a garden shrub. The gray-green foliage and waxy white blooms with their prominent red stamens are altogether satisfactory by themselves. Harvesting the fruit is like having your cake and eating it too.

The California Association of Nurserymen ranks Pineapple Guava right alongside the Pomegranate as a shrub to be grown as much for its ornamental as for its edible fruit. Unlike Pomegranate, however, the Pineapple Guava ripens table-quality fruit even in the cooler, coastal areas of the north, thus making it the more versatile of the two shrubs. In addition, it is evergreen and one of the hardiest sub-tropicals.

If looks alone were considered, Pineapple Guava would stand up like this: Clean, fresh-looking foliage, green on the topside and silvery underneath. Early summer blooms an inch in diameter with succulent, waxy white petals shaded purple and a cluster of red stamens. Medium height, easily kept to ten feet or under with a light annual pruning.

For those who appreciate a tropical treat, the fruit may be eaten out of hand or used in preserves.

Pineapple Guava is not to be confused with true Guavas which it resembles in the shape of the fruit only. Fruit flavor is sharper and slightly reminiscent of Pineapple, while fruit color is green, not red or yellow like that of true Guavas. Call it a Feijoa if you want to be technically correct, but any C.A.N. nurseryman will know the "Guava" you mean if you use the common name.

In garden use, Pineapple Guava makes an excellent informal screen as well as a specimen shrub. Good rich soil and plenty of water during the summer months are the only cultural needs; and in return, you'll be richly rewarded.

GAY NINTIES SHOW

Another presentation of the Gay Nineties will take place at the Torrance Moose Hall, 1744 West Carson Torrance, Saturday, August 26, at 8 p.m.

The talent is donated by the members of the Loyal Order of the Moose 785 and the Women of the Moose Torrance Chapter 44.

Dancing will follow till 1 a.m. to the music of Vi and the 3 J's.



SWIM EXPERT Calra Jensen, 16, will demonstrate speed and synchronized swimming August 5 and 6 at the grand opening and open house of the South Bay Swim Club, 2429 W. Lomita Blvd., Lomita. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Jensen, who operate the swim school. The grand opening will mark completion of a big new A.A.U. pool, 42 feet by 75 feet. The swim club now is the largest in the South Bay area.

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