

WEDDING FLORAL DECORATIONS

By MARGARET LAING, FAIRBAIRN

AS the time of the wedding draws near the question of what the decorations shall be and who shall do them, looms large in the mind of the mother. (We are thinking now of the average mother who cannot hand over all this sort of thing to paid workers.)

The little bride is busy putting the finishing touches on her trousseau, seeing friends, and acknowledging the gifts that are pouring in, so that she can give her mother little help in the planning for the flowers at the wedding—how they shall be used in the decorations for the table at the wedding breakfast, and how arranged in the drawing-room, living-room, parlor (or whatever name the chief room in the house bears) as well as in the other rooms to be used.

We are going to suppose there is no florist in the question—either he is too far away or he would charge too much, or his arrangements would be too elaborate for the simple home wedding which is our ideal. Anyway, he is eliminated from the problem for which we will seek a solution.

There is the garden, of course, and neighbors have generously offered whatever we covet from theirs—everyone loves to help a bride—and, besides, there is all out-doors to draw upon, with its glory of field and woods.

Since weddings are apt to come off at any time in the year, in spite of the fact that Providence seems to have designed June for that special purpose, in our reckoning we will have to take into account the cycle of flowerdom, from early spring to late autumn.

Suppose we glance over a few of our common garden and field flowers and flowering shrubs that might serve for the purpose in hand.

There are lilacs, hydrangea, japonica, field daisies, syringa, and black-eyed Susans, golden rod, wild blossoms of tree and bush, autumn leaves—in fact, the list is so long that it would be impossible to give it, so we merely offer samples. Flowers differ from one part of Canada to another, from one garden to another, from week to week and season to season, and there is scarcely a bloom of them all but may be utilized. The question is, how to select them and combine with taste.

We will begin, then, with the flowers for the table at the wedding breakfast. White is the usual choice, because of its suggestion of purity and its use is a matter of taste. Color gives a more brilliant effect. Of greenery there must be a generous supply, such as ferns, bracken, acacia leaves, asparagus, anything that is small and feathery, fluffy and green.

On the bridal table choose for flower holders a table vase for the centre surrounded by four smaller ones. Glass is always in good taste and inconspicuous. A very inexpensive set, easily ordered from a departmental store, consists of fold fish bowls, one large and four small, for there are four sizes to choose from.

Another pretty arrangement is made by utilizing a large bowl, if it happens to be a handsome punch bowl so much the better, in the centre of which stands a vase preferably green or clear glass.

By using a piece of wire netting with ends bent by pliers to fit over the edge of the bowl and making a sufficient break in the middle for the vase, you have the foundation for a beautiful mound of cut blooms.

To complete the effect, make a centre-piece of ferns or small green leaves, patterned on the cloth in the shape of an oval or star.

Another very practicable and unique decoration is carried out with moss and bark. It would require a square of galvanized tin with an inch-wide rim turned up as a foundation, to prevent the moisture going through to the cloth.

This is partly filled with sand and covered with brilliant green moss from the woods. From the centre of this rises the flower receptacle, which, to all appearance, is a section of a log with the bark on, but in reality is a little top rail or a crock or anything which will go inside the bark cylinder, made of a straight piece curved.

Where a buffet breakfast is served at

the wedding the decorations must be on a large scale to be effective, since many of the guests will see it only at a distance instead of seated at the table.

A striking design would be a bark canoe filled with a brilliant mass of bloom, the sides partly veiled with the vines that droop over it. The little craft would be emblematic of the voyage on which the young couple were starting together.

A more twentieth century idea would be an aeroplane, but the idea might be more difficult to carry out, so we will go keep to the boat. The home carpenter can easily make this out of bark. It should be anywhere from eighteen inches long, should be filled with moist sand, to hold the flowers, and should be raised some inches above the table on supports, hidden under the mass of green.

These are only a few suggestions indicating the wealth of material available and the variety of design possible, and are given as skeleton plans to be filled in to suit individual requirements.

Before leaving the question of the table decoration, perhaps a definite description of a particular table decoration might be helpful, which could, of course, be carried out in whatever flowers were in season.

The wedding we recall was late in July, when the wild carrot is in bloom along all the roadsides of Ontario—"Queen Anne's Lace Flower" is the prettier and more poetic name it is known by in older countries, where it is highly cultivated. At the bride's table its lace-like whiteness filled the receptacles of a glass epergne having five slender vases in a cluster and a large saucer-like vase, the epergne resting on a centre-piece of ferns. Smaller vases of the lace flower or a centre of ferns decorated each of the smaller tables for guests, presenting an exquisitely dainty appearance by using what most people call "a weed."

Field daisies would carry out a similar scheme—do you remember that when Lord Rosebery's daughter, Lady Peggy, was married, that it was a "marguerite" wedding? So would syringa, white asters, bridal wreath, white lilacs.

When it comes to the decoration of the other rooms, so much depends on their size and arrangement that it is difficult to give definite advice, but one general principle is, let the impression be one of out-of-dooriness of life and things growing.

Bring in huge branches of lilacs, japonica, syringa, spiraea, wild aster, the starry blue wild chicory, feathery asparagus, apple blossoms, or brilliant autumn leaves. Cover the newel post in the hall, fill the umbrella stand, place big jugs or even pails in the corners of the room, hidden by the furniture and holding miniature trees and branches, make a bower for the bridal couple in the bay window, bank the mantel shelf with a mass of bloom, the low vases hidden by moss or a wilderness of ferns and green foliage.

Much of the cutting and arranging of flowers can be begun days before with such as keep their freshness, like daisies, asters or chrysanthemums. Autumn foliage and many of the wild flowers, which lose their color and freshness soon, must be left till later. A bush of chicory cut off just around the roots, will droop the first day, but by the next will revive beautifully.

But perhaps this wealth of foliage and wild flowers is not as available as garden flowers. In that case select a single color for each room. Yellow is always cheerful and gay and would include sunflowers of all kinds, helianthus, nasturtiums, coreopsis, marigold, gailardia, black-eyed Susan, and all the rest of this golden family.

Arrange in large bouquets or masses of smaller ones, according to the flower taking the greatest care to mix only those which are different tones of the same color.

Sometimes a brilliant contrast will be a success, as, where the blue of canterbury bell or larkspur is placed near a bunch of some yellow flower.

A very lovely color scheme could be carried out by using sweet peas, asters (running the whole gamut of color), sweet williams, and phlox.



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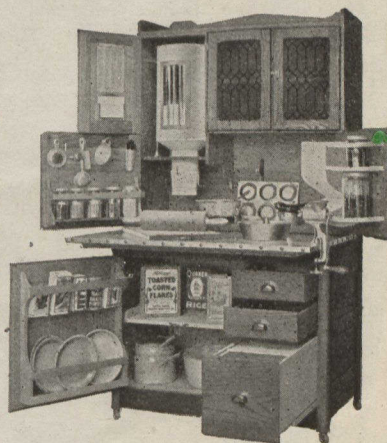
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