

Easy and elegant holiday arrangements

By Blair Farris

Flower arranging doesn't need to be difficult or stressful. Shopping, parties and family create enough stress. I know. Flower "arranging" and "easy" aren't usually in the same sentence, but here are a few steps to create beautiful arrangements for your table in less than 30 minutes. A few small but stunning vases set on a table can be gorgeous but are not nearly as difficult to arrange as a large centerpiece.



Step 1

Choose your vases. They can be identical or made of the same material, but different sizes. Think of a silver mint julep cup as the perfect size — not too big and not too little.

Step 2

Choose the flowers. In this situation less is more! Pick three kinds of flowers and stop. Sticking with a monochromatic palette is easier. For example, red roses, hot pink Gerber daisies and red tulips look beautiful together. They aren't exactly the same color and the different petal shapes give the arrangement depth. I used one bunch of roses, two bunches of tulips, two bunches of Gerber daisies and one bunch of a filler called Hypericum. Stay within your budget. Less-expensive flowers can make a big impact in mass, but never use baby's breath. The Blossom Shop always has freshly cut flowers marked 30-percent-off that you can arrange yourself.



Step 3

Prepare the flowers by stripping them of their leaves and possibly thorns. This will help to eliminate bacteria that can build up in the water. It will keep the flowers looking fresher for longer.

Step 4

Put two or three of the flowers in your left hand and then keep adding flowers with your right hand, trying to keep the flowers at the same level. Group them in bunches for more impact.

Step 5

As you hold the flowers, wrap some twine around the stems up close to the flowers to keep them secure. This step can be skipped, but it does help to keep the flowers in place when you put them in the vase. This is especially important when you have a container with a larger mouth.

Step 6

Cut the stems off at the same level with your right hand. Test the stems in the vase to see if they are OK. You might need to recut if they are too long.

Step 7

The arrangements don't have to be perfect. Once you put them in the vases, you can fill in with extra flowers where there are holes. Voilà! You have a table arrangement. Because the vases are smaller and the stems short, make sure to keep the vases filled up with water.

If you are not interested in doing it yourself and you want something absolutely fabulous, call The Blossom Shop. Ted Todd and Debbie Sacra, my longtime friends and owners of the Blossom Shop, taught me the basics of flower arranging. Nineteen years



Steps 3 & 4



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7