

A meditation on the beauty of a floral icon, *Ranunculus* explores and celebrates the diversity of a familiar yet fascinating group of plants.

*Ranunculus*, aka buttercup, is the flower of the moment, as gardeners, florists, and alpine enthusiasts all over the world embrace the possibilities of this plant once more. From the wild plants of the high mountains to species that thrive in pond margins or flourish in fast-flowing streams; from the familiar golden flower of lawn and meadow to the most popular cultivated forms, buttercups are variable. And though some seem impossibly delicate, many are excellent garden plants.

This guide delves into a genus that is widespread and intriguing. Florists' ranunculus, with their sumptuous, layered, tissue-paper petals and myriad colors are prized as an early season alternative to roses and peonies. While 'Italian Ranunculus' and Cloni® forms have become legendary for their consistent blooms, softer, more mutable flowers are gaining popularity and dainty Butterfly® ranunculus are rising stars.

Renowned floral photographer Georgianna Lane captures the blooms in exquisite detail, while leading garden writer Naomi Slade brings to life the historical background of a flower that has become ubiquitous yet still has the power to surprise.

\$24.99 U.S.

Jacketless Hardcover  
7 1/2 x 9 3/4 in, 240 Pages  
125 Color Photographs  
Pub Date: March 2023

ISBN-13: 978-1-4236-6356-0  
52499



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# RANUNCULUS

NAOMI SLADE  
photography by  
GEORGIANNA LANE



Gibbs  
Smith

NAOMI SLADE  
photography by  
GEORGIANNA LANE

# RANUNCULUS

beautiful varieties for home and garden



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## How to dry Ranunculus

Despite their dewy appearance, classic double ranunculus are reasonably easy to preserve, and these single butterfly forms and field buttercups still easier; so drying the flowers is a good way of keeping for posterity a few blooms from a celebration posy, or creating the raw materials for a longer-lasting – and increasingly fashionable – wreath or installation.

Cut the flower as usual and keep it in water for about a week or until the bloom has fully expanded. Then hang individual flowers or small bunches upside down – suspending them from a coat-hanger is effective – somewhere airy, dry and preferably dark is ideal, although a north-facing room will suffice. If they show signs of disintegrating, apply a few light coats of strong-hold hairspray.

The colours will lighten as the flower fades, but as long as the dried flower is kept out of direct sunlight they will last a surprisingly long time, and while traditional florists' ranunculus will become even more papery, butterfly ranunculus retain the echo of a sheen, even when fully desiccated.







# Hanoi

Lush and lavish, and with all the multi-petaled appeal of roses and peonies, *Ranunculus asiaticus* Cloni® Success® Hanoi® is the sort of flower that is perfect for every occasion.

The series is known as the 'Clonis' or 'Clooneys' in affectionate shorthand – due to the fact that the flowers are identical clones – and it is made up of varieties with matching forms but in a whole range of colours. Within this, delicately hued Hanoi® is a vision of romance and it is this quality that has made it a superstar, winner of awards and arguably one of the best-known named ranunculus in the world.

The substantial flower is the perfect bridal bloom: impactful but dainty, with a structured, layered quality reminiscent of a wedding dress itself. Fashionably soft and mutable, each petal starts off in the green-cream of pistachio, before maturing to blush pink then, finally, an exquisite, translucent shell-pink perfection as the bloom peaks in both size and magnificence.

Bred and selected specifically as a cut flower, the Cloni® series has extra-large blooms that are borne on sturdy stems, and they have an exceptional vase life.

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*Ranunculus asiaticus* Cloni® Success® Hanoi®

**Height** 45–60cm (18–24in)

**Spread** 30–60cm (12–24in)

**Flower size** Very large

**Colour** Palest blush pink

**Flowering period** Late autumn to mid-spring

**Habit** Fairly upright

**For cutting and growing** An outstanding and widespread cut flower; tubers for the garden are not available



