



UNIT 5: FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Flower arrangement is a very old art. Making up of a good flower arrangement requires a lot of creativity and one can develop this art through study and experimentation with different plant materials.

Flower arrangement may be defined as the art of organizing and grouping together plant materials (flowers, foliage, twigs, etc.) to achieve harmony of form, colour, and texture, thereby adding cheer, life, and beauty to the surroundings.

FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS IN HOTELS

In hotels, flowers are used extensively. Various types of arrangements are chosen, as appropriate to the area and occasion.

e.g.

- Large arrangements in the lobby as centre piece
- Medium-sized 'round' arrangements are often provided at the guest relations executives' desk in the lobby and on coffee tables in the lounges.
- Restaurants generally have bud vases on each table, with one or two flowers in them.
- Table arrangements for conferences must be low so that guests may see over them. Medium or large arrangements on tables, walls, stage etc in Banquets.
- Small arrangements in guest rooms.
- Special decoration on festivals such as Diwali, Christmas etc

BASIC REQUIREMENTS TO MAKE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

1. Mechanics
2. Equipment
3. Containers
4. Bases
5. Support
6. Plant material
7. Accessories

1. MECHANICS:

These are items used to keep flowers, foliage, and stems in place within the container. Mechanics must be fixed securely and should be hidden from view once the arrangement is kept for display. These include:

- Floral foam, also called oasis, is a cellular plastic material, available in two types – green foam and brown/grey foam.



- Pin-holders, also called kenzan or needle-point holders, is a series of sharply pointed pins are firmly held in a solid lead base, to hold thick and heavy stems securely by impaling them on the pins.

- Chicken wire, also called 'wire mesh' or 'wire netting', is a fine- gauge wire used to cover floral foam blocks in large displays.



- Prong is the simplest type of floral foam anchor. It is a small plastic disc with four



vertical prongs. The base of the prong is attached to the container with adhesive clay and the floral foam is pressed down onto the prongs.

- **Florist's cone**, also called a '**flower tube**' or '**flower funnel**'. It acts like a miniature vase. It is used in large arrangements, where foliage or flowers need to be placed above their stem height.



2. EQUIPMENT:

This includes tools used to ensure that a satisfactory arrangement of plant material is created within the container. These include: Bucket, scissors, knife, watering can, mister, wire cutter, cocktail sticks, turn, wire, floral tape, candle holder, cut flower preservatives, and secateurs.

- Mister is a hand-held spray bottle to produce a fine mist of water droplets to keep an arrangement look fresh in warm weather.
- Secateurs are used to cut through thick and woody stems.
- Cocktail sticks or a tooth pick is used to make holes in florists' foam for a soft stem of flower.
- Cut-flower preservatives is a bactericide, available in powder or liquid form, to prevent slime and smell from developing in the vase water, plus sugar to prolong the life of fresh flowers. A preservative can be made in-house by adding 3 teaspoons of sugar and 1 drop of bleach to half a litre of water.



3. CONTAINERS:

These are receptacles that hold the flower arrangement. They may or may not be hidden by the plant material. The container must be waterproof and neutral colours such as soft grey, dull brown, off-white, or earth colours are most suitable because they are inconspicuous and do not detract attention from flowers displayed. Theme and simplicity should be kept in mind while choosing the design of the container.

Example – vases and jugs, basket, bowls and trays, wreath frame etc.

4. BASES:

An object that is placed underneath the container to protect the surface of the support and/or to add to the beauty of the display is called a base. Example – table mat, tree section, wood base, stone base, and oriental base.

5. SUPPORT:

This refers to the structure on which the container stands. Example – tables, sideboards, alcoves, and shelves.

6. PLANT MATERIAL:

These can be divided into 2 basic types- FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE.

FLOWERS

Types of flowers -

- **Line flowers** stand tall and have many blossoms close to the stem. They are “showy” flowers like liatris, snap dragons, delphiniums, stock, gladiola and Canterbury bells. The line flowers are inserted both vertically and horizontally in the design first, to establish the direction and shape of the arrangement. Focal and filler flowers are added to add to the shape and feeling of the design.



