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It's Time for

Throwing Bouquets

by Winnifred Cannon

The art of flower arranging cannot be attained by instinct alone. The "snip and stick" routine in flower arrangement which is frequently employed results in a bouquet that would make the least artistically inclined person shudder with horror.

Anyone with a little thought and a lot of patience can produce a masterpiece in decoration. However, the beginner must necessarily work to the tune of some rather definite principles which will in time come to be a part of the decorator's own taste.

Before arranging the bouquet itself, one should have definitely in mind the purpose of the flowers, where they are to be placed, and the effect they are intended to create. With the space and color of the room and the effect you wish to create in mind, try to imagine the finished product in black and white.

In choosing the flowers, the shape, size and color of the blossoms are of utmost importance. A variety in any of these makes for a more pleasing, interesting and unusual flower-piece. However, the flowers should be similar in texture. For instance, a dainty rose and a coarse zinnia would not be used in the same bouquet since their textures differ.

An odd number of blossoms in the bouquet makes a more interesting design.

Select a container with simplicity in mind. If the shape of the receptacle suggests the shape that is dominant in the bouquet, unity of flowers and container is attained. Usually vases of one color are more attractive than those of a variety. This color may be analogous, similar or contrasting to the flowers. Since the container is serving the definite purpose of a foundation, it should always express strength in structure, color, or texture.

The flowers and container are now combined to form a design which is a result of the arranger's imagination and artistic ability. The various elements should have something in common, either shapes, colors or textures. One of the essentials for a good flower design is balance. The bouquet should have the center, where the stems converge, well filled out, and the sides should be of equal strength.

This does not necessarily mean a perfect symmetry, however, for size may be balanced by color; flowers of darker color appear to weigh heavier than those of lighter colors, and coarse textured flowers appear stronger.

Rhythm in a bouquet may be attained by repetition in shape or color, or by lines running in the same direction.

The contours of the design should not be abrupt and sharp. Each stem and each leaf should be at a graceful angle. A gradual transition should be obtained at the point where the plant material meets the container. If the leaves are allowed to come down over the edge there will be no harsh line of separation between the foundation and the flowers.

Color is of prime importance in arranging flowers. It is taken into consideration when selecting the spot for the flowers, the container, and the flowers themselves. It is through the color schemes that the spirit of the occasion or mood is caught. Colors are used according to seasonal bouquets. Dainty colors denote spring; soft blues or greens are for summer; reds and browns are typical of fall; while in winter, black, bare branches are used.

Also, the location of the room in which the bouquet is to be placed should influence the selection of color. Warm colors such as red and orange should be used in a north room; cool greens and blues subdue a warm, sunny south room; a grey spot is lightened and cheered up by yellow and white.

In using a variety of colors in a design, be sure to have one strong color definitely predominant or there will be a chaotic rivalry for leadership in color. Color combination is one of the most fascinating phases of flower work. At the same time it is one of the most difficult, particularly since the textures of the plant materials vary greatly. Good taste in color is a thing to be cultivated from a knowledge of the principles of color.

Personality is shown through the arrangement of flowers, and for this very reason much thought and care should be put into the designing and arranging of a bouquet. The fundamentals for flower arrangement are few and very general. It is up to each individual to carry on from there with all the enthusiasm and ingenuity and originality she can produce to make her bouquet a work of art.