CREATING BASIC GEOMETRIC FLORAL DESIGNS

8947-D

PREPARING ROUND ARRANGEMENTS WITH FRESH CUT FLOWERS

A civic organization has asked your high school floral design class to design table centerpieces for the guest tables at an upcoming banquet. The location of the guest tables will be near the front of the banquet area. Banquet guests and attendees will likely see the table centerpieces from all sides and angles.

What type of floral arrangements will your class design to be effective as table centerpieces? What other factors must your class consider in selecting an appropriate design type?

When creating any type of floral arrangement, a floral designer must consider several factors to develop an accurate mental image of how the arrangement will look when completed. These factors include the purpose and use of the arrangement; the theme and formality of the occasion; and the client’s preference of flowers, colors, and design style. Each of these factors influences the overall shape, form*, and style of the floral arrangement.

Because the banquet guests and attendees will see the centerpieces from all sides, the arrangements can not have a distinct front or back. Being table centerpieces, the arrangements must also be somewhat low in height so they do not block the views of the banquet guests and attendees.

These important factors influence the style and shape of the arrangements considered for the table centerpieces. An appropriate geometric floral design commonly used for a table centerpiece is the circular or round arrangement. The round arrangement is a mass style design that features a circular grouping of floral materials with radial stem placement appearing from the center of the design.

* Underlined words are defined in the Glossary of Terms.
Round arrangements are symmetrically balanced and similar in appearance on all sides. They may be compact or light and airy, and they may consist of one or only a few flower varieties. The symmetrical shape and form of round arrangements give them a more formal appearance than more natural design styles. However, by altering the design shape and the types of flowers used, the designer can create a more informal arrangement that is suitable for the formality of any occasion.

In addition to functioning as a table centerpiece for a banquet, a round arrangement has many uses in the home, office, and any other locations enhanced by the presence of fresh-cut floral materials. Round arrangements can express a range of emotions including birthday celebrations, love, and get-well wishes.

Because of its shape and form, a round arrangement is a popular design style for many retail florists. Flowers in the small, compact arrangement are close to their water source, which aids in their longevity and quality. Round arrangements are also easy to transport for both the florist and the customer. These favorable qualities of round arrangements lead to greater customer satisfaction and repeat sales.

A skilled floral designer uses the same design principles to create larger sizes of round arrangements popularly displayed on buffet tables and in hotel lobbies. In these instances, the designer adjusts the scale of the plant material and the container to correspond to the desired size of the arrangement.

**CONSTRUCTING A ROUND ARRANGEMENT**

Container selection and preparation is the first step in constructing a round arrangement. The container must harmonize with the flowers and foliage of the arrangement. Container preparation is necessary for properly securing the arrangement and maintaining its stability in the container.

After preparing the container, the designer establishes the framework of the arrangement. The designer establishes the framework starting with the height placement and then following with width placement. These placements of foliage or flowers establish the basic round shape of the arrangement. Additional flowers and foliage fill in the arrangement within this framework.

**Step 1: Select and Prepare the Container**

The container accentuates and harmonizes with the flowers and foliage making up an arrangement. It also expresses the style and formality of the arrangement. Therefore, careful thought and consideration are necessary when selecting the container for an arrangement.

When selecting a container for a round arrangement, choose one that provides the proper scale, balance, and sense of harmony for the arrangement. The size of the container should be proportional to the flowers in the arrangement and in scale with the surroundings.

A low rounded container, such as a utility bowl, is effective for a round arrangement. For a more informal appearance or setting, a small wicker basket with a plastic liner is appropriate for the arrangement. A container with a pedestal is functional for elevating and showcasing a round arrangement.
The container style should match the flowers and the occasion for which the arrangement is prepared. Container color and cost are additional factors to consider when selecting a container for a floral arrangement.

After selecting an appropriate container, cut a block of fresh floral foam to fit the container. Use either dry wettable foam or pre-soaked foam, depending on the method used to attach the foam to the container.

