

The best... flowers for delivery

Arena Flowers This is the first UK florist to sell ethically sourced Fair Flowers Fair Plants (FFP) products, says The Independent. It buys flowers direct from growers throughout the world that comply with strict environmental standards and ethical working practices. The flowers are "amazingly varied and beautifully arranged". Orders can be delivered anywhere in the UK. Prices start at £26.99, including delivery. Contact: 0800-035 0581; www.arenaflowers.com.

The Real Flower Company (below) If you want your flowers to smell as good as they look, order them from this Hampshire farm, says The Guardian. They sell bunches of herbs, eucalyptus and foliage all year round. British-grown scented garden roses are available from May to November, and sweet peas from April to June. Prices start at £15 a bunch; delivery is £6. Contact: 01730-818300; www.realflowers.co.uk.



David Austin Roses (above) Anyone nostalgic for the charm of the traditional English garden will love these "gorgeous" roses in gentle, pastel colours, says The Independent. Each bouquet is hand-tied and delivered with the flowers in open bud to ensure that they last. Bouquets start at £39.95 plus delivery costs. Contact: 01902-376300; www.davidaustinroses.com.

Scilly Flowers This flower farm on St Martin's, one of the Scilly Isles, produces stunning blooms all year round, says The Guardian. Buy scented narcissi (40 stems, £15), grown outdoors, from October to late April, and scented show pinks (50 stems, £16.50) from May to September. Prices include postage. Contact: 01720-422169; www.scillyflowers.co.uk.

Fast Flowers Mary Jane Vaughan's bouquets are beautifully composed, says The Independent, ensuring that she has brides-to-be "clamouring for her services". Fast Flowers also does standard bouquets of English and Dutch blooms. Prices from £30; delivery from £5.50. Contact: 020-7385 8400; www.fastflowers.co.uk.

Church Flowers This family-run Guernsey-based business is a hidden gem, says The Guardian. All flowers are grown under unheated glass and are sent out on the day of order. They are picked, arranged and tied by hand and come with flower food to ensure they're fresh on arrival. Freesias cost £16.50 for 40 stems and are best in spring. Alstroemeria is £21.50 for 20 stems. Delivery costs are included. Contact: www.churchflowers.co.uk.

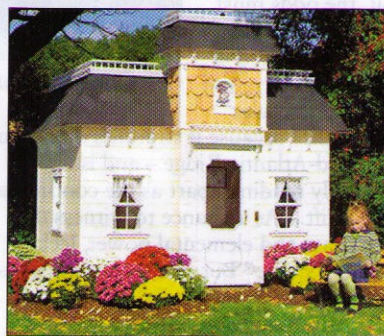
Aquarelle (below) This slick outfit takes a photo of your bouquet before it is despatched, so you can see (via an internet link) exactly what you have sent, says The Independent. The company specialises in roses and freesias, and all flowers are delivered in water or gel to keep them fresh. Prices start at £25 and UK delivery costs £6.50. They will also deliver abroad. Contact: 020-8772 9924; www.aquarelle.co.uk.



Tips of the week... how to shop for vintage clothes

- Vintage is just another name for second-hand clothing, used by the industry to make it sound more exclusive. Unless it's an original designer item, it shouldn't be costly.
- Visit charity shops in prosperous areas if you're after designer labels.
- Set out on your shopping trip with a clear idea of what you want. Otherwise, you may be overwhelmed.
- Start with accessories. Bags, belts and scarves instantly refresh an outfit and are easily incorporated into everyday wear.
- Steer clear of anything stained, as the marks probably won't come out in the wash. Avoid cheap, man-made fabrics. They're not worth buying second-hand.
- Look out for little details – a lace edging round the cuffs, a great set of buttons or a fantastic loud print – and imagine it in the context of your wardrobe.
- Have patience. Nine times out of ten you won't find anything, but the tenth might unearth a gem of a piece.

And for those who have everything...



Get your child on the property ladder with a Victorian playhouse. This "glorified Wendy house" is 9ft tall and features a turreted roof, stained-glass windows, a fireplace and a loft.

Price: £17,000.

Contact: www.rainbowplay.co.uk

Where to book... a survival course

www.woodlandcrafts.com This organisation offers a range of courses for adults and children over 12. On a family bushcraft weekend, you'll learn to build a waterproof shelter out of woodland material, and create a fire by friction.

www.islaybushcraft.co.uk Participants build shelters in caves, and catch their own food by fly-fishing and foraging along the coast of the Hebridean island of Islay.

www.raymears.com Ray Mears's company Woodlore offers a wide variety of options, from gentle introductions to outdoor cooking to challenging week-long courses where you survive in the wilderness, armed only with a knife and a cooking pot.

www.wildernessgathering.co.uk At this festival in August, you can learn skills such as arrow-making and spoon carving.

www.wildwoodbushcraft.com Learn basic skills in a day in West Sussex, or head to the wilderness of Inverpolly in Scotland for a week-long course based on traditional