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## An Inside Look

ARRANGING FLOWERS in a glass basket placed in front of a mirror was one of my earliest experiences with plants. The designs became my first training in plant color, form, selection, preparation, and performance.

My monthly copy of *Flower Grower* never seemed to provide all the information that I needed, so I learned mainly by trial and error. But I quickly discovered that certain plants and color combinations provided better displays than others: Snapdragons and chrysanthemums were wonderful, while roses and camellias were difficult to use—they seemed to fall apart.

At 15 I went to work for a local florist, where I was exposed to a new world of experiences: refrigerators, greenhouses, lath houses, and fields of cut flowers. Every imaginable container, wire, and ribbon was available to me. Within a few months I was able to re-create any design I had seen, to introduce new color schemes based on my years of art classes, and to offer a personal commitment to help people experience the pleasure of plants. For me, it was one of the first steps toward a career of being an ambassador for gardening.

So I am especially delighted by this issue's special focus on cutting gardens. Those of you who haven't yet experienced the joy of growing your own cut flowers will find Chela Kleiber's article on creating both traditional and more contemporary cutting gardens particularly useful. And you, our members, describe your favorite cut flowers and offer tips on flower arranging.

Also in this issue, Kathleen Fisher extols the virtues of vines native to North America. If you're neglecting the vertical element of your garden, here's a chance to try something new.

Gardeners who find the third dimension of garden design challenging will also appreciate Rand Lee's intriguing recommendations of statuesque herbs that are bold and beautiful enough for use in the ornamental border.

Soggy areas of the garden are often perceived as "problem" sites, but a solution is sometimes simply a matter of rethinking your plant choices. Bulb experts Brent and Becky Heath offer innovative ideas for brightening damp spots in the garden with an array of bulbous plants that tolerate—or even demand—wet feet.

Moving to a new garden in a different region presents a host of challenges for any gardener. Rekha Morris shares with us her experiences in moving from a sunny urban garden in England to a rural woodland lot in South Carolina. Taking cues from the natural landscape and the native flora around her new home, she established a shade garden filled with colorful wildflowers.

Once you have digested the information in this issue, I encourage you to share the magazine—or give the gift of a membership—to someone you know. The world is filled with budding gardeners of all ages who just need a little nurturing. I like to refer to this process as growing a new gardener.

Ever in green,



—H. Marc Cathey, *AHS President Emeritus*

