



DESIGN FOR FLOWERS

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Design for Flowers

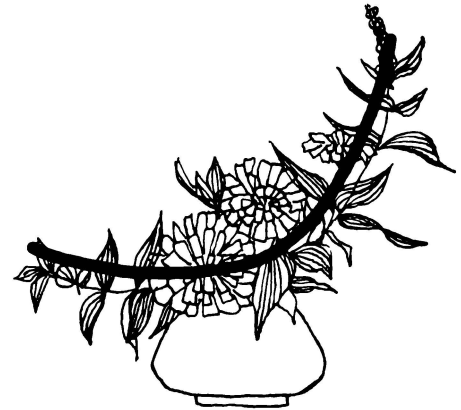
Prepared by Katherine L. Habel, Home Furnishings Specialist

1. Note basic designs.
2. Evaluate container.
3. Consider tools needed.
4. Try out an arrangement and place in location.
5. Score by basic principles and evaluate.
6. Prepare flowers for year around arrangements.
7. Study and experiment.

Remember art is simplicity, simplicity is art.

Love of flowers is virtually instinctive in human beings, and concurrent with this affection is a desire to arrange and display flowers and ornament the home with their beauty and fragrance.

The basis of any good flower arrangement is common sense and complete freedom of expression.



Crescent. Good design for oval or flaring container. Main line can be tipped, as here, or of equal height on both sides. Central or focal area is low and contains heaviest material.



Half Circle. Excellent design for footed container on dining table. Center line is low, with length of line stretched out and over sides of container. Focal point is in center of design.

These Are the Basic Designs



Circle. Design has curving, almost-meeting lines, with accent in lower half of circle. In tall urn, circular lines radiate from tall central line, going down over edges of container.



Triangle. Basis of many designs. Full triangle has tall center line flanked on both sides by equally spaced lines. Pattern lines are usually foliage, with open flowers in center.



Oval. Fits formal urn when mass of material is used. All outer edges of the oval are light; largest flowers and strongest colors are placed at low center of oval, as shown.



Set triangle. Most popular design, and easiest to arrange. High side may be on left or right of container. Outer tips are light; weight is concentrated at base of vertical line.



Hogarth Line. Gives feeling of rhythm in its swing from tall tip over center of container, forming pleasing and graceful S curve.



Perpendicular. Effective design for slender container. Arrangement is high, with tight mass of flowers about halfway between mouth of container and tip of tallest flower or leaf.

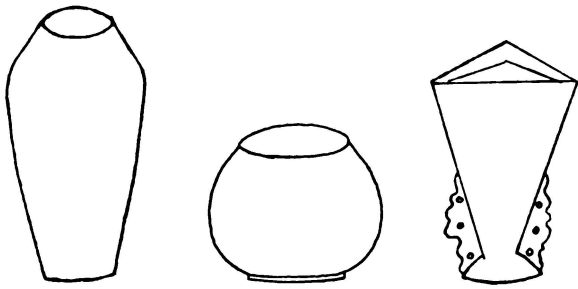
It is possible to put flowers into a vase without having a design in mind. With experienced arrangers, a line may emerge without conscious direction. However, if you begin with a design--suggested by your plant materials, your container, and the location you have chosen for the finished arrangement--you are more likely to have effective and satisfying results, and you are almost certain to display the materials to better advantage.

A design should be selected on the basis of its appropriateness. Attention should be given to its scale and proportion with regard to the final location of the arrangement. The background also should influence the design. A narrow space between windows, for instance, suggests a slender triangular line, while a broad expanse backed by a plain wall or a mirror may indicate a mass arrangement. A coffee or dinner table suggests a low arrangement, completed on all sides.

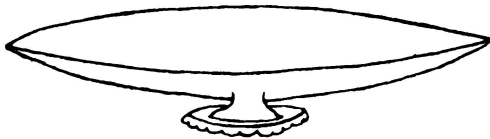
With practice, you'll learn the technique of arranging flowers. If you are an amateur, start with a simple line arrangement. Try sitting down while you make your arrangements. You will be more relaxed, and most arrangements are viewed by people who are seated.

