

Designed in the 1950s by
Lisbet Job but still as fresh as
daisy. Koksvoxter wallpaper,
£59 per roll, from the
Borastapeter Scandinavian
Designers 11 range by
cloudberryliving.co.uk.



the [♥]comfort of things

FLORAL FURNISHING

There are certain things in your home that are like old friends, they always cheer you up. This month we feel the love for sprigs, blooms and boughs

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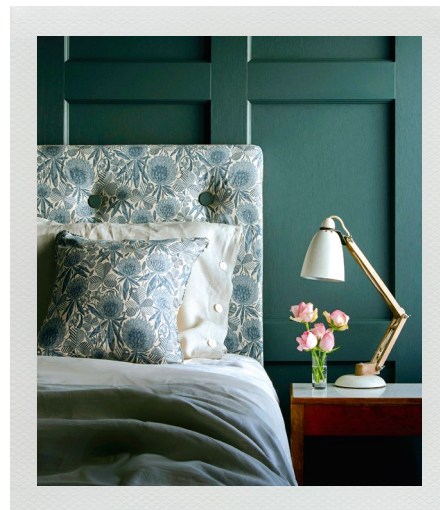
In a perfect world we would all come skipping in from the garden with a trug full of home-grown blooms and arrange them artfully in generous vases. Back in the real world, however, it's more a case of treating ourselves to a bunch on the way home from work and sticking them in a jug. Nothing is as lovely as a vase of cut flowers but if you aren't fortunate enough to have the budget to buy them regularly, or a garden bursting with blooming borders, decorating with florals instead could help deliver the necessary horticultural boost.

Nature, of course, has all the best designs so it's little wonder that

"One wall covered with a bold flower paper will avoid mimsiness"

designers return to it over and over for inspiration. From flowers in bud, to sprigs of blossom, boughs of wisteria, to seedheads and leaves, floral motifs appear repeatedly on wallpaper, furnishing fabric, tableware and bedlinen. Choosing which floral design to introduce into the home however does require a certain amount of control and selectivity. Despite grannyish florals being back in fashion, banish all thoughts of papering a room with pink rosebud wallpaper and furnishing with matching cushions and bedspreads. It might also be wise to give chintz (glazed calico printed with exaggerated flowers and leaves) a swerve, unless you want your home to look like a suburban bungalow. Which is not to say that there is no place for small, pretty florals if used wisely – to wallpaper a bookshelf, or on a couple of cushions, say. They can add a touch of cottage garden romanticism (or country house grandeur, depending on your ambition) to a room.

To keep things modern not fusty, go big. One wall covered with a bold flower wallpaper will avoid mimsiness – little says elderly aunt's spare room like four walls papered with tiny pansies – and a duvet cover with a simple sprig-design is enough flowers for most bedrooms. »



THE POWER OF FLOWERS

Ways to bring floral loveliness indoors

Swathe the home with fabric

Or at least add a few cushions, those instant sofa-refreshers. Dig around in the remnants box in the soft furnishing floor at department stores for appealing floral fabric off-cuts. And if your sofa is looking shabby, now might be the time to reupholster. More expensive but a source of delight in your living room.

Make time for tea

Come over all Lady of the Manor and serve tea from a teapot, poured into bone china cups and saucers decorated with floral sprigs. Buck the trend for plain glazed ceramic tableware and dig around in charity shops for rose-covered, fluted tea sets with gold rims. Have a gathering coming up but not sure you want to commit? Hire an afternoon tea set from bettylovesvintage.co.uk, from £49 for ten people.

Turn the bedroom into a bower

Flowery sheets and matching pillowcases may smack of a faded seaside B&B but there are plenty of contemporary designs to bring them up to date. Team with a plain bedspread or throw to keep everything under control. Cabbages & Roses (cabbagesandroses.com) has prettily sprigged duvet covers, £70, and Ikea's Blagran blue and white cotton quilt cover and pillowcases (£20, ikea.com) is floral without being twee.

THREE TO MAKE, BUY OR CUSTOMISE

Bring the freshness of a summer meadow indoors by covering the walls with a pretty wallpaper.

Here are three ways to do it



1 Make

The best way to create something truly distinctive is to make it yourself. Purchase a roll of lining paper and experiment with a few stencils or even with painting freehand. Or paint a wall in a single colour, and draw a blossomy bough over a bed. Alternatively, sign up for a wallpaper workshop, above, run by designer Louise Body in St Leonards-on-Sea, and learn how to hand-print wallpaper or fabric by block printing using your own design carved into lino. louisebody.com



2 Buy

Wallpaper is having a moment with a new wave of independent designers creating desirable wall coverings. Abigail Edwards' hand-designed wallpaper and fabric is influenced by nature and fairy tales. Her Secret Garden wallpaper, above, (£89 a roll, abigailedwards.com) is inspired by Frances Hodgson Burnett's book and includes metallic moths hidden among the ivy leaves. Also worth a look is Emily Dupen's riotous English Garden Wallpaper, £75 for a 3m panel, dupenny.com.



3 Customise

Let the queen of chalk paint Annie Sloan be your inspiration and experiment with decoupage. Find a roll or two of floral paper to your liking, then snip with scissors into wreaths, sprigs or whatever takes your fancy and glue on to a wall painted with a light paint wash. (The wall above is painted with Svenksa Blue Chalk Paint, £19.95 per litre, anniesloan.com.) Try to keep the pattern as regular as possible and, once dry, coat with a matt varnish to keep everything in place.



HOME QUANDARIES

Even though I live in a flat, my decorative style could be called 'country cottage' ie the more flowers the better, whether they are in a vase or on wallpaper, cushions, etc. My boyfriend, on the other hand, is more Scandi in his approach to decoration. We are about to move in together – have you any tips on achieving interior design harmony?

Answer in brief: take a rain check on the chintz and embrace crisp Scandi design instead for the best of both worlds.

Fortunately, many Scandinavian designers, with their love of the outdoors and the summer months, are also enthusiasts of flora and fauna. However, unlike the UK tradition of flowery chintzes and sprigged prettiness, the Scandis tend to go for a more geometric, stylised take on natural forms. Check out the splashy flowery fabrics by Finnish company Marimekko (marimekko.com), or the geometric retro floral wallpaper (pictured), which is influenced by Scandi design. Something there for both of you. **S**