

Topic: Home management

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Using plants and flowers

Flowers delight everyone. Interior decoration is complete only with the presence of few flowers in a room. Flowers suit any room in the house and provide variety and interest. Flowers are universally admired and loved. Apart from the beauty and charm they possess, plants also help to purify the air during the day time. Plants inside the house create a pleasant, fresh and cheerful atmosphere. It alleviates feelings of depression and objection. Today arranging flowers has become the fascinating hobby of many housewives. Now we shall discuss flower arrangement in detail.

Selection of Vases The main function of the vases or container is to support the flowers and foliage. The container should be subordinate to the flower arrangement. It should be of the right size, shape, colour and material.

Types of vases or containers

1. Jars, attractive bottles, tins.
2. Tall cylinders, narrow necked vases, flat round dishes, deep trays, low round bowls.
3. Bottles of different colours.
4. Block of wood or bamboo baskets.
5. Household pots, vessels, tumblers, shallow dishes.

Selection and preservation of flowers

1. Flowers should be collected either early morning or evening.
2. Select buds or flowers just blossoming than flowers in full bloom. These flowers are liable to shed their petals or droop and wither fast in a short period.
3. The stems should not be broken with the hand. It should be cut with scissors or a sharp knife. The stem should be as long as possible.
4. The cut portion of the stem should be immersed in water. Only the petals of the flowers should be exposed.
5. The leaves close to the base of the stem should be removed.
6. The flowers should be wrapped either in a piece of paper or a broad leaf, such as the banana leaf, above the stem ends and stored in dark corner of a room in a bucket of water, to protect them from sunlight. If they are not going to be used soon, polythene covers may also be used to cover the cut flowers.
7. The container or the vase should be filled with warm water. The water should be changed every day. Add sugar or salt to enable the flower to last.

Flower Holder

A flower holder is one which has sharp spikes upon which the stems can be firmly placed. This is known as pin type holder. Other than this we also have crumpled wire, split twigs etc. Flower holders must be strong and flexible, so that any type of stem can be easily fixed. It should also be rust proof. Pin holders can be fixed to the bottom by clay or candle.

This fixing must be done when the vase as well as the holders are dry. Large flowers and foliage can be arranged at the bottom so that the holders are concealed.

Styles in flower arrangement

1. The traditional style: Where a mass of flowers of all kinds, colours and size are used together. This produces a multicolored mass effect.

2. Oriental style: This is Japanese mode of flower arrangement. It gives an impression of a natural growing plant. The stems are so arranged that their lines form an attractive pattern. The flowers are placed in such a way so as to produce balance. The flowers are always in odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. The arrangement has three main branches representing heaven, man and earth.

3. The modern style: A combination of traditional and oriental style.

4. Floating arrangement: This arrangement can be made in shallow bowls and trays with short stemmed flowers. The largest, highest and most attractive flower can be allowed to float in the Centre and others grouped around. Flowers should not completely cover up the water.

Points to be Considered While Arranging Flowers

1. Have an idea about the arrangement.
2. Arrange the flowers first and then fill up with leaves and twigs.
3. Have big bright flowers at the bottom and small light coloured flowers on higher levels.
4. Make the levels start and deviate from one point in the arrangement.
5. Fill the flower vase with enough water to dip the stem ends.
6. Sprinkle salt, sugar or suitable preservative to keep up the freshness of flower for long.
7. Display the flower arrangement beautifully in a place to be seen and enjoyed. Select suitable accessories to go in with the arrangement
8. All the principles of design should be followed for pleasing effects.

Types of Flower Arrangements

1. Mass Arrangement: A group of flowers of all kinds, colours, size and textures are combined in a container. Usually decorative container is used.



Fig. 24 -Mass arrangements

2. Line arrangement: This arrangement is simple, meaningful, beautiful and informal. The Japanese oriental style usually follows. This arrangement gives an impression of natural, free growing plant. Odd numbers of flowers are used at three levels. The **highest** level signifies heaven, the **middle** refers to the man and **lowest** indicates the earth. Heaven- $1\frac{1}{2}$ times to 2 times the height or width of the vase Man - $\frac{3}{4}$ th the height of heaven. Earth - $\frac{1}{2}$ the height of man.