The Container Counts

Flowers can be beautiful in almost any container, but if they are suited to the container, and if the arrangement is planned to complement both the plant materials and the shape and character of the holder, so much the better.

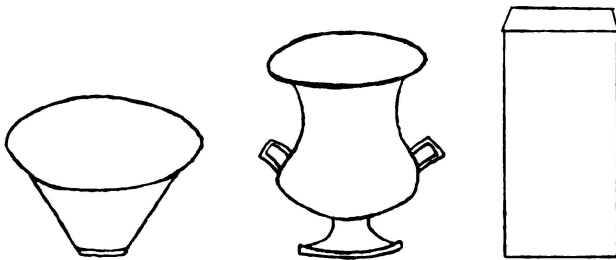


The texture, color, and nature of the flowers should be taken into consideration when choosing a container. Bold, vivid flowers usually do not look nice in delicate china containers. Fragile flowers usually are ill at ease in rough pottery. Heavy, rugged containers are appropriate for field



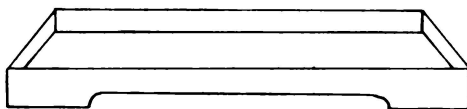
flowers--zinnias, tiger lilies, cattails--and lusty garden varieties. Delicate blossoms--violets and lilies of the valley--take to fine glass, porcelain, and alabaster. Containers of glazed pottery, glass, polished wood, copper, brass, and pewter accomodate all types of in-between flowers.

Highly colored vases-- especially those that have floral decorations--are ill-suited



to arrangements, for they detract attention from the flowers themselves.

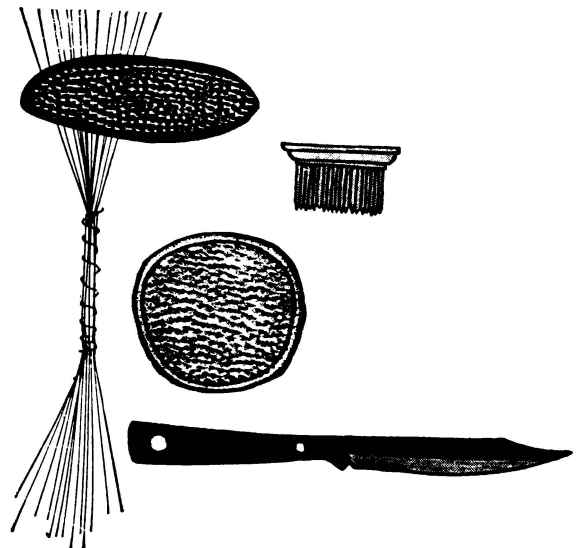
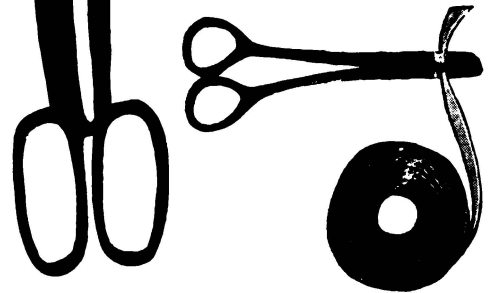
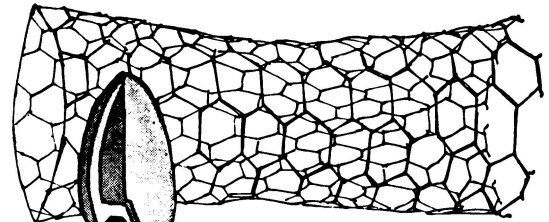
You don't need very many, but they should be the right kind.



Containers should be kept scrupulously clean, not only for appearance' sake but also because soil, dirt, or vegetable matter left in a container may reduce the life span of fresh flowers.

