Flowers as Decorations

Sarah Dolan
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Dolan, Sarah (1924) "Flowers as Decorations," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 4 : No. 7 , Article 5.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol4/iss7/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Flowers as Decorations

By SARAH DOLAN

A single rose is an example of form, lines and color.

Before man was bidden two thousand years ago to “consider the lilies of the fields and how they grow,” flowers were being used as means of decoration. We find the acanthus and ivy leaf used in Greek sculpture while the Egyptians used conventional flower designs. The delicate beauty and rare perfume of the flowers have been praised in all art, literature and song, and no one can deny the influence and inspiration that they have been upon the lives of men.

We have today three sources of flowers—the greenhouses, gardens and the fields. The floriculturist specializes with his flowers but his prices are too high for common use. The garden is our most common source because our supply of wild flowers is fast becoming very limited.

In speaking of the wild flowers, Anette J. Warner says that anyone with an extensive acquaintance with children, or with schools, is familiar with bunches of flowers gathered shortstemmed and brought as offerings of devotion to the teacher. She, in turn, crowns them all, violets, buttercups and daisies, into one receptacle where color and form clash with each other and not even the fittest survive. There is a common tendency, not only of our school children, but older people as well, to gather the wild flowers with little or no thought of their conservation. It is quite astonishing how many of our wild flowers are rapidly becoming extinct.

A garden of flowers blooming the entire season is available to most people if they but realized it. It need not be a large plot laid out in formal beds, with paths and hedges, but a garden in a place where flowers are invited to grow, may be by a doorway, beside a path, or in a fence corner. Such flowers as hollyhocks, geraniums and fox glover are decorative in themselves and will brighten a doorway or make an attractive border around the garden patch.

Many people have the same attitude as the poet in Amy Lowell’s poem who, with his cane struck off the daisy head, and lopped off the iris which waded in the pool, struck off the honeysuckle and gilly-flower and left them dying because “They were not roses.” There are so many possibilities which we overlook. The common back-eyed Susan and cowslip are both rich in color and may be used effectively. Even red clover with grasses makes an interesting decoration.

In picking flowers there are some precautions to follow. First, flowers should be cut, not picked or pulled. Preferably they should be gathered in the morning or in the evening and placed at once in cold water. Before making the final arrangement of a bouquet, it is well to let the flowers stand for some time in a tall receptacle in which the blossoms are supported. Delicate long-stemmed flowers keep better if kept in this fashion overnight. It is best to remove the leaves below the surface of the water as they will soon decay and discolor the water. However, if a glass vase is to be used and one does not wish to remove the foliage the water should be changed often. Flowers keep fresh much longer if the temperature at which they are gathered is maintained; for instance, branches gathered in the fall keep best in very cold water.

The proposed use of the flowers should be well considered before they are selected. A bouquet of lillies-of-the-valley, violets, pansies or sweet peas would be delightful on the small luncheon table, or as a gift for a young girl; but they would be completely lost on a large banquet table or on a church altar. In a large spacious room, blossoms, branches, leaves, berries or seed pods may be used, as well as vines and small potted trees. Also cysanthemums, peonies, snowballs, bridal wreath or goldenrod lend themselves to this type of decoration.

In Bowls and vases simple in design and color are more appropriate than those which are overdecorated. In choosing a vase for a certain type of flower the suggestion of color should be taken from the natural environment of the flower, and the line of the vase from the line of the flower. The receptacle should have some element in common with the plant. For instance, the tall slender vase in harmony with the rose; if the arrangement is low and broad the bulbous bowl is good and if the arrangement is tall and slender a receptacle may be used which repeats that line. The whole arrangement should give the feeling of security.

The elements to be considered in arranging flowers are line, form and color. Those flowers whose chief attraction is line, such as the bridal wreath and goldrod, should be grouped separately or in small groups. How often we see such flowers massed together until the grace of their wand-like stems is lost.

Three sprays of bridal wreath make an interesting arrangement. One long stemmed rose in a vase is a good example of both line and color. Iris, lilies and tulips should never be massed.

We must not overlook the fact that flowers having abundant foliage, such as the pansy and violet, should have some of the leaves in the arrangement. If we study nature we find how carefully she has selected foliage for color and texture. The apple leaves are yellow-green and are subordinated until after the blossoms have gone, then they become a deep rich green color, but as the fruit ripens they again become subordinated to the color of the fruit. Nature also uses a different green for the leaf of the white lilac than for the leaf of the colored varieties. Should we not follow the same principle?

How often asparagus and sword fern are combined with carnations and other hot house plants without thought of appropriateness.

