

The Bloom Room: Floral Design Basics

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Educational Objectives

- Participants will correctly define what floral design is.
- Participants will increase knowledge of basic principles of design.
- Participants will understand how the concept of balance is applied to floral design.
- Participants will identify focal flowers, filler flowers, and greenery.

There is no mystery or secret to creating your own beautiful arrangement. You do not need to be an expert to enjoy creating with your hands. Learning the art of floral design is simple with a few basic concepts to follow.

What is Floral Design?

Floral design is the art of creating arrangements that convey meaning and emotion with flowers, leaves, ornaments and other objects using design principles. Design is the aesthetic combination of elements and visual principals to suit a specific purpose. The elements of design include color, size, line, pattern, form and texture. In floral design, plant materials are used as the elements.



Basic Principles of Design

- **Proportion:** Relationship between size and shape among the materials being used.
- **Balance:** Relationship between physical and visual weight in an arrangement.
 - **Symmetrical balance** is achieved by placing equal amounts of similar materials on either side of a central axis.
 - **Asymmetrical balance** is balance without symmetry that is achieved by placing approximately equal visual weight of different elements on each side of a central axis.
- **Rhythm:** Visual flow or movement in the arrangement
- **Dominance:** Achieved by placing sharp contrasting materials with size, color or texture.
- **Contrast:** Placing two different or opposite elements together.
- **Harmony:** Achieved when a combination of flowers, foliage and accessories provides a pleasant visual experience.

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Elements

- **Size:** The visual dimension of line, shape, form and space.
- **Pattern:** The visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, colors, textures and spaces in the design. It is dependent on illumination.
- **Texture:** The visual surface quality of the components, e.g. rough vs. smooth, dull vs. shiny.
- **Color:** The visual response of the eye to light waves. There is a corresponding relationship between the principles of design and color. Warm colors (yellow, red, orange) seem to move forward. Cool colors (blue, green, violet) recede and seem farther away.
- **Light:** Illumination (natural or artificial) is necessary for vision. It affects color, shadows, and the visibility of a design.
- **Space:** The open area in and around the arrangement. It includes the space in which the design is placed.
- **Line:** A visual path that leads the eye through the design and establishes the structural framework of the design. It carries the rhythm through the design.
- **Form:** The contour of two-and three-dimensional material. It applies to individual components within the design as well as the contour of the design as a whole.

The Rule of Three in Floral Design

A good rule of thumb is that the arrangement is twice as high as the container; or of the overall composition, the container is one-third of the height/mass and the flowers are two-thirds. Three is the magic number: no less than three of each flower or element. Odd numbers create a balanced look.

Selecting Containers

Select your container with the same care used when selecting your flowers. Be sure it can hold water or wet floral foam if using real flowers. Silk flowers can be a container that will hold the stems or floral foam. Select containers large enough to hold flowers without crowding the stems and deep enough to hold adequate water. Choose containers that are easy to clean and have simple outlines with a good proportion. For tall arrangements choose a taller container, for short arrangements select a shallow container. Some things that you can use are:

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|--------------|---------------------------|
| • Hat | • Tin Can |
| • Vases | • Shoes |
| • Mason Jars | • Wooden or plastic boxes |
| • Basket | • Get creative |
| • Fruit | |

Choosing the Flowers

Focal flowers: Focal flowers are typically larger blooms and the anchor of the design. These are typically lilies, roses and carnations.

Button or Accent flowers: Button and accent flowers are round flowers that add an accent to the arrangement that attracts the viewer's eye. These flowers can be petunias, marigolds, zinnias and mums.

Line flowers: Line flowers are taller flowers with blooms along the stems that help carry color to the ends of the arrangement. These are typically

snap dragons and delphinium. They are used with the greenery to create the overall shape of arrangement. They can also be referred to as “spike” flowers.

Filler flowers: Filler flowers are smaller blooms that add texture, color and depth and will support the focal flowers. These flowers can be spray roses, baby’s breath and berries.

Detail flowers: Detail flowers are delicate blooms that typically go in last to add airiness, elegance and movement. These can be sweet peas and cosmos.

Greenery: Greenery is used at the base of the arrangement to hold in flowers and starts to create the shape of the arrangement. Multiple types of greenery can be used.



Conditioning Flowers

Good arrangements start with good materials. In order to keep your arrangement looking fresh they need to be properly handled and conditioned. Flowers will last longer when they



are cut with a sharp knife or pruners and put in water immediately after being cut. Cuts should be clean and made at an angle. The stage of maturity will affect how long the flowers keep. For instance, roses, peonies and gladiolus are better to harvest before they bloom. Asters, marigolds and zinnias should be harvested

after they have bloomed. If harvesting your own flowers for your arrangements, choose specimens at different maturity stages to create a rounded design.

To achieve the best results, you should harvest your flower in the early morning or early evening when the plants are more fragrant and filled with stored food and water. Remove any leaves on the stem that will be under water in your arrangement.

When creating your arrangement:

- Think of how you want your overall end product to look.
- Choose a container that is proportionate to your flower sizes.
- Choose your color palette such as ombre or multiple colors. Consider using the color wheel if you have a hard time choosing colors.
- Select your flowers and group them.
- Start with greenery. Work from large to small flower blooms when creating your arrangement.
- An odd number of flowers and flower types create balance.
- Less can be more to the eye and flow of design.

Activities:

Create Your Own – Fresh Flower Vase Arrangement

Before you start, imagine what your end arrangement will look like. What is your arrangement design? Symmetrical, asymmetrical, triangular or s-curve. Will it be sitting in the middle of the table or against a wall?

Pro Tips:

- Be sure to remove all leaves at the bottom of the stem. Leaves will make the water stagnant.
- Do NOT cram in a bunch of focal flowers into your arrangement. Need to create balance and space.



- To determine height, hold the stem next to the vase and then cut to determine height. Always cut less to start.



Now to make your arrangement!

1. Place your greenery in the vase first. Make sure to place enough to hold in your flowers and create shape. If using multiple species of greenery, an odd number will provide balance.
2. If using line flowers, these will be placed next to create the overall shape and design of the arrangement.
3. Start in the center and work your way out with the focal flowers. These need to be off different heights and placements to create balance, shape and eye appeal. You do not want to bunch your large anchor/focal flowers.
4. After placing in the focal flowers, start placing in your accent (medium-sized) flowers, small flowers and fillers.
5. Build around your focal flowers. Accent fillers will go throughout the arrangement.
6. Place in small blooms and filler stems in the places you see large empty spaces.
7. Add in your delicate flowers last. This will prevent breaking of stems.
8. Turn your arrangement and place any greenery as needed to fill any gaps.

Fresh Flower Wrapped Arrangement

Wrapped bouquets tend to be flat arrangements and given as gifts. Lay three ferns slightly overlapping each other. Next place your line flowers or additional greenery (if using). Then place your focal flower(s) on top of ferns at different heights. Add in your accent and filler flowers. You can work on moving and wrapping the filler flowers, such as baby breaths, around the focal and accent flowers. To finish, place 1-2 more ferns at the bottom to help hide the stems. Hold the bouquet tightly in your hand and use your other hand to snip all the stems at equal length. Lay down tissue paper, newspaper, or the material you are using to wrap the bouquet, then gently lay the bouquet on top slightly right below the corner. Wrap one side snugly against the bouquet and bring the other side to meet. Tie bouquet with ribbon or twine. If leaving flowers out for a while, use watering tubes at the end of stems.

Resources

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