The Tools You Need

Flower arranger's kit of tools contains: small, sharp knife; needle-point holders of various sizes; fine wire to secure materials; sharp shears to cut stems and foliage; waterproof clay to anchor holders; Parafilm to tie stems (with scissors); shears to cut wire; and chicken wire to fill containers.

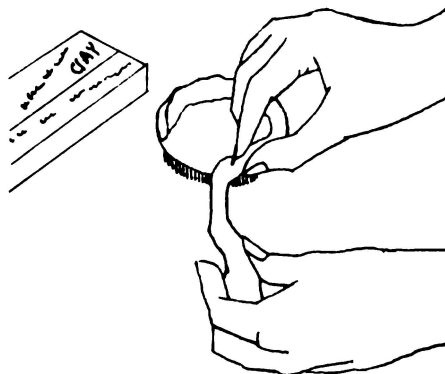


Basic Principles of Flower Arrangements

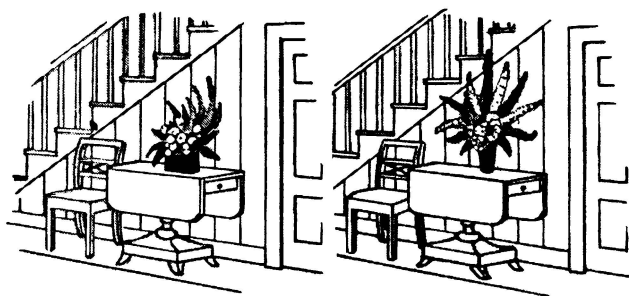
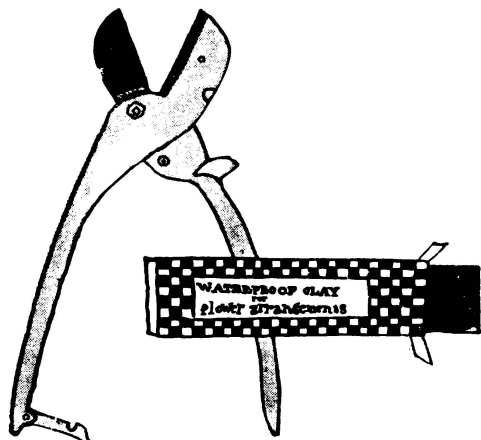
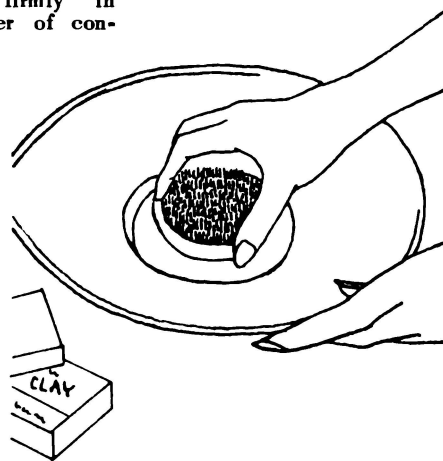
Below are step-by-step directions for making two different flower arrangements. First, have a plan in mind. Keep the tip of the highest spray exactly over the base of the container. Do not place all the flowers on the same level except in extreme, stylized arrangements. It is well not to have the flowers lean against each other or face the same direction. Keep the design clean by pruning out extra leaves after you have completed the arrangement. Cut stems to suit the requirements of your design. Remember that the flowers you leave out sometimes mean the difference between a good and a bad arrangement.

Take One Dozen Carnations

Pinch off small portion of waterproof clay; roll in cylinder around holder.

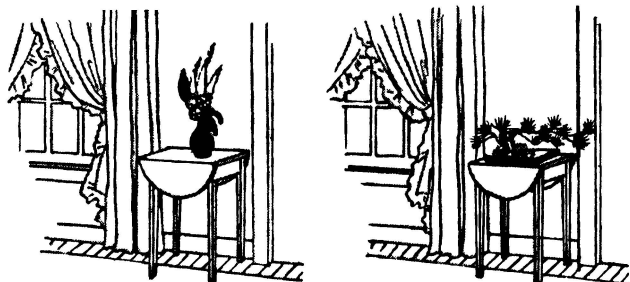


With clay, fix needle-point holder firmly in place in center of container.