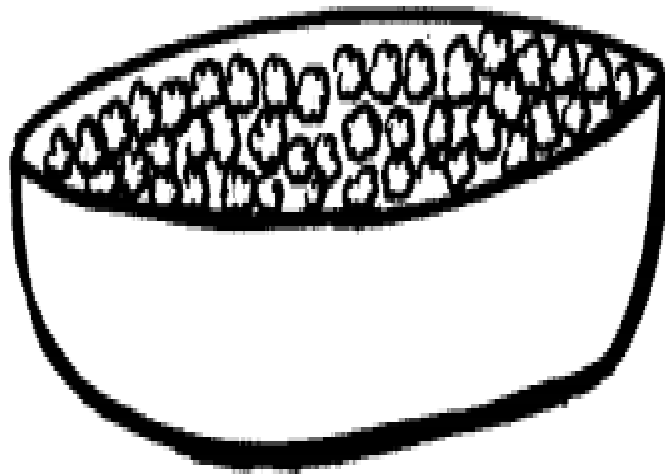


Fig.25-Floating arrangement

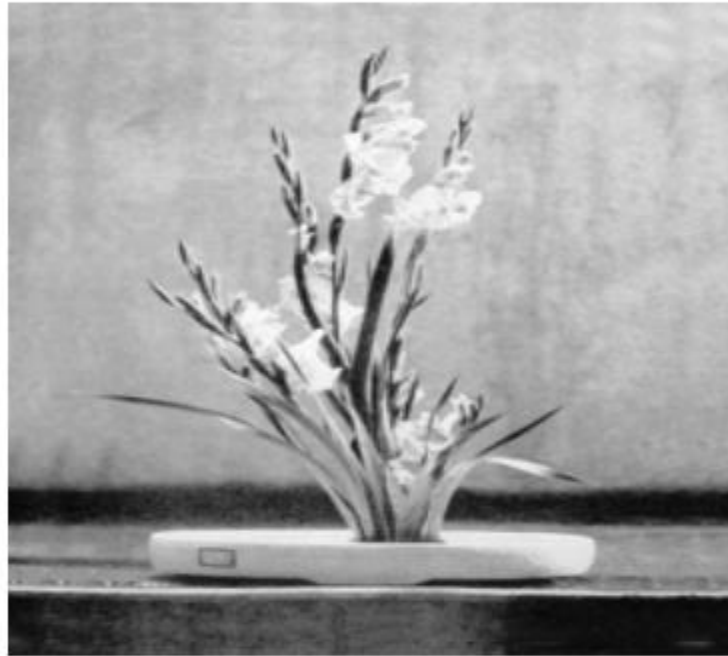


Fig. 26 -Ikebana arrangement

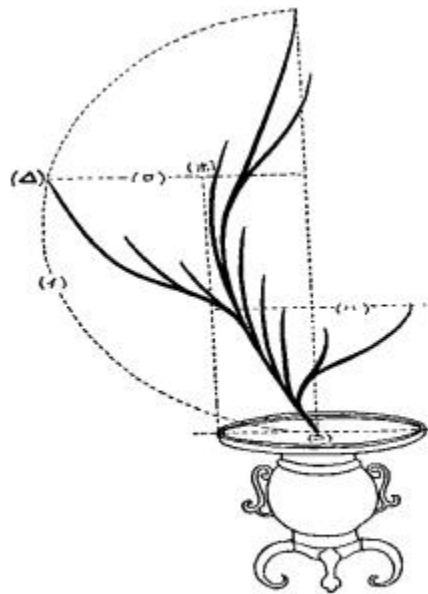


Fig. 27 -Ikebana arrangement - basic style.

3. Combination arrangement: A combination of line and mass arrangement gives rise to geometric shapes as cone, crescent, circle, triangle, 'L' shape and so on.

