

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Flower arrangement may be defined as the art of organizing and grouping together plant materials (flowers, foliage, twigs, etc.) to achieve harmony of form, colour, and texture, thereby adding cheer, life, and beauty to the surroundings. It is essentially a decorative piece and should be the centre of attraction. An arrangement can be composed of only flowers and/or foliage or in combination with vegetables and fruits. Flower arrangements have an ability to introduce a personal touch in an otherwise staid and impersonal hotel room. Arrangements can be used in lobbies, restaurants, suites etc. Guests appreciate flowers for the freshness they bring to the surroundings. Arrangements need not be reserved only for parties or special occasions. They can be used regularly depending upon the season and the theme. Unconventional and dry material can also be used to make arrangements which are more economical and last longer

FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS IN HOTELS In hotels, flowers are used extensively. Various types of arrangements are chosen, as appropriate to the area and occasion. Medium-sized 'round' arrangements are often provided at the guest relations executives' desk in the lobby and on coffee tables in the lounges. In most five star hotels, one can see huge, spectacular arrangements in the lobbies. Restaurants generally have bud vases on each table, with one or two flowers in them. Table arrangements for conferences must be low so that guests may see over them. At informal banquets, large arrangements may be seen. At wedding banquets, wall arrangements using gerberas are very popular nowadays. On special occasions and festivals, some hotels even make beautiful traditional flower carpets for the lobby.

BASIC INGREDIENTS

- 1. Mechanics**
- 2. Equipment**
- 3. Containers**
- 4. Bases**
- 5. Accessories**
- 6. Plant material**
- 7. Support**

MECHANICS: These are items used to keep flowers, foliage, and stems in place within the container. Mechanics must be fixed securely and should be hidden from view. Examples – florists' foam (oasis), pin holders (Japanese term – kenzan), chicken wire, prong, adhesive clay and tape, florist cone. Floral foam, also called oasis, is a cellular plastic material, available in two types – green foam and brown/grey foam.

Pin-holders, also called kenzan or needle-point holders, is a series of sharply pointed pins are firmly held in a solid lead base, to hold thick and heavy stems securely by impaling them on the pins. Chicken wire, also called 'wire mesh' or 'wire netting', is a fine-gauge wire used to cover floral foam blocks in large displays. Prong is the simplest type of floral foam anchor. It is a small plastic disc with four vertical prongs. The base of the prong is attached to the container with adhesive clay and the floral foam is pressed down onto the prongs. Florist's cone, also called a 'flower tube' or 'flower funnel'. It acts like a miniature vase. It is used in large arrangements, where foliage or flowers need to be placed above their stem height

EQUIPMENT: This includes tools used to ensure that a satisfactory arrangement of plant material is created within the container. Examples – bucket, scissors, knife, watering can, mister, wire cutter, cocktail sticks, turn, wire, floral tape, candle holder, cut flower preservatives, and secateurs. Mister is a hand-held spray bottle to produce a fine mist of water droplets to keep an arrangement look fresh in warm weather. Secateurs are used to cut through thick and woody stems. Cocktail sticks or a tooth pick is used to make holes in florists' foam for a soft stem of flower. Cut-flower preservatives is a bactericide, available in powder or liquid form, to prevent slime and smell from developing in the vase water, plus sugar to prolong the life of fresh flowers. A preservative can be made in-house by adding 3 teaspoons of sugar and 1 drop of bleach to half a litre of water

CONTAINERS: These are receptacles that hold the flower arrangement. They may or may not be hidden by the plant material. The container must be waterproof and neutral colours such as soft grey, dull brown, offwhite, or earth colours are most suitable because they are inconspicuous and do not detract attention from flowers displayed. Theme and simplicity should be kept in mind while choosing the design of the container. Example – vases and jugs, basket, bowls and trays, wreath frame etc.

BASES: An object that is placed underneath the container to protect the surface of the support and/or to add to the beauty of the display is called a base. Example – table mat, tree section, wood base, stone base, and oriental base.

SUPPORT: This refers to the structure on which the container stands. Example – tables, sideboards, alcoves, and shelves.