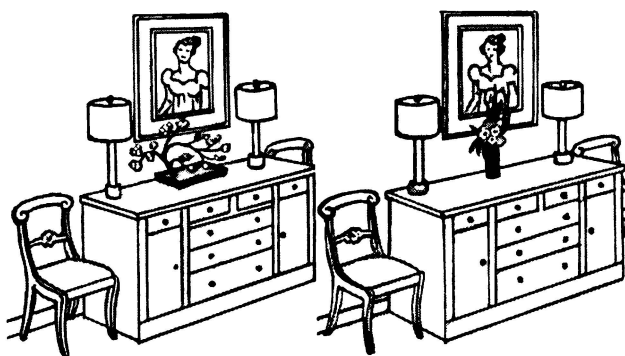
Right

Wrong



Right

Wrong



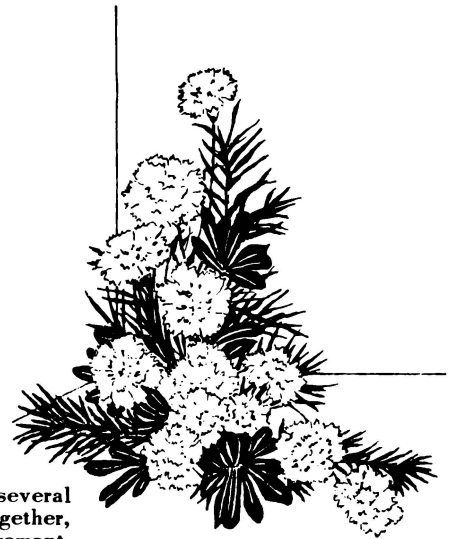
Right

Wrong

Plan each arrangement to fit its assigned location. Design, scale, balance, harmony must all be considered. Which principle has been violated in each "wrong?"



Form main line with foliage, making height $1\frac{1}{2}$ times container's width.



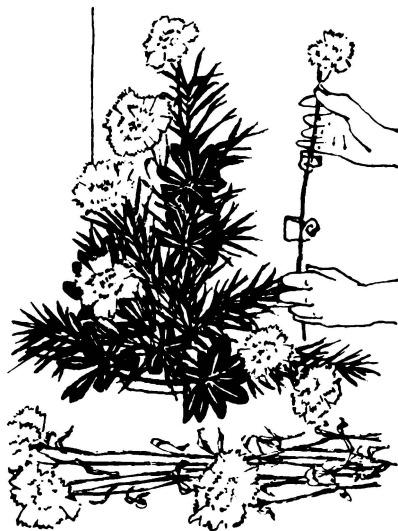
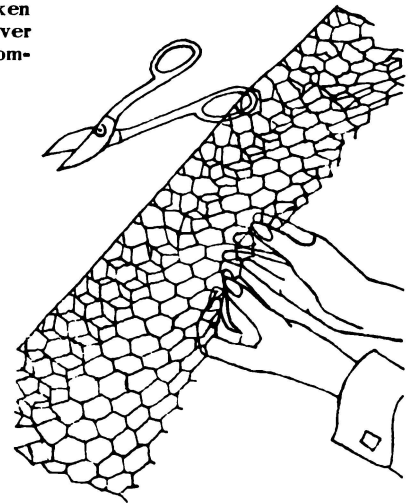
Final step: Add several flowers, close together, as focus of arrangement.