- Focal flowers, like roses, magnolias, hydrangeas and peonies are single stem, compact the flowers that command the attention of the viewer. They are placed close to the center of the arrangement slightly above and drooping below the edge. They add stability to a design.
- Filler flowers have clusters of individual flowers on a single stem or flower head. Some fillers have multiple leaves and feathering blooms. They are called transitional flowers because they are used to fill spaces between the line and focal flowers. statise, dianthus, denzia, pom-poms, field flowers, baby's breath, poppies, asters and wax flowers are examples of filler flowers

FOLIAGE

Foliages are commonly used to compliment arrangements through the addition of greenery, and are excellent for covering the stalks of longer stemmed flowers. e.g. Camellia, Eucalyptus, Palm, Sword Fern, Myrtle, Leather leaf fern, Ivy, Magnolia,

7. ACCESSORIES:

These are non-plant materials included in or placed alongside the arrangement. Their purpose is generally decorative but could be functional at times. Accessories are added to the design for extra interest or to 'stretch' the flowers when they are in short supply.

Example – miniature dolls, hats, ribbons, beads, painted wire, wooden fruit shapes, silk flowers and foliage, candles, driftwood, shells, idols, interesting pebbles etc.

CARE AND CONDITIONING OF FLOWERS

A flower or leaf cut from a plant has a short, though beautiful, life. It is possible to prolong this for a little while by a few methods. Flower arrangers use the term 'conditioning' to refer to the preparation of cut plant materials for a long life, the filling of stems with water, and prevention of wilting.

- A bucket of water at room temperature should be carried into the garden and the cut flowers should be immediately plunged into it. This helps retain their moisture for a longer period of time.
- Plant material should be cut at a slant, using sharp scissors or knife, either early in the morning or after sunset. At this time, they are crisp and filled with moisture.
- As a general rule, it is best to cut flowers before they reach maturity.
- Carry cut flowers in a heads-down position so that heavy-headed flowers will not snap off.
- Wrap the flowers in newspaper till the neck of the flowers. Plunge this bunch into a bucket of water for 3-4 hours or overnight to condition. This is called '**hardening**'. In case of foliage, submerge them in water for about 2 hours.
- Use a good pruning knife or scissors to make clean, slanting cuts, causing minimal damage or bruising to the little ducts in the stem which carry water.
- Make slanting cuts in stems rather than straight ones – preferably underwater, as this helps expose a larger surface area for water suction by the stems.
- To revive wilting flowers, snip off half an inch of the stem underwater and plunge in a deep container of water. Dead flowers should be cut off.
- Re-cut any stem that has been left out of water, doing this underwater if possible and removing about 2 inches of the stem.



- To reduce underwater decay, strip the stems of all foliage and thorns that fall below the waterline.
- Never place a fresh flower arrangement where it will be exposed to direct draughts from a fan or window. To prevent dehydration, keep cut flowers away from direct sunlight and large appliances as well.
- Do not put flowers near a bowl of citrus fruits as they emit ethylene gas when ripening, which causes wilting of flowers.
- Prolong the freshness of the arrangement by spraying with lukewarm water from a mister morning and night.
- Change the water every day if the arrangement is meant to last a while. Never use chilled water, as cut stems fare best in warm water of about 45°C.
- Listerine, ammonia, salt, lemonade, sugar, camphor, aspirin added in small amounts to the water, or commercial cut-flower preservatives slows down bacterial growth, thus prolonging the life of flowers.
- Use clean containers to prevent premature fouling and bacterial growth. Do not use aluminium containers for flowers.
- Every 3 days, re-cut the stems, clean the vase, completely replace the water, and add more preservative.

PRINCIPLES OR DESIGN OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

1) SCALE –

Scale is easy to understand as we can all recognize when small flowers look wrong in a large container, etc. However size is relative – an object seen by itself is not big or small unless it is seen next to another object for comparison. If the difference is great then objects do not go well together.

In flower arrangement, this can be explained in terms of relative size dimensions of flowers used. E.g.

- Focal – Large flowers e.g. , lilies, gerberas, bird of paradise
- Transitional – Medium flowers e.g. rose buds, carnations
- Fillers – Small flowers e.g. Waxflowers, Asters

2) PROPORTION –



Good proportion refers to pleasing amount of things and is a matter of relationships. One most widely accepted rule is The golden ratio / Greek oblong. Euclid's golden ratio is a special number approximately equal to 1.618 that appears many times in mathematics, geometry, art, music, architecture and other areas. It is popular by the name Phi and is considered aesthetically pleasing. In terms of flower arrangements, it can be approximated as 2:3 where

if shorter side measures 2 units then longer side measures 3 units.

