

PRNewswire Release

**Harvard Research Shows Flowers are the Perfect Pick-Me-Up
to Boost Morning Moods**

*Top Floral Designer Offers Quick, Simple “How-To’s”
on Fashioning Flowers for Positive Moods in the Morning*

Alexandria, VA, October 2007 – Recent research confirms that flowers might be the perfect pick-me-up for millions of Americans who do not consider themselves “morning people.” Participants of a behavioral study conducted by researchers at Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital confirmed that they feel least positive in the early hours but reported being happier and more energetic after looking at flowers first thing in the morning.

“The morning blahs, it turns out, is a real phenomenon, with positive moods – happiness, friendliness and warmth, for example – manifesting much later in the day,” says lead researcher Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D. “Interestingly, when we placed a small bouquet of flowers into their morning routines, people perked up.”

Dr. Etcoff is referencing the fact that participants in the study responded to the flowers, which had been placed in rooms they frequented in the morning. Overall, the participants reported they liked to look at the blooms first thing in the morning, particularly in the kitchen. The final study results demonstrate that flowers impact people emotionally at home, causing them to feel less anxious and more compassionate. They even reported a boost of energy that lasted through their day.

“What I find interesting is that by starting the day in a more positive mood, you are likely to transfer those happier feelings to others – it’s what is called mood contagion,” says Etcoff. “And, the kitchen is the place where families tend to gather in the morning – imagine how big a difference a better morning mood can make.”

New York City floral and garden designer Rebecca Cole, host of Discovery Channel’s *Surprise by Design*, is not surprised by these findings. “I grew up with a kitchen often decorated with flowers,” says Cole. “My family knew instinctively that flowers brought joy to the people who came in contact with them – and now there is scientific proof.”

Cole shares her floral design experience with others, showing them how to use flowers to capture emotion and encourage community in their kitchens.

“There are so many places for flowers in the kitchen – the room where we spend most of our waking time,” says Cole. “From the breakfast nook to the table to the

countertop, flowers just belong. It's even the most convenient room to change the water!"

Whether you visit the supermarket or elicit the help of your florist, Cole suggests the following tips for experimenting with color to trying new, dramatic styles to the creative use of containers.

- Cut flower stems short and place flowers in interesting or everyday kitchen containers such as tea tins, jelly jars, salt and pepper shakers or even pretty wine glasses. Pick something to match your personal style.
- To make a big "wow" statement, choose lots of one type of flower. Take off the leaves below the waterline and place them in a big jug, teapot, coffee tin or water pitcher for a burst of cheer.
- Select surprising color combinations to make a bold statement. For example, try red and purple stems in grouped vases. Or, use monochromatic flowers, from one color family, to create a simple, pleasing effect.
- Choose citrus-colored flowers for a sunny feeling. Place a bud vase holding a few stems of yellow and orange blooms inside a bowl filled with oranges. Or, place a narrow vase of flowers inside a wider, but equally tall, vase. Fill the larger vase with lemons or limes to surround the smaller vase for a fresh look.
- Play off of accent colors in your kitchen to bring a splash of color with flowers. Look around and match flowers to decorative wall plates, placemats or curtains to pull out key accent colors.
- Line three bud vases or decorative bottles, low or tall, along the middle of your kitchen table or along your sink for a fun, dramatic effect. It's also a great conversation starter when guests drop by.
- Inspire neatness. Place flowers where kitchen clutter typically congregates to prevent future messes from settling there.

"What could be simpler than bringing home a few blooms to brighten your kitchen table and your mood?" says Cole. "Experiment, design and smile."

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For floral photography, go to www.aboutflowers.com/media.

The Home Ecology of Flowers Research Methodology (2006)

Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., of Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital and her research team investigated the effects of flowers in the home environment on well being. Fifty-four people, ages 25-60, were studied using a series of self-report measures allowing the research team to know where the person was, with whom and what they were doing when they experienced an emotion, both when flowers were and were not present. Half of the participants received a “control” home décor item, other than flowers, to ensure study validity. After living with either flowers or the control intervention for approximately one week, participants rated their feelings during specific periods of the day, recording emotions during each episode. The research team also took photographs before and after flowers were delivered to determine any changes in use or appearance of the room.

About Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D.

Nancy Etcoff, Ph.D., is a faculty member of the Harvard Medical School and the Harvard University Mind/Brain/Behavior Initiative and a practicing psychologist at the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Psychiatry where she is the Director of the Program in Aesthetics and Well Being. At Harvard, she currently teaches a course entitled “The Science of Happiness.”

About Rebecca Cole

Rebecca began her design business 12 years ago and is the author of three books, *Potted Gardens*, which won the Quill and Trowel Award, *Paradise Found: Gardening in Unlikely Spaces* and *Flower Power*. According to Oprah, Rebecca Cole is “one of the country’s top designers.” E! says she’s “a designer with boundless energy and limitless imagination,” and the *New York Post* coined her “Garden Goddess.” Rebecca has hosted Discovery Channel’s *Surprise by Design* since its inception in 2002. She contributed to the *Today* show for six years running, and has appeared on scores of television and radio shows including, *Oprah*, *The View*, *CNN* and *BBC World News*. Her career, business and home have been profiled in over 300 national and international publications as diverse as *Architectural Digest*, *Forbes*, *Budget Living*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Us Magazine*, *Hanajikan Japan*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Woman’s Day*, *Travel and Leisure*, *Air France*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Country Living*, *The New Yorker* and *Greek Maison*.

SIDEBAR: Rebecca Cole's Rules & Recipes for Easy, Everyday Kitchen Flowers

Today's kitchen interior trends – such as more prominent windows, expansive islands and countertop space, open floor plans and creative seating areas – all lend well to another major trend – bringing the outdoors inside. But whether your kitchen is spacious or cozy, there is no better or easier way to welcome nature into your kitchen than with fresh-cut flowers.

For years, interior and floral designer Rebecca Cole has been helping people choose flowers that are grounded to their personal style and taste. Now, she shares her simple advice for anyone who wants to add some floral flair to the hub of their home.

“Whether you want a kitchen that is relaxing, stylish, functional or elegant, you can accent with flowers to help inspire that atmosphere,” says Cole. “While there are no hard and fast rules, certain design guidelines will get you on your way to effortless, everyday arrangements.”

Rebecca's Color and Design *Truth or Dare*

Whether your style is cottage or classic, modern or mosaic, B&B or urban chic, you can tailor these floral design tips to work in your kitchen. Place the flowers on your table or countertop. The most important thing is to enjoy them every day.

Truth: Try Classic or Commanding Colors and Containers

- To be bold with color, choose just two colors at a time. Yellow and orange, for example, look amazing and bold together. Remember, in flowers, green is neutral and white is a color.
- For a simple look, select a variety of flowers but keep it to one color. It's a sure-fire bang of modern beauty. For the kitchen table, keep the stems cut to below eye level and about the same length as each other.
- When bringing home flowers from the supermarket or florist, have a couple of small vases and containers available so you can place a few flowers around the house. You'll be amazed how many small arrangements you can get out of a single bunch of flowers. Be creative with containers – try a demitasse cup, champagne flute or even fun salt and pepper shakers.

Dare: Dabble in both Dramatic and Everyday Design

- When arranging with a variety of flowers, think “scale” and “texture.” Mix large-headed flowers such as sunflowers, peonies, hydrangeas and dahlias with smaller blooms. Also try adding some fun, textured blossoms such as belles of Ireland or delphinium with softer petals like sweetpea or lisianthus.
- Try “monobotanic,” all one type of flower, for a simple, elegant look. Roses (standard or spray), alstroemeria, lilies, tulips or gerbera daisies work well. Place them in a big jug, pail or coffee tin for maximum impact.
- Mix everyday, “humble” flowers such as daisies, carnations and mums with “showoffs” like peonies, roses and ranunculus. Keep the color palette simple.

For more floral decorating and care tips, visit www.flowerpossibilities.com and www.aboutflowers.com.

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