



Forcing Flowering Branches

Springtime is nature's time of resurrection. With the warmth and light of springtime, the beauty of nature is renewed. Trees blossom and grass grows green. Flowers give promises of fruit and seeds to come. In the northern hemisphere, it is as if nature is rejoicing, echoing the joy of the Lord's resurrection. This may be why we want to bring flowers into our homes as we get ready to celebrate Easter.

Those celebrating Easter before flowering trees start blooming, may be able to sample the beauty of spring a few weeks early. Cut small branches of flowering shrubs and bring them indoors in a pot of water. Forsythia, dogwood, magnolia, viburnum, flowering cherry, apple, plum, almond, redbud, azalea, rhododendron, and many others can yield early blossoms indoors.

Procedure

1. Gather branches one to two months before they would bloom outdoors.
2. If possible, cut the branches on a mild day. It is also good to cut them at the warmest part of the day, when the buds are filled with sap.
3. Select small branches about 2-3 feet long that have plump buds. (Take care that you maintain the shape of the tree or shrub as you choose which branches to cut.)
4. Put the branches in a bucket of warm water and keep in a cool place (out of direct sunlight) until the buds are ready to open. Change the water every other day.
5. Make fresh cuts at the bottom of the branches periodically to facilitate water intake.
6. When the buds start to swell and show color, bring the branches into a warmer room and get ready to enjoy the blossoms!
7. The blossoms should last about a week.