Anchor dry wettable foam to the container using pan-melt glue. This method anchors the foam securely without the need for using anchor tape. After gluing the foam to the container, place the foam and container in a tub of water and preservative solution and allow the foam to soak thoroughly. Afterwards, cut the moistened foam with a knife so the foam extends ½ to 1 inch above the rim of the container. Shape the foam by rounding the corners. Rounded corners help reduce the amount of foliage needed to cover the mechanics of the arrangement.

When using pre-soaked foam, allow the foam to extend ½ to 1 inch above the rim of the container. Securely fasten the foam to the container using two ¼-inch wide strips of anchor tape. Criss-cross the two strips of anchor tape in an asymmetrical manner for the symmetrical placement of floral materials.

**Step 2: Develop the Arrangement With Foliage**

Before inserting foliage into the floral foam, lightly score the foam with the tip of a knife. Draw the first line down the center of the foam from the back to the front. Draw a second line from left to right across the center of the foam, dividing the foam into four equal sections. The intersection where the two lines cross is the location of the central vertical axis. This scoring technique assists the designer in placing equal amounts of plant materials on each side of the axis, creating symmetrical balance and a round shape.

Pre-green the arrangement with foliage to hide the floral foam, tape, and any other design mechanics. The foliage will also serve as a background for the flowers inserted later. Use only enough foliage to establish the width on all sides of the arrangement. Place foliage stems horizontally near the rim of the container, around the perimeter of the floral foam. This technique covers the container rim and establishes a transition between the arrangement and the container.

Insert two stems of foliage near the central vertical axis to establish the height of the arrangement. Add additional foliage stems to create a layered appearance. Position the foliage stems so they appear to radiate out from the central vertical axis. Make sure the height of the foliage stays shorter than that of the flower stems inserted later.

Avoid adding too much foliage to the floral foam at this time. Allow enough space in the floral foam for inserting flower stems. If necessary, add additional filler foliage to cover any mechanics after inserting the flower stems in the arrangement.
Step 3: Establish the Arrangement With Flowers

After inserting the foliage to establish the shape of the design, measure and cut the tallest, vertical flower. Make the length of this flower at least 1 ½ times the height of the container (1 ½ times the width for low, flat containers). Insert this flower at the location of the central vertical axis. The height of this flower determines both the height and width of the arrangement.

Measure and cut three additional flowers of similar length. Position these flowers horizontally around the rim of the container. Insert the stems into the floral foam so they are equidistant from each other and the vertical flower at the vertical central axis. Position the flowers so they face upward.

Measure and cut three more stems of the same type of mass flower. Position the stems so they are equidistant from the tall vertical flower and the flowers around the rim of the container. Insert the flower stems into the floral foam at a 45-degree angle between the tall vertical flower and the horizontal flowers at the container rim.

View the arrangement from the top and the sides to assess its round form and shape. The seven flower stems inserted into the floral foam at this point are the key flowers that establish the framework of the round design.

Use this framework as a guideline for adding additional mass flowers. Additional mass flowers added to the arrangement may be of a different type than those making up the floral framework of the arrangement. When inserting additional mass flowers, make sure all materials appear to radiate from the central vertical axis, which is the focal area of the arrangement.
Vary the heights of the flower heads to create depth and interest within the arrangement. Open space among the flowers allows the eyes of the viewer to rest when scanning the overall arrangement.

Flower selection is important in developing the form and shape of a round arrangement. Mass flowers effective for round arrangements include roses, chrysanthemums, carnations, and gerbera daisies. The repetition of mass flowers in a round form develops the design principle of repetition and creates harmony within the design.

Avoid using line flowers and form flowers whose individual character may become lost within the mass of the arrangement. Select foliages of contrasting textures and shapes to add interest to the arrangement and avoid monotony and over repetition.

