



Preserving Nature's Blush

One of my favorite ways to round out what is available for creating wintertime arrangements is to incorporate an array of ingredients dried from the summer harvest.

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Some of the best materials to preserve are statice, globe amaranth (gomphrena), cress, and larkspur. Drying flowers is easy: Just pick them when they are fully open but not overly ripe, and hang them upside down in a warm, dry place for a few weeks until firm and completely dry. Gently wrap dried bundles in newspaper, and store them away until winter, when they come in handy for wreath-making, crafts, and weaving in with fresh flowers. Dried material is quite fragile, so handle it with care.

For the bouquet shown opposite, I scoured our property for unexpected ingredients. Chocolatey azalea foliage, maroon pieris buds, and copper yew set off large peach amaryllis. Dried strawflowers and fragrant hyacinths accentuate the soft palette, while creamy spray roses add softness. I saved the most delicate ingredients for last, threading in a few stems of dried cress and fuzzy golden grasses for movement and sparkle. I love how beautiful and romantic this centerpiece turned out, given the time of year.

See A Year in Flowers by Erin Benzakein for more information.

PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS BENZAKEIN

