Pearly Everlasting  
(*Anaphalis margaritacea*)

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Is *Anaphalis margaritacea* a wildflower? Is it a flower for floral arrangements? Is it a Superweed? The answer is all in your perspective and the way you grow it. My own answer is that *A. margaritacea*, commonly known as pearly everlasting, is an attractive native plant that grows very well, and even “behaves itself” in the appropriate garden setting. Also, it is drought tolerant, making it appropriate for a WaterWise garden.

In fact, pearly everlasting is native to much of North America, found in most western and northern states as well as Canada and Alaska. The species exhibits many signs of its drought tolerant nature. The leaves and stems are grayish from fine white hairs. These hairs help regulate moisture levels near the plant’s surface and the color reflects some of the sunlight. It can be found blooming for most of the summer in our area, with clusters of yellow and white flowers heading up each stem and branch.

The end of the bloom season, however, does not mean that they do not remain attractive. Since this is an everlasting flower, often used in floral arrangements, the flowering heads remain on the plant for a long time. Harvesting them is relatively simple; cut the stems while the flowers are still attractive, remove the leaves if you wish, bundle them together, and hang them upside down to dry in a cool and dry location. For information on drying cut flowers and which different ones might be appropriate, visit this website from the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service:  
http://lancaster.unl.edu/factsheets/091.htm. All sources recommend cutting flowers at their peak of beauty for the best dried flowers. I have seen pearly everlasting used successfully in dried flower wreaths as well as dried flower arrangements, and the flowers hold up well over time.

Growing pearly everlasting is not particularly tricky, but use common sense in choosing your location. This species propagates readily through underground shoots and can colonize an area quickly, especially if you supply ample irrigation. Choose either a site where this characteristic is desired, or plant in a location receiving only limited water. Spread can be managed by hand pulling plants in undesirable locations, but withholding water in the first place is more economical.

For some additional photos of pearly everlasting in wild settings, visit:  