



THE
PEARLSEEKER'S
GUIDE TO
ARRANGING
FLOWERS

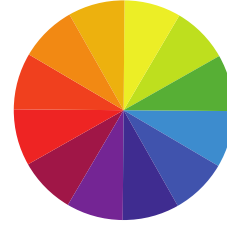
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Selecting flowers can help you learn what you like.

Color

You can use contrasting colors (opposites on the color wheel) and complementary colors (next to each other on the color wheel) to create bold, bright bouquets.

I like to pick up the first flowers that catch my eye or make me say "Wow!" Or, I'll walk around the entire floral area to see all of what is available first. Sometimes I will only choose different colors of the same flower.



For example, the flowers in this photo are striking because of the contrast of peach with the light blue tablecloth. Having a darker color and white make each color stand out. I also chose flowers of different sizes and textures. A low arrangement in a box allowed this to be viewed from all sides, so I turned it around as I filled it in.



Texture



Considering texture will give more visual interest to your bouquet. I generally like to have one spiky, one smooth, and one with multiple small petals. In this arrangement, the tulip is the smooth, the daisies are "spiky" and the chrysanthemums have the small petals.

Play!

Consider how you might take apart and rearrange a pre-assembled bouquet if picking up separate flowers stresses you out at first. Or pick up different small ones and see what you think about how they look together. Enjoy the process!



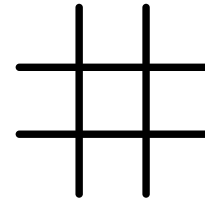
Container

What have you got on hand? A basket? A wooden box? A mason jar? A vase? A teapot? A bucket?

A dollar store is a great place to pick up inexpensive vases and jars, but you might be surprised how charming a rinsed-out jam jar can be!

Structural Support

You can make a tic-tac-toe structure with clear tape on the top of a vase if you want flowers to be arranged more tightly, but I also like just putting them directly in my container.



For a holiday centerpiece, I like to use these foam bricks from a craft store. Follow instructions to soak them in water, then put flowers directly in the foam.



You'll need to line your container (I've even set a foam brick inside a gallon Ziploc bag or cut the foam to a size of two square vases and set the vases down inside my long box, for example. You'll just want to prevent the water from leaking!

Preparing flower stems

Start by cutting at least an inch off the bottom of every stem, and do so at an angle so that the flower can take in more water. Pull off the leaves at the bottom of each flower stem or they will make the water get dull more quickly. Woodier stems (such as hydrangeas) require a different approach, and you can search online for "how to prepare -- name of flower -- for a vase." You can also search "how to prepare water in vase for flowers" for more details, but I generally use lukewarm water and sprinkle in just a little of the flower packet from the store, then refresh the water every couple of days.





Order of place in vase

(think like a theatrical set designer!)

Filler first - greens set the stage

Supporting cast - flowers (sweet williams, carnations, bells of Ireland, etc.)

Showstoppers - the flowers you want to showcase (roses, tulips, sunflowers, etc.)

What we learn from flowers

These beautiful bouquets were put together at a "Make a Bouquet and Give It Away" event that I led. Some of the women had never arranged flowers, and for a couple it was harder than they expected - not because of the arranging, but because of the feelings that were brought to the surface.



Creative work can bring up feelings of comparison, perfectionism, anxiety, or a fear of failure. However...

Like each of us, flowers are inherently beautiful and worth treasuring.

Even if flower buds fall off, they are still lovely floating in a bowl of water. I encourage you to take your time. Smell the flowers. Be gentle with them, and with yourself. Whether you choose a mason jar or a crystal vase, those flowers will brighten a room and add to an atmosphere of beauty and rest. Enjoying beauty is enough; there is no need to assess it.

We each have our own beauty. You are beautiful.

Some people adore sunflowers, others adore tulips. Some people prefer daisies while others prefer roses. Yet no one would ever berate them for their preference. Isn't that interesting?



We take for granted that flowers are different and are each beautiful in their way. That is true of people, too.

There is a woman whom I admire for many reasons; I don't know her personally, but somehow she manages to be a mother of five on a homestead, serve as an editor to a national magazine, publish multiple books, knit, sew, etc. I have no patience for handcraft. It was a good day if I got to shower when my kids were little. It was easy to look at her blog and think of myself as not as impressive.

Then I had a dream in which I gave her a jar of honey.

As I gave it to her, she was delighted, despite the fact that she was already a beekeeper (of course).

Waking up, I immediately thought of how every jar of honey has a particular taste because of the flower pollen that the bees selected. That is why local honey is so special. And that led me to realize:

We each have our own honey to give.

We each have our own history. Values. Skill set. ETC.

So, comparison is truly pointless, unless it encourages us to realize areas in which we want to grow and consider how we might do so.

Today, take a moment to consider your strengths, your personality, your beauty, your skills, your job history, your resources, etc.

How will you share your beauty and the best of yourself with the world today?



I painted this after the dream to remind me of what I learned.