PLANT MATERIALS: These can be divided into 3 basic types a) Flowers (dominant/ focal/ point material) – This consists of bold flowers or clusters of small showy blooms. The dominant material provides a centre of interest. Example – Gerbera, Chrysanthemum, lilies, Anthurium, Tulips, Poppies, Roses, Dahlias, and Daffodils. b) Fillers (secondary material) – This consists of smaller flowers and all sorts of leaves and foliage that are used to cover the mechanics and edges of the container and also provide added interest and colour to the display. Example – Asters, Ivy, Button Chrysanthemum, Carnations, Gypsophila (Baby's breath), Limonium and Marguerites. c) Foliages (line material) – This consists of tall stems, flowering spikes, or bold leaves that are used to create the basic framework or skeleton. This line material may be straight or curved and it sets the height and width of the finished arrangement. Examples – Gladioli, birds of paradise, golden rods, larkspur, asparagus ferns, palms, tuberoses, and Peruvian lilies. **ACCESSORIES:** These are non-plant materials included in or placed alongside the arrangement. Their purpose is generally decorative but could be functional at times. Accessories are added to the design for extra interest or to 'stretch' the flowers when they are in short supply. Example – miniature dolls, hats, ribbons, beads, painted wire, wooden fruit shapes, silk flowers and foliage, candles, driftwood, shells, idols, interesting pebbles etc.

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN FOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

1. **SCALE** – Scale is easy to understand as we can all recognize when small flowers look wrong in a large container, etc. However size is relative – an object seen by itself is not big or small unless it is seen next to another object for comparison. If the difference is great then objects do not go well together. In flower arrangement – a) Each piece of plant materials should be related to the others in size. b) The base should neither be too big or too small for the rest of the design. c) Any accessory used should be in scale with the remainder of the design and should not seem huge or dwarfed. d) The whole design

should be in scale with its setting. E.g. on a dining table, the flower arrangement used should leave enough room for china and should not inhibit conversation.

2) PROPORTION – Good proportion refers to pleasing amount of things and again it a matter of relationships. The same amounts of material that appears too much for one container may seem correct for another. Scale concerns relative size and proportion concerns relative amounts. A number of arrangements can be made for a room and all may be in scale with their setting but the number of arrangements may be too many, so the proportion of arrangements to the room is not pleasing. A guideline is that the plant material should be one and a half times the height or the width, whichever is the greatest, of the container. Equal amount of things lack interest and on the other hand too much of one thing is also not pleasing. Here the eye is the only judge.

3) BALANCE – physical as well as visual balance needs to be considered. Physical balance: this is vital for any arrangement. If it is too asymmetrical, then there is a danger that the whole arrangement will tip over. The mechanics must always be securely fixed and the container should always be heavy enough to support the plant material. The more one-sided the display, the heavier the container should be. Sand and gravel can be added to achieve this. Visual balance: this calls for the arrangement to look stable even if it is one-sided. To increase the visual weight of the lighter side, keep in mind that – a) Dark flowers look heavier than pale ones. b) Round flowers look heavier than trumpets and conical ones. Top to bottom balance also needs to be considered. Large flowers placed centrally and close to the bottom of the arrangement give a feeling of good balance. Symmetry and asymmetry: This refers to the outline or the shape of the design. If design is symmetrical, then its shape is exactly the same on either side of the centre. If asymmetrical design, then shapes are dissimilar and balance depends on the eye being attracted to both sides of the design equally by the use of different colours, shapes and textures.

4) RHYTHM OR MOVEMENT: This involves using techniques and materials that guide the eye from one part of the display to another. Rhythm in flower arrangements may be achieved by – a) Using curved stems b) Hiding all or part of any tall, straight stems. c) Placing flowers ‘in and out’ through the arrangement. d) Having flowers at various stages of development in the arrangement. e) Using foliage of various sizes and contrasting shapes. f) Having an irregular line of various- sized blooms. Rhythm is best achieved by repetition and easy gradual change.

5) CONTRAST: Contrast and variety add interest to life and opposite things emphasize each other. A flower arrangement can be dull without contrast. Contrast can be created in shape – by turning the flowers to different ways when all round flowers are used. Contrast can be achieved by introducing line plant material. Strong contrast in textures can be used

for interest. Very strong contrasts should be avoided as too much contrast may upset the unity of the arrangement

6) EMPHASIS/ DOMINANCE: This involves having one or more areas in the arrangement to which the eye is drawn and on which it rests for a short time. This point is known as a 'focal point' or 'centre of interest'. The usual methods to achieve emphasis are as follows-

- Include a small group of bold flowers (dominant material).
- Use an unusual container.
- Use striking foliage.
- Have sufficient plain background.

7) HARMONY/ UNITY: In a pleasing flower arrangement, the plant material, container, base, accessory and setting should all be in harmony. Similarity in appearances between materials help s give repetition and a feeling of harmony, e.g., the curve of a piece of driftwood, etc. The resemblance in all cases need not be identical but a link in appearances is an echo giving a feel of relationship. The important fact here is that all plants look as if they belong to the arrangement and give a look of unity.