

The art of flower arranging

Arranging flowers is a relaxing and rewarding hobby, not to mention that it adds a great deal of beauty to any room.

You have brought home that bundle of flowers from the grocery store, or maybe cut them from your own garden, so what now? Arranging flowers is actually pretty simple as long as you take your time. The first thing to do is fill your vase $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up with warm water. You may want to put a drop of bleach in the water to keep it clear; this will not hurt the flowers. Now spread the flowers out on the table in front of you and separate them. There are three basic types of flowers that go into an arrangement:

1. Ornamental flowers- These are the main part of your display. The daisies, roses or whatever varieties you are using.
2. Foliage- This is any greenery that you have. It will work as a backdrop to the flowers.
3. Fillers- This is the traditional baby's breath or maybe some other type of flower. This will fill in any empty spots in your display.

To be a beautiful arrangement, you do not need all three of these. As long as you have ornamental flowers, you will have a terrific arrangement. Begin by putting any foliage you want to use in the vase, concentrating on keeping it around the edges. You should plan to circle the edge of the vase with one layer of foliage. If it is too thick, it will detract from the flowers, and if it is too thin, it will not provide enough visual contrast.

Now place your ornamental flowers into the vase, one at a time. If your arrangement is going to be against a wall, put the tallest flowers in the back, if it will be visible from all sides, put the tallest flowers in the center. Start with the tallest and work your way out to the edge of the container with the shorter flowers. Now carefully look at the vase, is it pleasing to the eye? Is it reasonably symmetrical? Are there any spots that clearly need to be filled in? This is the time to rearrange. It should have a look you are happy with

before you add the filler. Once the filler is added it is a much bigger pain to move things around, as the filler plants are usually very fragile.

Once you are happy with how the arrangement looks, carefully stick a few sprays of filler among the arrangement. Remember that this is to balance out the arrangement. You do not want to detract from the main flowers. Now stand back and look at the arrangement from all sides. How does it look? Are you happy with it?

To maintain the look of your flowers make sure to keep the vase $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water, make sure the water is warm when you pour it in, and if the water starts to turn cloudy or develop an odor, add a splash of bleach. Be sure to scrub out your vases thoroughly between uses and let them soak in bleach water for a few hours before you use them again.