Space the various flower sizes and colors evenly throughout the arrangement. Some designers prefer to arrange the design with one type and one color of flower at a time. They begin with one color of large mass flowers, then change to another color of mass flowers.

**Step 4: Complete the Arrangement**

If desired, complete the arrangement by inserting filler flowers such as baby’s breath, statice, or asters among the foliage and mass flowers of the arrangement. Filler material enhances the round form and shape of the arrangement.

Use filler material sparingly to create a soft, airy finishing touch to the arrangement. Place the filler flowers carefully between the mass flowers and evenly throughout the arrangement. Allow them to extend slightly beyond the flowers and foliage and over the container rim. This creates harmony and unity between the flowers and the container.
CONSTRUCTING AND DELIVERING QUALITY FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

The following checklist is an efficient tool and guideline for the floral designer in constructing and delivering an attractive, symmetrical, round mass floral arrangement.

- The completed arrangement is constructed so it can be viewed from all sides.
- When visually divided along the vertical axis, one side of the arrangement is a mirror image of the other side.
- All flowers and foliages exist within the framework of the arrangement.
- Mass flowers of the same size exist throughout the arrangement. Color distribution is even throughout the arrangement.
- The floral materials in the arrangement appear to radiate from the central axis and center of the container. Flowers extend over the container rim to unify the design with the container.
- The floral foam and the mechanics are covered.
- Water has been added to the container.
- Greeting card, care tag, and delivery instructions have been attached to the arrangement.

Quality control is an important consideration in the retail floral industry. Customers demand well constructed arrangements of high quality floral materials. Customer satisfaction leads to repeat sales, a respectable reputation, and profitability for the retail florist.

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REFERENCES

The references listed below were used in the development of this topic and can be researched for additional information. References indicated with (1) were consulted and permission for use was given.


GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Definitions for terms in this glossary are taken from Book of Floral Terminology, developed by the Education Committee of the American Institute of Floral Designers.

Form – The overall three-dimensional configuration or shape of a floral arrangement.

Focal area – The center of interest in a floral arrangement to which the viewer’s eyes are drawn.

Mass flower – A type of flower (single, rounded head) used to complete and add mass to an arrangement.

Pre-green – To insert foliage and greenery into the floral foam before inserting the flowers.

Round arrangement – A circular, rounded mass arrangement commonly viewed from all sides and used as a centerpiece for a table.

BRAIN PROBES

SHORT ANSWER/LISTING: Answer the following questions or statements on additional paper.

1. Discuss several factors a floral designer considers as he/she plans the shape and style of a floral arrangement.

2. In what settings are round arrangements commonly used?

3. List the steps for constructing a round arrangement.

4. Sketch the framework of a circular arrangement. Show a top view and side view, identifying the seven flowers that form the framework of the arrangement.

5. Discuss how to create depth and how to disperse color in a round arrangement.

6. Describe the location of the focal area in a round arrangement.

7. List four types of flowers used in round arrangements.

8. How should filler material be arranged to finish out a round arrangement?
CONCEPTS TO CREATIVITY

➢ Select several containers that would be suitable for round arrangements. Describe or sketch an arrangement for one of the containers. Describe an event for which the arrangement would be appropriate.

➢ Select photographs of floral arrangements from professional floral magazines or from commercial florists’ Web sites. Identify the round designs. Create a poster of these arrangements for the classroom.

➢ Select pictures of round arrangements. Discuss the designs and identify the seven key flower placements. Identify other elements and principles of floral design such as color, texture, line, and balance. Identify the mass and filler flowers.

➢ Collect native and ornamental flowers and foliages from the home landscape and from the local area. Create round floral arrangements with the plant materials. Place the designs on display in the school library or main office.

➢ Visit a local florist. Ask the florist to demonstrate how to create a round arrangement. Ask the florist for tips in constructing attractive floral designs.

➢ Use a wholesale florist price list to calculate the cost of materials (floral, container, and mechanics) in a round arrangement. Determine a retail price for the arrangement.

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