

CHICAGO for her information



COLD COMFORTS

BY CASEY COOPER

THE COLD, GRAY WEATHER OF FEBRUARY, March and April can sometimes leave you feeling down. Something as simple as a single leaf—a vivid tropical leaf — or a waft of heady hyacinth, or a mass of voluptuous, sea-blue hydrangea, can perk you up. In a bare Midwest winter, these elements may be out of place, but they're not out of reach. They can be what gets you through the cold, dark and gray months.

As the owner of Botanicals, a flower design company in Chicago, I appreciate my job most in winter. At work, I enjoy the aromatic blends of stems, leaves and fragrant flowers from far off places such as Colombia, Hawaii and Thailand and the beautiful rich, saturated colors of lilies and orchids. Seeing such beauty really gets you ready for ANY day.

When you pass through a room with flowers in it, notice, you will almost always look at them. Breathe them in. Touch them. Draw energy from them. They're powerful. A single stem or leaf or petal can be just as powerful as an entire arrangement, but they need to be fresh—dried flow-

ers and silk flowers simply do not have the vibe.

After 20 years in the flower industry, I started teaching floral design classes at our studio last year. I wanted to share how I survive the winter with fellow casualties of the calendar. Our first class fell on a January evening. It had snowed 12 inches that afternoon. Students were set to come from many miles around. I was convinced none would make it, yet every single student showed up. At the end of class, as I ushered people out of the door and into the icy darkness, their hearts were aglow, their arms filled with colorful bouquets and their faces filled with enormous smiles. Never mind windshields to scrape and treacherous streets to navigate, every soul was bright and warm.

Fresh blooms or foliage of any type, variety, hue or number will bring you comfort from the cold. You will feel the brightness nature brings to your space and your soul. Spend your winter learning how to arrange flowers. For class information please call 773.269.3142 www.botanicals.com 🍀