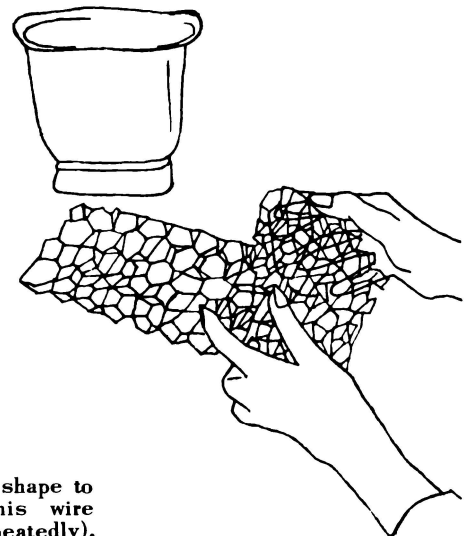
Design shown here is a side triangle. Establish apex with one carnation.

Recipe For Roses

Cut length of chicken wire. Fold edges over until wire is firm and compact.



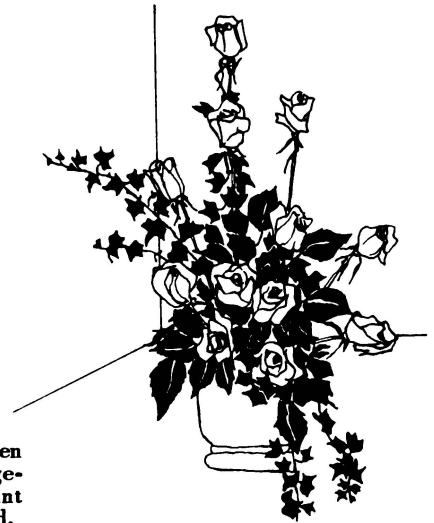
Fill in design with carnations, working from top down, then to side.



Mold wire into a shape to fit container (this wire can be used repeatedly).



Cut stems of roses with sharp knife, and remove thorns and lower leaves.



Add ivy to soften outline of arrangement. Focal point is low, centered.

Basic Principles of Arrangement

(Check your arrangement)

Design is the basic pattern of the arrangement. It consists of a planned relationship among the component parts--flowers, foliage, and container. A pattern must have a definite relation to its location in the home.

Total Score

Scale is achieved by selecting materials reasonably related in size to one another and to their container. An arrangement's proportions should be at least 1-1/2 times a vertical container's, or 1-1/2 times a horizontal container's width. These are only suggested measurements. Scale is dictated by materials, containers, and location.

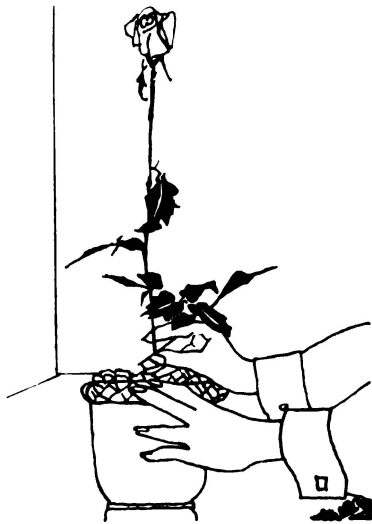
The visual weight of material and containers is an important consideration, too.

Score

Texture is the tissue structure or surface quality of the plant material, background and container. Texture may be smooth or rough, shiny or dull, coarse or fine. It is often a decisive factor in determining which materials harmonize with each other and which do not. Harmony in texture can lend added emphasis to harmony in line and colors.

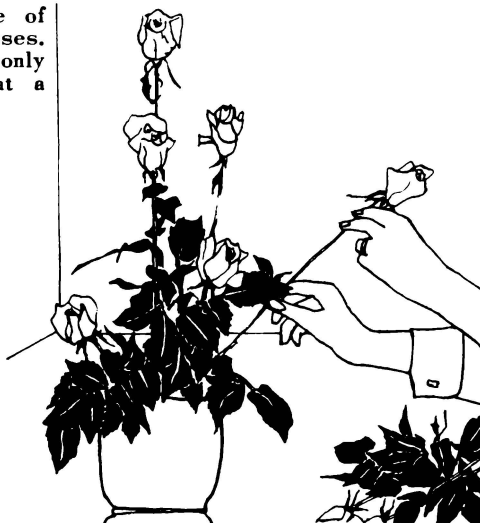
Score

Balance is the grouping of materials within the pattern so that an impression of calm and stability is created. Balance is



Place tallest rose in chicken wire, to establish starting point of design.

