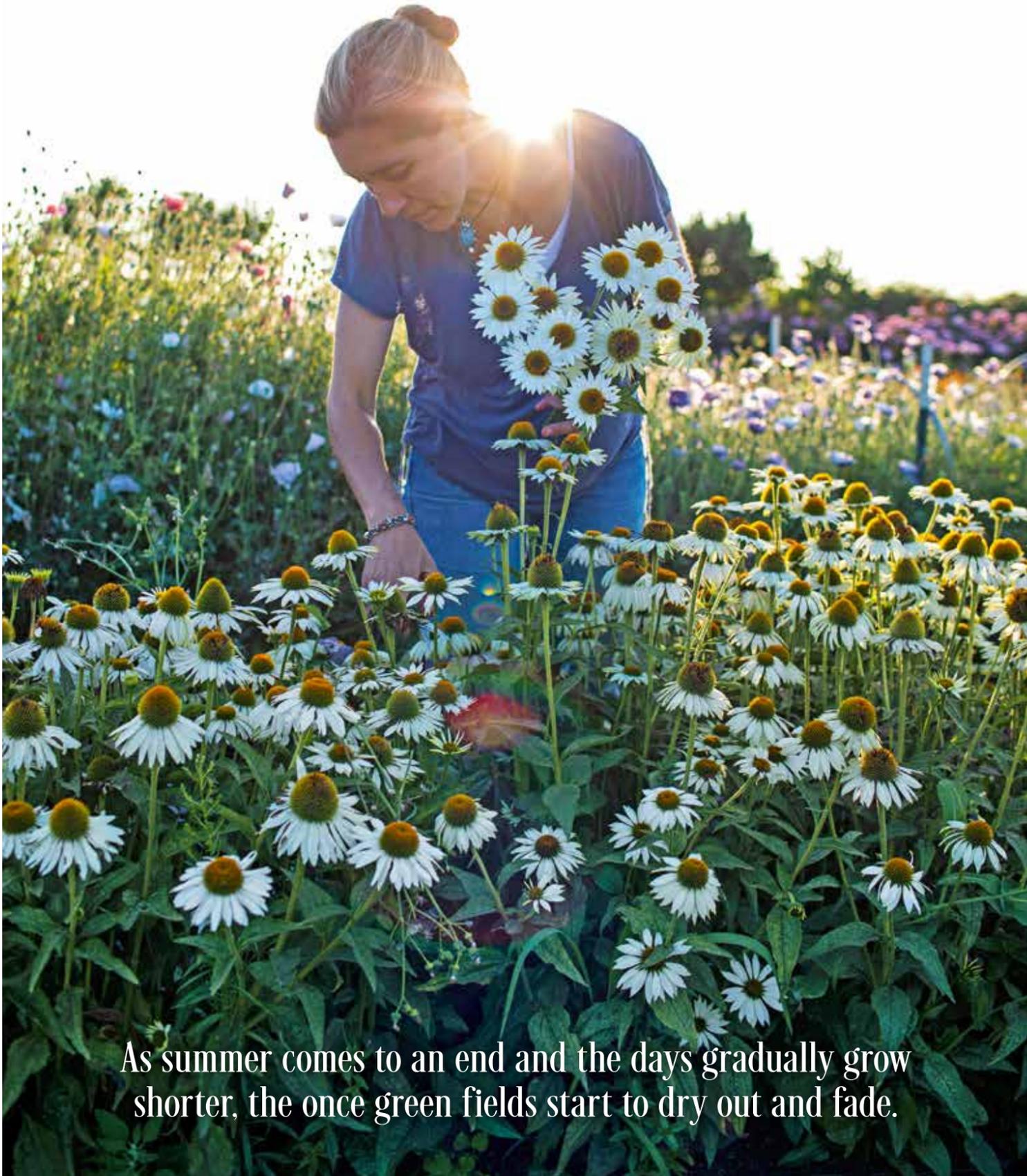




# DIY florist: make A meadow-inspired centerpiece

American flower-farmer  
Erin Benzaken specialises in  
growing and designing with  
seasonal blooms.





As summer comes to an end and the days gradually grow shorter, the once green fields start to dry out and fade.

*In the high summer, our fields are literally a sea of flowers and when I walk the rows, I have to part the waves of waist-high plants to wade through them.*

**A**t this time of year, the perennial section is in its prime, and echinacea stands out as one of the stars. Of all the perennial flowers that we grow, it is one of the most loved by the beneficial creatures living on the farm, from the hummingbirds to the honeybees. All day long the rows of echinacea are literally buzzing with pollinators. At the end of a long day, I love to sit in the perennial patch where, if I keep still long enough, I notice that everything is moving, humming, and vibrating.

