

paint the lily

Budding artists can go a step further than a still-life and paint the flowers themselves. Make your flowers last all year by drying blooms and painting them in beautiful Resene colours.

You need:

- Dried flowers and foliage in different shapes and sizes
- Mini portable spray unit (use a Colorpak portable spray unit from Resene, alternatively, use paintbrushes)
- Small artist's paintbrush
- Drop cloth
- Resene testpots or paints (Jane used Karen Walker Chalk Colour tinted to Resene Blanched Pink, Resene Weathered Orange and Resene Weathered Yellow)

Dried floral arrangements are becoming popular – and painted dried floral arrangements even more so. Dried flowers and paint are a match made in heaven. Dried blooms painted in Resene paints last infinitely longer than a fresh posy and their fragrance can be topped up with a few drops of essential oil.

To get the best from your flowers, pick blooms (or foliage) with a low moisture content. How can you tell? If a plant feels somewhat 'squishy', it is likely to have more moisture. If it feels slightly dry to the touch, it will most likely dry well.

Plants that dry well include statice, gypsophila, artemisia (for its silver foliage), strawflowers (*Helichrysum bracteatum*), hydrangeas, proteas, honesty seed heads, lavender, celosia, eucalyptus foliage, craspedia, achillea, love lies bleeding (*Amaranthus caudatus*), roses, clematis seed heads, globe thistles and globe amaranth. These can all be grown in your garden. But think, too, of flowers and foliage that can be foraged. The charming bunny tails that grow close to beaches are perfect for a dried flower arrangement, as are the heads of toetoe or pampas grass. Seed heads can be striking too. Look for dried

Right: Give your dried blooms a new lease on life with Karen Walker Chalk Colour paints, available from Resene ColorShops. The vase, hydrangea and protea are in Resene Blanched Pink. The pampas, small seed heads and foliage are in Resene Weathered Orange. The achillea and bunny tails are in Resene Weathered Yellow. The table is in Resene Half Smalt Blue and the wall is in Resene Pot Pourri.

words and image Jane Wrigglesworth



Arranging flowers

Choose a mix of different flowers – long and skinny flowerheads (such as lavender and salvias) mixed with big round blooms (such as hydrangeas and sunflowers). Play with different stem heights for effect but the whole arrangement, from top to bottom, should be two and a half times the height of the vase.

Growing hydrangeas

Hydrangeas are ideal for picking and drying. Plant in a partially shaded spot – they will grow in the sun, but their flowers will brown quickly in hot weather. Dig in plenty of compost before planting. Hydrangeas thrive in fertile soil. The best time to pick hydrangeas for drying is mid to late summer. They last longer in the vase than those picked earlier.