4. Foliage arrangement: Arrangements using leaves or branches of plants are foliage arrangements, (e.g.) ferns, crotens, cannas, cactus, weeds can also be arranged effectively with a touch of imagination

5. Diminutive arrangement: They are small arrangements usually within four inches in height arranged in small containers like egg shell, small bottles, lids, etc.

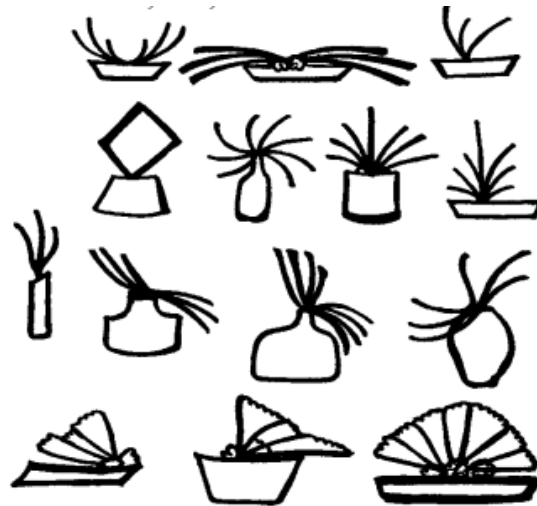


Fig. 28 - Arrangements of Different Shapes

Dry Arrangement These are particularly useful during rainy season when there are very few flowers, Dry arrangements with fruits, vegetables, seed pods, bare branches, flower plumes of tall grasses, sugar cane, roots, stems of money plant, a small dead tree, the clustering, especially peacock feathers if well-arranged presents a novel appearance and are suitable for interior decoration. Dry arrangements with wood can be painted in silver, white or gold for variation in style



Fig. 29 - Dry arrangements

Fruit and Vegetable Arrangement A great amount of foliage should be added in fruit or vegetable arrangement. Containers should be sturdy and large sized. Even baskets and trays will be attractive. The cuts and carving should be made in such a way so that a pine apple may look like a peacock, an onion a lotus and beet root, red rose, melon - a. lamp shade etc.

5.3.16 Floor decorations: The various types of floor decorations are

1. Kolam: Kolam is a free hand drawing of various designs. It can be either dotted or in various designs. For drawing kolams, either white stone or chalk powder, enamel paint, white or Coloured salt, sand or powders and solutions prepared by mixing ice flour and water is used. Red mud solution is used as painting to give added brightness. In rural areas, people spray cowdung mixed with water as base on floors before putting Kolam.

2. Rangoli: Coloured dry powder which are usually made from kolam powders are used. They are mixed with either sand or salt.

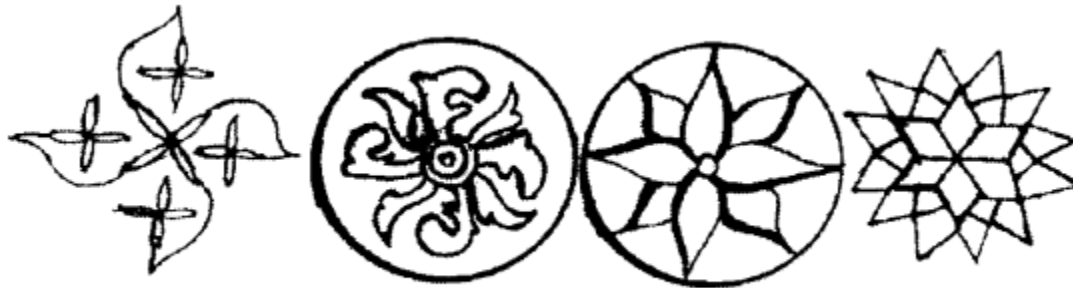


Fig. 30 -Rangoli

3 Alpana: Alpana is a traditional art where the design is painted with white paint. Usually zinc oxide and gum are mixed to keep it for a longer duration.

4. Flower Carpet: Different coloured flowers, petals and leaves are arranged over the design. Wet sand may be evenly spread beneath the flower carpet to have a raised effect.