The stress of the day dissipates and I become more in tune with nature, which always helps put things in perspective.

One of my favourite challenges is to elevate even the most common flowers – those that are often overlooked, such as cosmos and daisies – by combining them with more refined, romantic ingredients like garden roses.

The tension formed between these opposites always tends to kickstart conversations as people stop to comment on the elements they recognise. White echinacea, a common flower native to America, inspired this bouquet, it embraces the blooms of summer. From there, I hunted around the farm and gathered all of the more refined white flowers I could find, including PeeGee hydrangeas, clematis, and mignonette. To offset these, I chose a few textural ingredients that aren't commonly thought of for bouquets, including immature raspberries and pokeweed seedpods.

To retain a loose, airy quality, I gave each of the flowers room to breathe and express their individual nature.

For my vessel, I chose a beautiful vintage mixing bowl from my favourite antique store. It's so well worn that the glaze is partially rubbed off, exposing a linen-colored base that echoes the echinacea centres and the soft gold of the unripe raspberries. ❀



## INGREDIENTS

### Structural foliage

*Rosa multiflora* foliage

### Supporting ingredients

Pokeweeds • *Hydrangea* 'Bobo'  
'Bobo' • *Hydrangea* 'Little Lamb' • Raspberry 'Tulameen'

### Textural ingredient

*Clematis* 'Paul Farges'

### Supporting flower

*Echinacea* 'Coconut Lime'

### Focal flower

*Echinacea* 'White Swan'

### Airy accent

White mignonette

## NZ ALTERNATIVE PLANTS

Erin is based in America and not all the plants she uses are available here.

With the hydrangeas, in place of 'Bobo' try 'Bombshell'; in place of 'Little Lamb', try 'Limelight'; in place of *Echinacea* 'Coconut Lime', try *Echinacea purpurea* 'Alba'; and in place of *Clematis* 'Paul Farges' try our native *Clematis paniculata*.



*Rosa multiflora*  
foliage



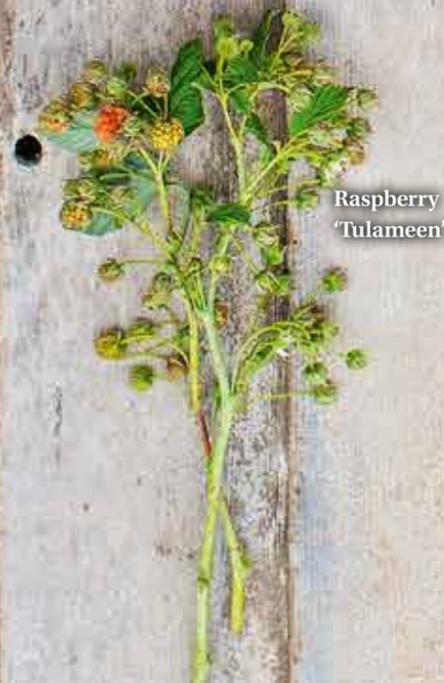
*Echinacea*  
'White Swan'



White mignonette



*Clematis* 'Paul Farges'  
(Summer Snow)



Raspberry  
'Tulameen'



*Hydrangea* 'Bobo'



*Hydrangea*  
'Little Lamb'

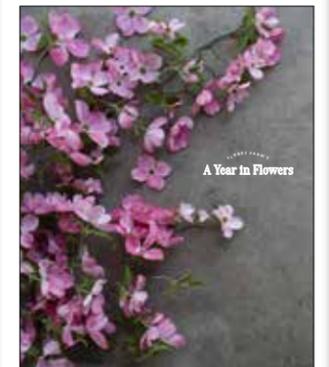


Pokeweed

*Echinacea*  
'Coconut Lime'



Extracted from  
**FLORET FARM'S  
A YEAR IN FLOWERS**  
by Erin Benzakein  
Photographs by Chris  
Benzakein with permission  
by Chronicle Books 2020.  
Distributed in New Zealand by  
Bookreps NZ. RRP \$59.99.



## WIN

We have one copy of  
*Floret Farm's A Year in Flowers*  
to be won!  
Enter at [nzgardener.co.nz](http://nzgardener.co.nz)  
by March 29, 2020.