



Creating a Gorgeous & Meaningful Bouquet

SIX GREAT TIPS

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Perhaps more than any other accessory in your wedding ensemble, your wedding bouquet commands the spotlight. While your all-important hand-held arrangement should not outshine your wedding dress, it should be impressive enough to accompany it. To create a bouquet that not only accents your dress but embodies your entire personality and wedding theme, follow the advice of these famed floral experts.

1. Don't dominate...coordinate. When designing your bouquet, remember you want it

to coordinate with your wedding color palette and your wedding gown, but not overwhelm your appearance. It is part of the picture rather than the entire picture, so remember to treat it as such. "It's a great accessory to the event," says Michelle Kellett, wedding director for Clear Lake Flowers in Houston. "You don't want to draw all eyes to the bouquet; the emphasis should be on the bride."

If you have a dress with a lot of embellishment, Kellett recommends a bouquet with a simpler style so the bouquet doesn't compete

flowers

with the gown. However, that doesn't mean you can't enhance your understated arrangement a bit. For instance, Kellett suggests adding some Swarovski crystals or wrapping the stems of your flowers in a fabric that matches your dress or veil. A subtly sparkling bouquet "brings a little more life to the

overall event," she notes.

Likewise, "if the dress is overly simple, don't do an overly simple bouquet, because it will be boring," says New York-based celebrity event designer Preston Bailey, author of "Preston Bailey Flowers" (Rizzoli, 2011). A sophisticated sheath or demure ballgown gives

you the opportunity to create a bountiful bouquet, rich with texture and color.

2. Tie one on. A great starting point when creating your bouquet is deciding what shape you want. Should it be round? Hand-tied? Cascading? Wild and full? "Initially, focus on the style and shape," says Sara Jenkins-Sutton, co-owner of popular floral studio Topiarius in Chicago. And if you're using a magazine or web image as your inspiration, "Don't discount a design just because the photograph shows a particular color or flower."

The hand-tied bouquet definitely beats out other styles in popularity at the moment. But Kellett says brides appreciate a modern twist on this classic style. "It's hand-tied, but with more fluidity," she explains. "It gives more movement as you walk down the aisle." The Houston florist notes that she is using a lot of orchids, jasmine and greens in this beautiful bouquet style.

For the "tied" part of the hand-tied style, Jenkins-Sutton advises brides to think about what they want to go around the stems of their flowers. Favorite materials include ribbon, leather, organza and satin—and some brides like to use a bit of fabric from their veil or wedding dress.

3. Weigh your options. When designing your bouquet, don't get so caught up in the particular blooms and the overall look that you forget about the size and weight of your arrangement. "Keep proportion in mind," says Rebekah Graves, owner of Dream Bouquet in Houston. Consider your own size and how you look in your dress, she says. If you are very tall, don't opt for a diminutive nosegay. If, on the other hand, you are petite, don't obscure half of your body with a giant sphere of blooms. "You want to keep the size of the bouquet in check so we still see the bride," she advises.



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Also, remember that more is not always better. “How big do you want?” Jenkins-Sutton asks. “Big sometimes means heavier,” she says, especially when your bouquet is dominated by thick-stemmed blooms and accents such as heirloom brooches.

4. Keep it simple. Many brides know they want their bouquet to be a specific color, but they want more than one flower. That’s where monochromatic bouquets come in. “We see a lot of monochromatic bouquets with a mix of flowers,” Kellett says. Brides especially adore bouquets of roses, hydrangeas and peonies, all in shades of white or ivory. Other popular monochromatic palettes are reds, pinks and purples.

Likewise, a bouquet featuring a single flower type in variations on a color can make a bold statement in the right hands. A great example, says Lisa Tran of Houston’s Blooming Gallery and Linen Gallery, is all calla lilies in shades of white, accented with just a touch of greenery. Also lovely are roses in variegated shades of pink from deep to pale, and peonies in colors ranging from coral to shell.

5. Make it personal. The best bouquet is a bouquet that means something special to the bride who carries it. One wonderful way to personalize your bouquet is by using flowers that have significance to you and/or your groom. For instance, did your groom propose with a bouquet of roses? Were hydrangeas your grandmother’s favorite flower? Did your mom carry lilies at her own wedding?

Another way to personalize your flowers is to honor loved ones who may not be present by adding an heirloom or other sentimental accent to your arrangement. “I’m a sentimental person so I love adding little details of someone you love,” Graves says.



Bailey, for his part, has taken a Bible belonging to one bride's mother and wrapped it beautifully, then attached it with ribbon to the bottom of the bouquet. For another bouquet, he attached the engagement ring belonging to the bride's mother.

Tran says she also has seen brides add a locket with their grandparents' photos inside or a family brooch that's been passed down from generation to generation.

If you want to include a sentimental item in your bouquet but you're concerned about it detracting from the overall design, rest easy. Your florist can tuck it into the arrangement "for your view only," Kellett says.

Perhaps the easiest way to incorporate something precious into your bouquet—and make good on the tradition

of "something old"—is to have your florist tie your bouquet stems with a family handkerchief, or a bit of lace from your mother's or grandmother's wedding dress.

6. Have fun with your flowers! With seemingly infinite varieties of flowers, colors and style choices, bouquet design can be a bit...overwhelming. So let your floral designer do what he or she does best—make expert bouquet suggestions based on your preferences and the details of your gown and wedding.

And if you aren't sure what you do want, perhaps consider what you do not want. "Sometimes people have no clue what they do like but know what they don't like," Jenkins-Sutton says. "This can be very helpful to the designer."

And don't get carried away. Bailey recommends using just two or three

different flower types in your bouquet, to avoid having it look messy. If desired, he says, you can enhance the design with pearls, gems or other eye-catching accoutrements.

Most importantly, choose a bouquet that matches your personality. Are you a rock 'n roll bride? Consider, perhaps, black calla lilies (actually a very deep shade of purple), which are infinitely elegant, but with plenty of edge. Are you gaga for glamour? Create a bouquet with ostrich feathers, full red roses or oodles of bling.

Overall, make sure your bouquet fits in with the vision you have for your wedding. "It's about your experience and what you want for that day," Kellett says, so don't be afraid to keep tweaking your bouquet design until it's a perfect reflection of you.



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