Form outline of design with roses. Always add only one flower at a time.



achieved by working from light, delicate dorms (buds and foliage tips) at the edges of the arrangement to darker, heavier materials at the center. Balance is of 2 types:

Symmetric--both sides of the arrangement are the same or compensating weight.

Asymmetric-- the 2 sides are distinctly different but have equal visual weight and therefore balance each other. A properly balanced arrangement looks good from any viewpoint.

Score

Color Grouped color is more effective than spotty or mixed color. Dark, full-blown, heavy flowers are best at the base or center of an arrangement with buds and lighter, smaller flowers at the outer edges.

Striking effects may be obtained by using warm or cool colors. Grouping different shades of one color from pale to dark makes an interesting bouquet.

Score

Focus is the center of interest in an arrangement. Various elements should be placed so that the eye is led to a natural center of interest. Where the main lines of the design cross, there must always be a highlight of the choicest plant material, never a void.

Score

Rhythm is the feeling of motion in an arrangement, achieved by graceful lines curving through the arrangement and leading to the center.

Score

Accent is the emphasis obtained for a special area of the composition by giving it unusual prominence. In a flower arrangement, accent is acquired by contrast in color, size, form, or texture or by incorporating unusual but harmonious materials.

Score

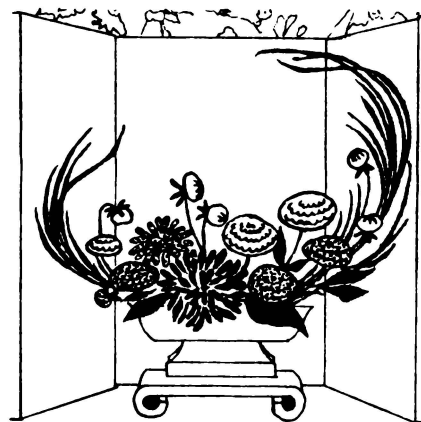
Added Decoration Accessories are objects, not the container itself, which may be used to complete or enhance the design or to suggest a theme. The creative arranger makes use of most unlikely objects to complement her compositions.

Scale is most important in the use of accessories. A figurine too large or too small for the proportions of the arrangement itself can easily destroy the beauty of the whole design.

Score



Here figured background makes it impossible to take in clearly the design of the arrangement, and accessories add to the confusion. Use of plain screen background and removal of accessories clear up the composition.



Drying

These flowers can be prepared for winter arrangements by hanging material upside down:

Acacia	Goldenrod
Achillea	Heather
Artemisia	Honesty
Bells-of-Ireland	Lavender
Everlasting	Peony
	Salvia

Simply hang upside down from lines or coat hangers, not touching each other, preferably in a dry, airy dark place. If dried in the light, much more of the natural colors will be lost.

These can be dried in sea sand, or a mixture of 1/2 borax, 1/2 corn meal:

Aster	Marigold
Calendula	Pansy
Chrysanthemum	Poppy
Clematis	Rose
Columbine	Shasta daisy
Cosmos	Sunflower
Daffodil	Tulip
Dahlia	Zinnia
Delphinium	Larkspur
Fuchsia	Lilac
	Lupine

Fragile blooms of delicate colors are best dried by covering them for a few days to several weeks, depending on the material, with fine clean sea sand or a half and half mixture of sifted borax and fine corn meal.

A layer of drying material is placed in the bottom of a cardboard box. Flowers from which all foliage has been stripped are gently placed on this, face down or face up and the sand or borax mixture is very gently poured around the heads until they are covered.

Sprays like delphinium, larkspur, and lupine are laid lengthwise in a long box on a layer of drying material. The entire sprays are then gently covered with the same mixture.

Silica Gel Method

Today, thanks to a drying agent known as silica gel, the color and texture of a freshly picked blossom can be captured in two to eight days. This crystalline compound enables you to dry flowers as they

come into bloom and then have a delightfully varied selection from which to compose bouquets.

