Containers, Mechanics, & Tools

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- 8947A -
Introduction

A marketable and desirable floral arrangement must hold together and have a sense of stability. To establish these characteristics, a designer must select an appropriate container for the arrangement, use effective design mechanics, and use the appropriate tools.
Introduction
Containers

An appropriate container for a fresh-cut floral arrangement must:

• Hold a sufficient supply of water.
• Have an opening large enough for flowers and foliage stems.
• Be suitable to hide or reveal the design mechanics.
• Be tall enough to support long-stemmed flowers.
• Have a stable base to provide physical balance.
Containers
Containers

Additional considerations in selecting an appropriate container for a floral arrangement include:

Shape
Size
Texture
Color
Style
Materials
Price
Containers (Shape)

Common container shapes include:

- Vases (height is greater than width)
- Bowls (width is greater than height)
- Pedestals (elevated by means of foot or pedestal)
- Baskets (textural qualities suggest casual)
- Novelty (various occasions and holidays)
Containers (Shape)

- Vases
- Basket
- Pedestals
- Bowls
- Novelty
Containers (Style)

The **style** and **texture** of a floral container should reflect the **theme** and **formality** of the occasion.

The color of the container may either **blend** with the floral materials in the arrangement, or create an accent by **contrast**.
Containers (Size)

Container size is influenced by the proportion and scale of the arrangement.

The rule of proportion between an arrangement and its container is that the height of the arrangement not exceed $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 times the height of a tall container or $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the width of a low container.
Containers (Size)

The *scale* relationship of an arrangement with its surroundings affects the size of the arrangement. This, in turn, influences the *size* of the container.
Containers (Type)

Many retail floral designers select utility containers for arrangements. These containers are inexpensive and their neutral green color blends naturally with the floral materials of the arrangement.
Containers (Type)

Containers used for floral arrangements include:

- Plastic (inexpensive; most commonly used)
- Glass (used for vase type arrangements)
- Ceramic (must be glazed to prevent leakage)
- Baskets (require leak-proof lining)
- Metal (requires protective lining)
Containers (Price)

The **price** of a container ranges from inexpensive to expensive. In most instances, the container should be the **least** expensive part of an arrangement.
Design Mechanics

Design mechanics refer to the various devices and techniques used for securing flowers and foliage in an arrangement. Design mechanics establish stability in the design.
Design Mechanics

Examples of design mechanics used in floral design include:

• Stem support materials
• Adhesive materials
• Wire
• Pin & picks
• Accessory materials
Design Mechanics
Stem Support Materials

The most common stem support material used in fresh-cut floral arrangements today is floral foam. Floral foam has a porous and cellular structure and is relatively inexpensive. Examples of stem support materials include:

- Wettable Foam
- Dry Foam
- Styrofoam
Floral Foam
Stem Support Materials

A needlepoint or pin holder is another type of stem support device used in floral arrangements. It consists of numerous sharp, strong, and upright pins attached to a heavy metal base. This stem support device is not commonly used in floral arrangements today because of its expense.
Needlepoint Holder
Stem Support Materials

Before the development of **floral foam**, chicken wire was commonly used as a stem support material. Today, chicken wire is used primarily for **large** arrangements containing plant materials that have **thick** and **heavy** stems. It provides extra **strength** and **stability** when used together with floral foam in large arrangements.
Adhesive Materials

Adhesive materials used in floral design include:

- Waterproof or anchor tape
- Pan-melt glue
- Double-sided tape
- Floral clay
- Floral tape or stem wrap
- Liquid floral adhesive
- Hot/Cool melt glue
Wire

Florist’s wire is used to:

• **Bind** floral materials together.
• **Strengthen** and/or **curve** floral stems.
• **Lengthen** fresh-cut or silk stems.
Wire
Wire

Wire gauge indicates the thickness of the wire. The smaller the gauge number, the thicker the wire diameter.

Gauges of floral wire commonly used for corsage construction are #28, #26, and #24.
Wire

Wire Gauge

#18  #20  #22  #24  #26  #28
Wire

**Straight** wire is available in 12" and 18" lengths. **Paddle** wire consists of a continuous piece of wire wound onto a paddle or spool. Silver-colored florist’s wire is referred to in the industry at **bright** wire. The green, enamel-coated wire is referred to as **green** wire.
Pins & Picks

The function of pins and picks is to secure items in a floral arrangement. Examples of pins include:

- Greening pins (‘S’ pins)
- Dixon pins
- Corsage & boutonniere pins
Pins & Picks

Picks used in floral design include:

• Wooden picks
• Hyacinth stakes
• Water picks
Pins & Picks

Greening Pin  Dixon Pin  Corsage Pins  Wooden Pick

Water Tubes & Pick
Accessories

*Accessories* are decorative items added to an arrangement to enhance the theme of the arrangement. These items should *complement* the color harmony and proportion of the arrangement and not *detract* from them.
Accessories

Examples of accessories include:

• Candles
• Pine cones
• Ribbon
• Balloons
• Toys
Floral Design Tools

Floral design tools are needed for cutting and sizing the stems of floral materials. Handling and arranging floral materials are easier and more efficient with the proper floral design tools.
Floral Design Tools

- Ribbon Shears
- Straight Blade Knife
- Pruning Shears
- Curved Blade Knife
- Wire Cutters
- Bunch Cutter
- Utility Shears
- Folding Knife
Tool Safety

- Maintain sharp blades and protect the sharp edges.
- Check tools regularly for defects and damage, and repair or replace damaged tools.
- Use the proper tool to perform a specific task.
- Keep tools in their proper places when not in use.
- Carry tools in a toolbox or tool holder.
- Always clean tools after use.
- Learn how to use tools properly.
- Make cuts and/or point tools away from your body.
Tool Safety

To properly cut a flower stem with a florist’s knife, hold the knife between the thumb and forefinger. Cut towards the body at an angle. Let the hand holding the stem pull the stem upward and away from the body.
Tool Safety

Each tool has its own **use** and **purpose**. Safe and proper use of tools is important to prevent **injury**.
Summary

Floral designers use effective design mechanics, specialized techniques, and appropriate tools in creating attractive and marketable floral arrangements.

Safety is an important consideration in floral design. The safe and proper use and care of floral tools prevents injury and aids in the efficient handling of floral materials.
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