

Floral Arranging 101



As you can imagine, Matt and I have visited many homes over the past several years. In those visits, we've discovered that there is one accessory added to a home that always, and I mean always, makes an impression. That accessory is floral arrangements.

These arrangements don't have to be fresh flowers if you don't like the constant maintenance. Dried and silk arrangements are just as impressive.

In fact, silk flowers today are so realistic that sometimes it's almost impossible to tell the fake from the real. Artificial flowers have come a long way from the old days of plastic blooms and are actually made from cotton, rayon, or polyester fabrics. So, I guess the term silk flower is a bit of a misnomer! As for the stems, there are several types and the least expensive is plastic. Better quality stems are hand wrapped with floral tape which provides a more natural appearance. Pliable stems made with wire are even more realistic looking, but can be quite expensive. However, creating your own floral arrangement is much less expensive than having a professional make one for you, so let's get started!

Materials List:

Container
Floral adhesive or glue gun
Floral foam
Serrated knife
Spanish moss
Greening pins
Artificial flowers



Tip:

Choose a suitable container for your arrangement. Urn shaped containers are a great choice for large floral displays, but don't feel pressured to go traditional. Try large chests, wooden boxes, hat boxes, watering cans, etc. The more creative you are, the happier you'll be with your creation!

Instructions:



1 Start by preparing the container. Size your floral foam to the size of your container using a serrated knife. Build up the foam to come about 1" above the top of the container. Use the hot glue gun to hold the pieces together and in place in the container.

2 Cover the foam with spanish moss and secure it with a couple greening pins.



Tip:

When you select your flowers, choose a variety of different textures to give the arrangement interest. Consider color as well so the arrangement works nicely in your room.

As you shop, remember that you are trying to select **line** flowers that stand tall and have many blossoms close to the stem, also some large flowers that are your **focal** flowers, **secondary** flowers that are smaller or less vibrant, and **filler** flowers that can include berries, branches, leaves, or tiny buds like baby's breath.

3 IMPORTANT! Before hopping right in and arranging the flowers, spend the time to open all them by unfolding each one from the bottom and shape the leaves and petals as naturally as possible. This will make a HUGE difference in the finished appearance of your arrangement.



4 Now you can start arranging! Keep in mind, that for the best proportion, the arrangement should be about 1-1/2 times the height and width of the container. In order to create this proportion, start by inserting the line flowers. Line flowers will stand tall and are inserted first, both horizontally and vertically to create a fan shape. If you don't want to use "line" flowers and want a more rounded floral arrangement, start with the focal flowers to create your arrangement's silhouette.

5 More Arranging! Whether you use line flowers or not, the main flowers in the arrangement are called the focal flowers. They will be the flowers noticed first. Place the focal flowers of the arrangement strategically in the middle areas facing all sides. In this arrangement I used 5 sunflowers as my focal flowers and they really do make a statement!



6 Once you are satisfied with their locations, fill in the empty space with the secondary flowers that are either smaller or less vibrant. My secondary flowers are large hydrangeas, but they are very muted in color so they work just fine filling in and not distracting from the sunflowers.



7 Finish with the filler flowers, which are usually small multiple flowers that are lacy and add texture. Filler flowers are also called transitional flowers because they are used to fill in spaces between the line flowers and the focal flowers. Stand back often as you insert the filler flowers to check the symmetry of the arrangement and make any necessary adjustments. My first filler “flower” was eucalyptus in autumn shades and it filled the arrangement up nicely.

More Tips:

- *If any of the silk flowers become loose, they can be secured with hot glue.
- *If the edges of silk leaves become frayed, they can be seared with a match.
- *With care, silk floral arrangements can last for years. To prevent fading, try to protect your arrangement from direct sunlight.
- * To dust off your arrangement, use a feather duster or hair dryer on a “no heat” setting.
- *Commercial silk flower cleaners can also be used.
- *If, after time, your arrangement seems a bit droopy, use a clothes steamer or steam iron to help perk up your arrangement.



As you can see, I also added some branches with berries and a wheat-like filler to give my arrangement even more texture. One of the great things about this arrangement is that it is in the colors of several rooms in my home. It looks great here in the family room, but I moved it to the bedroom and I love it in there, I have a spot in the foyer for it, and even on the dining room table. I love versatility because I am constantly changing things around to get a fresh new look, and a floral arrangement like this one is the perfect accessory for just that!!

Shari