3) BALANCE –

Here, physical as well as visual balance needs to be considered.

- Physical balance: this is vital for any arrangement. If it is too asymmetrical, then there is a danger that the whole arrangement will tip over. The mechanics must always be securely fixed and the container should always be heavy enough to support the plant material. The more one-sided the display, the heavier the container should be. Sand and gravel can be added to achieve this.
- Visual balance: this calls for the arrangement to look stable even if it is one-sided. To increase the



visual weight of the lighter side, keep in mind that –

- a) Dark flowers look heavier than pale ones.
- b) Round flowers look heavier than trumpets and conical ones.
- c) Large flowers placed centrally and close to the bottom of the arrangement give a feeling of good balance.

Symmetry and asymmetry: This refers to the outline or the shape of the design. If design is symmetrical, then its shape is exactly the same on either side of the centre. If asymmetrical design, then shapes are dissimilar and balance depends on the eye being attracted to both sides of the design equally by the use of different colours, shapes and textures.

4) RHYTHM OR MOVEMENT:

This involves using techniques and materials that guide the eye from one part of the display to another. Thus it is flow of lines creating sense of movement. Rhythm in flower arrangements may be achieved by –

- a) Using curved stems
- b) Hiding all or part of any tall, straight stems.
- c) Placing flowers ‘in and out’ through the arrangement.
- d) Having flowers at various stages of development in the arrangement.
- e) Using foliage of various sizes and contrasting shapes.
- f) Having an irregular line of various- sized blooms.

Rhythm is best achieved by repetition and easy gradual change.

5) CONTRAST:

Contrast and variety add interest to life and opposite things emphasize each other. A flower arrangement can be dull without contrast. Contrast can be created in shape – by turning the flowers to different ways when all round flowers are used. Contrast can be achieved by introducing line plant material. Strong contrast in textures can be used for interest. Very strong contrasts should be avoided as too much contrast may upset the unity of the arrangement.

6) EMPHASIS/ DOMINANCE:

This involves having one or more areas in the arrangement to which the eye is drawn and on which it rests for a short time. This point is known as a ‘focal point’ or ‘centre of interest’. The usual methods to achieve emphasis are as follows-

- a) Include a small group of bold flowers (dominant material).
- b) Use an unusual container.
- c) Use striking foliage.
- d) Have sufficient plain background.

7) HARMONY/ UNITY:

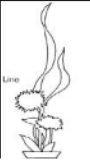

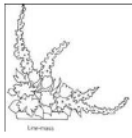

In a pleasing flower arrangement, the plant material, container, base, accessory and setting should all be in harmony. Similarity in appearances between materials help s give repetition and a feeling of harmony, e.g., the curve of a piece of driftwood, etc. The resemblance in all cases need not be identical but a link in



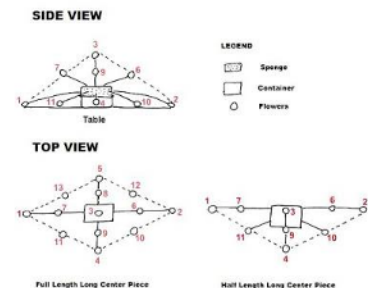
appearances is an echo giving a feel of relationship. The important fact here is that all plants look as if they belong to the arrangement and give a look of unity.

STYLES / OUTLINES OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Flower arrangements can be made in various styles based on their shape and view:

1. **Line Arrangement** - In this style, open spaces within the boundary of the arrangement is the main feature. This style is popular in Oriental arrangements. 
2. **Mass Arrangement** – In mass arrangement, there is little or no space enclosed within the boundary of the arrangement. This style is popular in Europe. 
3. **Triangular Arrangement** – This type of arrangement is triangular in shape. It could be a symmetrical triangle or asymmetrical. (Left triangle- Longest stem along the left side or Right triangle - Longest stem on the right side of the container with consecutive stems) 
4. **Round Arrangement** - This arrangement is designed to be seen from all sides and is therefore chosen for a table or a room centerpiece.
5. **Single side facing / Flat-back Arrangement** - It is designed to be seen only from the front and perhaps from the sides. It is therefore chosen for placement on a shelf or sideboard.
6. **Crescent Arrangement** – A half moon or crescent shaped arrangement. This is usually thicker in the centre with more flowers and foliage and thins out towards the edges. The curve can be given with soft woody stems or with help of wires.
7. **S Shaped / Hogarth** - This style was pioneered by an 18th century painter, William Hogarth. This is a very graceful and easier to make arrangement when curved branches and pliable stems are used. After establishing the S shape with these, flowers are filled in at the centre and just above and below the rim of the tall container 