Silica gel is available in commercial form as a product called Flower Dri. You will need a container deep enough to hold flowers standing up with stems and heads intact. You can use an outside lard can, or a large canister. Your container should have a tight-fitting lid. As your flowers are dried, remove them to airtight tins or tightly sealed plastic bags until you are ready to use them.

You may want to use silica gel on the blossoms only and dry the sprays of leaves and other foliage in a less costly material--glycerine.

Silica gel can be used many times over. While most of the crystals are white, some blue ones have been sprinkled in that turn pink to tell you when the silica gel has absorbed too much moisture. Then you simply heat the silica gel in the oven until the pink crystals turn blue again.

To create a holder for your flowers while they dry, cut a collar of corrugated cardboard 7" or 8" wide and staple the ends together to fit easily inside the container you plan to use. On top of the cardboard collar place a round of styrofoam cut about a quarter of an inch short of the can's circumference and about 2" thick. Take a 12" length of florists' wire, fold it in half and punch it through the styrofoam at the center. Perforate the styrofoam disk with an ice pick to be sure the flower stems may be easily inserted. Put the styrofoam and collar in the container. Spread a thin layer of absorbent cotton over the top of the styrofoam so that the silica gel won't trickle down the holes. Sprinkle on a thin layer of silica gel, cover the blossoms. Press on the lid of the can. When flowers have dried sufficiently, pour off and reserve silica gel for the next batch.

Pressing

For blooms, autumn leaves, and other foliage to be used in framed still lifes or on panels, material may be laid between several thicknesses of newspaper and then weighted with heavy books.

Glycerin Method

Most types of foliage

a. on their own stems or branches such as

beechn, Chinese chestnut, oak, magnolia, blueberry, and English ivy leaves, or
b. broad or straplike leaves such aspidistra, seagrape, gladiolus, iris, calla, mullen and the humble cabbage

can be permanently and beautifully preserved. Place 4" to 5" of the stems of cut sprays in jars containing a mixture of 1/3 glycerin and 2/3 water. Crush the ends of woody stems to help the process of absorption, and leave materials in the mixture until it has been absorbed to tips of the leaves. As soon as this occurs, remove the materials and hang upside down until fully cured. In many cases, this treatment changes the natural color of leaves, but gives them a smooth silky texture which is most attractive. Two great advantages are that they are not as brittle as when naturally dried, and their stems may be placed in water without injury when they are combined with fresh plant material.

In all methods of drying, pressing, and preserving, the time factor is an uncertain one. Examine blooms in sand or borax and remove them as soon as they seem to be completely dried. They may then be stored upright in jars or with the stems stuck in blocks of styrofoam. Many dried blossoms are so fragile they shatter at a rough touch. Handle them very gently. Pressed flowers should be removed from their weighted papers as soon as they are dry and before they lose color. They can then be stored between layers of waxed paper in shallow boxes.

Materials Needed for Training Meetings

1. Arrangements brought by each member.
2. A collection of containers suitable for dainty and coarse flowers.

3. Suitable flower holders for display and discussion.
4. Pictures showing suitable flower arrangements.
5. Long-stemmed flowers selected for specific arrangements.

What To Do at Meetings

1. Discuss the arrangements brought.
2. Make any changes that will improve them.
3. Demonstrate principles of arrangement.
4. Show slides for summary.

Arrangement Notes

It is not enough for the enthusiastic arranger to have profuse bloom. To be really efficient, she should plan and plant her garden with arrangements especially in mind.

A rich source of flower arrangement material may be found among house plants.

Helpful books on flower arrangement:

Flower Arrangement, published by Good Housekeeping

Flower Arrangement, F. F. Rockwell and Esther C. Grayson

Complete Book on Dried Arrangements, Raye Miller Underwood

The Art of Drying Plants and Flowers, Mabel Squires

The Art of Flower Arrangement, Tatsuo Ishimoto

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