Many who select flowers wisely and arrange them well forget that placing is also an important factor. Some flowers, such as Lilies, will brighten a dark corner; drooping vines will grace a mantel; delicate iris is effective silhouetted against the light of a window; and pond lilies are never as effective as when in a flat bowl upon a stool or low table. The background is also an important factor. The effect of an arrangement may be entirely lost if it is placed against a back-

(Continued on page 16)
are crisp and delicious with afternoon tea or coffee.

Fattig mand kager (poor man cakes) are an appetizing pastry made by adding to four beaten egg yolks one cup of sugar and eight tablespoons of sweet cream. The whites of the four eggs are then beaten and added. Flour is folded in until the mixture is of a consistency stiff enough to lightly roll out to about a quarter of an inch in thickness. Strips are then cut and fried in deep fat.

Kumla (a potato dumpling) is made by grating a half dozen average sized potatoes mixed with a tablespoon of salt. To this is added the flour until the mixture can be formed into dumplings. A piece of meat fat is put in the center of each kumla. These potato dumplings are cooked with pork shank.

Milk is used considerably in Norwegian dietary in the form of cheese and other dishes. In the summer the cows are taken up on the mountain side to graze. Here the saeter (dairy) is located.

Flowers as Decorations
(Continued from page 5)

Flowers have a ground which has a prominent design, such as some of our wall papers and textile hangings.

Whether it be a bit of forget-me-not, a delicate liljy, goldenrod or but a few clover, arranged with thought and care, they not only bring enjoyment to ourselves but have a connection of sympathy or sympathy, brighten our table, perhaps enliven our living room and bid welcome to a guest.

Glimpses into Child Problems
(Continued from page 6)

still unknowingly we destroy it to keep it from developing in a child. Dr. Wooley, an eminent psychologist, tells of how when her daughter was five months old, she began, one day, to explore the edge of the chifflower drawer with her finger. Instead of hurrying to finish dressing the child she decided to see how long the baby could keep her attention on that one thing and discovered that it did not waver for forty minutes. Of course, we cannot know just what the baby learned during that time, but it certainly shows us that by snatching children from first one thing and then another we may be destroying their developing power of concentration.

"Do children think?" an interested onlooker might ask and student observations reveal such instances as:

Bobby, aged two and one half was building a tower of blocks. Soon it became so high that he could no longer reach the top to put on the next block, so he went for a chair and his problem was solved for awhile. Of course it wasn't long before it again outgrew his height and after a moment of contemplation he went for another chair and placed it carefully beside the first. What a look of surprise came over his face when he put one foot on one chair and one on the other chair and still found he was no nearer the top! His method of reasoning was all right but he needed experience to help him reach the right conclusion. No adult jumped to his aid, but after a little experimentation he finally placed one chair on the other and reached the top! That was a real problem solved.

Some general rules that are given to the students are: Do not make a request unless you wish it carried out; ask a child courteously to do something instead of plainly demanding it; give a child a chance to make a choice as, "Will you walk in from the playground or shall I carry you in?"

It is only by truly trying to understand a child and by trying to see things from his viewpoint that we can help him to develop into the finest possible type of individual.

"That Shoog Girl Complexion"
(Continued from page 7)

I hasten to answer— a sense of humor, without which all else would count for little. She is never dull because she sees the funny side of life and enjoys a joke from herself as much as a joke on someone else.

As I mused over these inner qualities which in the last analysis determine, more than do the outward traits, the beauty of the portrait I was reminded of a woman whom I knew. She possessed not a single good feature but she was blessed with a manner degree with those splendid mental and moral characteristics a few of which we have been discussing. A celebrated artist was engaged to paint her portrait. When the picture was finished and placed on exhibition we beheld the portrait of a beautiful woman. There was no mistaking the identity of the subject, however, for the artist had been faithful in the reproduction of her features.

What magic then, had he practiced to enable him to portray this homely woman as a beauty? There was no magic except that of a great artist—he had caught the spirit of the woman and put it upon the canvas—the light that shone from her eyes, and lines of understanding and sympathy about the mouth and the tender, sensitive lips. All the honesty, the loyalty, the quick sympathy for others, the generous spirit and the fine sense of humor all these had burned within that woman like a white flame. They had softened and made beautiful her features, just as a glowing light might dissolve a piece of ice by its influence.

As I drove into the town through the golden sunshine, I realized that the girl of the roadside picture was beautiful not merely because of that "School Girl Complexion." Those other qualities of mind and spirit had given her a charm which mere physical beauty could not produce and which every girl can cultivate if she will.

Attractive tho Inexpensive Hangings
(Continued from page 7)

When glass curtains are used the figured material is sufficiently wide to spill that it may be desirable to carry the color across the top of the window. This is done by using a plain colored valance either made straight or gathered. These valences may vary in length according to the style of hanging.

Curtains for bed rooms have an added amount of styles choice. The types already discussed may be used with only slight changes, but often times the housewife wishes variety and finds the bed room the ideal place for it. A most pleasing effect is secured by us-