8. **Fan shape** - The fan or horizontal shape is a good line to follow when designing flowers for the centre of the table. It is a low arrangement, symmetrical and thus attractive from every angle.



TYPES OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

1. **Western / Traditional**
 - Formal mass arrangements, bunches, bouquets, posies or corsages.
2. **Oriental / Japanese**
 - Ikebana, Moribana,
 - Line arrangements
3. **Abstract**
 - Follow geometric patterns



- Free style
- Creative, combination of two or more styles

4. Miniature

Very small arrangements made in small containers.

5. Floating

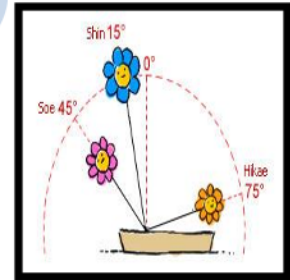
Water plants arranged in containers OR urns. In Indian culture also flowers, petals etc are floated on water surface in earthen urns complimented with diyas.

6. Dry

Arrangements made using preserved flowers, wood, pine cones and leaves. These may be varnished or painted.

IKEBANA (Japanese/ Oriental flower arrangement):

The word literally means 'making flowers *live*' in Japanese. This Japanese style has been practiced for thousands of years. These arrangements are more than an aesthetic grouping of plant materials. They are symbolic representations of an ideal harmony that exists between earthly and eternal life. In each arrangement, there is an imaginary triangle. Its tallest line represents 'heaven'. Facing and looking towards heaven is 'man'. The lowest line, looking up to both, is 'earth'.



- General principles:
 - Impression of naturally growing plants
 - Bamboo, bronze or pottery tall vases & shallow bowls are used as containers.
 - Use of odd number of flowers is considered aesthetic and lucky
 - Minimalistic approach
 - Represent Heaven, Man & Earth

In all such arrangements, Heaven, man and earth are represented by means of three main branches. Shin, the main spray, is the tallest and symbolizes heaven; it ends at about 15° to the central axis of the vase. This stem should be 1 ½ to 2 ½ times the height of the container. Soe, the second highest stem, represents man. It provides width to the arrangement and is about three-fourth the height of the tallest spray. This stem forms an angle of about 45° with the central axis of the container. Hikae, the lowest spray, denotes earth. This branch is about half as tall as the one signifying man and extends very little beyond the diameter of the container, forming an angle of about 75° with the central axis of the container. It is placed opposite the branch signifying man and is used to balance the arrangement.

STYLES OF IKEBANA:

1. Moribana:-

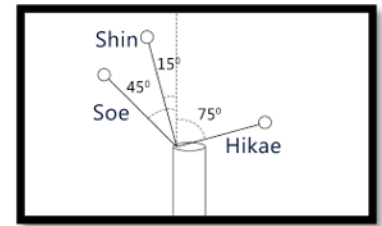
- Most popular – Ohara School
- Informal arrangement
- Flat or shallow container with pin holder (Kenzan)



- Portray landscapes or large colourful flowers (Piled – up)

2. Nageire:

- Classical arrangement in tall cylindrical vase with flowing & natural effect (Thrown – in)

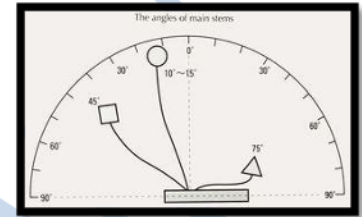


3. Seika:-

- Formal arrangement
- Strict rule governing length & angle of stem
Triangular arrangement
- Looks like all stems arise from single point

4. Ukibana - Floating arrangement

5. Morimono - Arrangement using fruits, vegetables & nuts



PLACEMENT OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS:

1. Eye level – On pedestals, alcoves or credenza.
2. High level – Large and decorative. Banquets or lobby.
3. Low level – Floating arrangements.

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