

Flower Arrangement Basics

Simple Floral Design Tips for Professional Results

Any hobbyist can learn to arrange flowers in attractive, creative designs. Here are some basic guidelines to help design a beautiful flower bouquet, vase or centerpiece.

Select a Flower Arrangement Style

Most flower arrangements are considered either formal or informal in their overall style. Formal flower arrangements are often monotone or just a couple of contrasting colors, tend to have fewer types of plants in them and can have very ornate containers. Informal or casual flower arrangements have a looser symmetry, can have more flowers and colors involved, or simpler – often whimsical – containers for the arrangement.

Choose a Floral Color Scheme - The plant materials and container selected for a flower arrangement should

- A monotone flower arrangement has plant materials in shades of a single color – all the same colored roses or sometimes flowers that are dark pink, medium pink and light pink.
- A complimentary color scheme for a flower arrangement would have flowers in colors that are opposite on the color wheel such as blue and orange or green with purple.
- A related color scheme involves combining flowers with colors that are near each other on the color wheel in the same arrangement such as blue with purple or red with orange.
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Symmetry, Balance and Shape

Each flower arrangement needs a sense of symmetry and balance. This is achieved through the overall shape and can help an arrangement feel more formal or more informal. Oftentimes a perfectly symmetrical flower arrangement, such as roses packed rightly into an oval shape, will have a more formal effect; whereas a loose arrangement of mixed wildflowers with some tall flowers, some short flowers and some drooping down around the sides unevenly will have a much more informal effect and give a nice casual air. The shape of the flower arrangement helps the hobbyist find that symmetry and balance by giving one a goal to work towards when building the arrangement.

Find a Container to Match the Arrangement's Mood

Different containers work better for different flower arrangements. In some arrangements a whimsical container accentuates the off-kilter balance of the arrangement or echoes the bright colors. In another flower arrangement a pure crystal container would be a more formal setting for wedding roses. Some containers are highly architectural adding a great deal of weight and shape to the floral arrangement while others are merely supports for the flowers and tend to not be seen.

Selection and Number of Plants

The other key ingredient for beautiful flower arrangements is of course – flowers! A standard, mixed floral arrangement will have four main components: focal flowers, intermediate flowers, short flowers and filler plant material.

- **Focal flowers** are usually tall, large or unique flowers to grab your attention. Generally hobbyists would use only a few of these – one to five, depending on the size of your container.
- **Intermediate flowers** are one-third shorter than the focal flowers or have smaller flowers that fit the chosen color scheme. Use approximately two times the number of these flowers in the arrangement.
- **Filler flowers** are used to edge the container or fill in any gaps left by the taller flowers within the arrangement. These flowers solidify the color scheme and hide unattractive stems. Use as many of these flowers in the arrangement as necessary to complete the desired shape and balance.
- **Filler plant materials** are often attractive foliage pieces, grasses or even feather and bark pieces and are used to fill in any gaps and provide balance to the arrangement.