Flower Arrangements: Step by Step

Let's start with the basics of putting together a flower arrangement. That way, if you want to put an arrangement of your own creation together other than the ones I will mention later in the chapter, you have the basic procedures to experiment with. Think of these steps as a recipe you can change to your own taste as you try each of them.

There is a certain process you will follow for each arrangement, no matter what design, height, width or length of the arrangement. Follow this formula for each arrangement and you no doubt will have success every time.

1. **Line Materials** – As mentioned in an earlier chapter, think of the line material as the bone structure of the arrangement. The line material will determine the overall dimensions of the arrangement. For instance, if you use a gladiolus in the arrangement and that is
the tallest flower, the gladiolus is creating a line. Any flowers that protrude from the sides and extend farther than the bulk of the arrangement would also be line material. Other line material you might want to use are flowers such as liatris, foxtail, lilies, stock, delphinium, gladiolus, and tall snapdragon. Line materials are flowers that can usually stand on their own if bunched together and put in a tall vase.

2. **Dominant or prominent flowers** – These flowers are usually added after the line flowers have established the dimensions of the arrangement. They usually stand out in the arrangement, drawing the eye in and are considered focal points. Large flowers such as blown open roses, lilies, peonies, gerberas or large bearded irises would fall into the category of dominant or prominent flowers. You
don't need as many of the prominent flowers as you do others as too many will overpower the arrangement and actually distract from the beauty of each flower. The size of the arrangement will determine the number of dominant flowers you use, but always keep it to an odd number.

3. **Secondary Flowers** – Although called secondary flowers, the smaller flowers that fill in the space around the dominant flowers play an important part in flower arranging. They enhance the larger flowers, adding to their beauty. Use small cluster flowers as secondary flowers. Cluster flowers are flowers that have multiple blooms on one stem.
4. **Filler Material** – It is not necessary to use filler materials in your arrangement, but if there are spaces between the flowers that show the foam form in the container, filler material can help hide that while enhancing the look of the arrangement. Filler material can include flowers and foliage such as small-leaf fern, gypsophila, baby's breath, feverfew, Queen Anne's Lace, status and waxflower.
5. **Special Material** – Special material can be anything from grape vines, to moss, to stone. Anything that adds texture and fills in space so that the arrangement looks full can be used.

6. **Specialty Props** – These are sometimes called accents. Some people like to put little props in their arrangement to add personality. A little bird, a small figurine, candles, ribbons or balloons would all be considered specialty props. While it is not mandatory to use these things, it can be fun to use your imagination to put your personal stamp on your arrangement.
Flower Arrangement Directions

Let's start with the basics, a small arrangement made out of a mixed bundle of flowers you can pick up at your local supermarket. Most supermarkets have flowers that they've put together that include all the elements you need for a nice arrangement. However, most people take those flowers home and stick them in a vase without giving them any real attention. The flowers fall haphazardly to the sides and never look quite right. But you can turn a bundle of flowers that cost $4.99 into an arrangement you'd pay $25.00 or more to purchase at your florist. This is what you can do.

**Standard Arrangement**

**Materials you'll need:** 6 inch bowl, mixed flower bouquet from the supermarket, floral foam, and any specialty props such as ribbons that you want to add.

1. Cut floral foam to fit inside the bowl so that the foam extends above the rim of the bowl by approximately 1-2 inches. Once you have the perfect fit, soak the floral foam for a few minutes in a water solution to saturate it. Then put it back inside the bowl. You want to saturate the foam to make sure there is wetness
throughout. This is the food that will help your arrangement stay beautiful longer.

2. Meanwhile, take all your flowers out of the packaging from the supermarket and spread them out on the table to get a good look at what you have. If there are any line flowers, separate them from the dominant flowers. If no line flowers are there, you can use the dominant flowers next to help form a round or oval shape to your arrangement.
3. Cut the stems of the dominant flowers with a sharp knife or pair of scissors. Hold the bottom of the stem firmly and push it into the floral foam where you want to place the flower. Don’t worry if you make a mistake and want to move it. Floral foam is forgiving.
4. Next, take your secondary flowers or smaller flowers and place them around the dominant flowers, making sure they sit in the foam about ¼ to ½ inch below the face of the prominent flowers. Remember, they are there to accent the beauty of the prominent flowers.
5. Your filler materials like fern or baby's breath should come next.

You'll want to take the stem of baby's breath and break the stock into smaller pieces so that a small branch will go further. Stagger the places where you place the baby's breath as well as how far it sticks out from the other flowers. Decide what looks best. Fern looks lovely if you break it up and line the entire rim of the bowl, giving it a border. While you certainly don't have to do that as you can use some larger petal flowers such as lilies or Alaskan Daisies to fall over the rim of the bowl to hide any foam that may show, it does create a clean look to the arrangement.
6. Last, add any special materials and props that give your arrangement your unique signature. Even if you don't have these specialty items, your arrangement will look beautiful and complete.

Keep in mind that just because you might be using a round bowl, that doesn't mean your arrangement needs to be round in shape. You can extend flowers to the side a little bit to give the overall arrangement an oval shape. Also, make sure you aren't placing the face of all your flowers straight toward you. You want the arrangement to look good from all angles.

As your eye for arranging flowers gets better, you'll know where to place flowers without having the arrangement look lopsided. If it does and
you want to make corrections, you can do that by being careful to reach into the arrangement and gently grasp the stem of the flower you want to move as close to the floral foam as you can to prevent breakage of the stem. Pull the flower out completely, decide where it needs to go and then adjust the flowers around it to make sure it looks even.

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