

Florists should look for flowers and foliage that offer useful color, shape, texture, scent, and seasonal character. A garden visit is also a chance to see how plants grow, how their stems behave, and which details might inform an arrangement.

Notice color and form

Start by looking at the garden as a whole, then move closer. A border that reads as pale pink from a path may contain cream, peach, and deeper rose tones when you stand beside it. Note the combinations that feel balanced, as well as the small contrasts that make one flower stand out.

Look at the shapes, too. Round blooms can sit beside spires, flat flower heads, or loose sprays. A few grasses moving behind a cluster of flowers may suggest a way to give a bouquet more space and movement.

Bring a notebook or use your phone to record the plant names on labels. Photograph the whole plant as well as a close view of the flower, so you can remember its scale and habit later.

Study stems and foliage

Foliage does more than fill gaps. Watch how leaves frame a flower, where they sit on the stem, and how their surfaces catch the light. Soft, matte leaves create a different effect from glossy ones, even when both are green.

Look at the stems without assuming every garden plant is suitable for a vase. Some may be too short, brittle, or branching for the work you have in mind. Garden plants can still offer ideas for shape or color, even if you never use them as cut material.

- Stem length and the position of side shoots

- Leaf shape, color, texture, and density
- Flower size in relation to the whole plant
- Buds, seed heads, and other stages worth noting

Pay attention to timing and conditions

Record the date of your visit and what is flowering. A garden changes quickly: a bed full of buds one week may be open the next, while another plant is already forming seed heads. Repeated visits can build a more useful picture than a single trip.

Notice where plants are growing and what the weather has been like. A flower in a sheltered spot may look different from one exposed to wind and rain. These observations give context, though they do not guarantee the same timing or appearance elsewhere.

Scent deserves a note as well. Pause near a bloom and compare it with the scent in the air around the bed. Some flowers have little fragrance, while others can be noticeable at close range.

Ask and record before you cut

If a gardener is available, ask for the plant name and what they have observed about its flowering season. If you are researching cut flowers, ask about harvest and vase performance rather than judging them from the garden alone.

Do not pick flowers, leaves, or seed heads without permission. A photograph and a clear note are often enough to take an idea back to the worktable.

After the visit, sort your notes while the details are fresh. Keep the combinations, plant names, and unanswered points together, ready to guide your next arrangement or a later visit.

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