



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A.,
Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative
Extension Service

SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

Easy Floral Design – Using Yard and Roadside Plants

Objectives:

To explain the steps to make easy, inexpensive floral arrangements from flowers and plants found along roadsides, in fields and ditches and in your own yard.

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

You don't have to spend a fortune to have beautiful flower arrangements in your home. You can find lots of plants and flowers for FREE along roadsides (check to make sure they are not protected), in meadows and fields and right in your backyard. With a few tools, a container and some simple steps of design, you can skip the florist and save money on floral décor.

Lesson: It's easy to make your own floral designs. You don't have to be a trained florist to make beautiful arrangements for your home, you just have to look for materials found in nature.

First of all, gather a few tools. You will need a sharp pair of shears to cut the stems, a pair of sturdy gloves in case of thorns, floral "wet" foam or a flower frog and floral sticky tape or chicken wire.

Next, look for a vase or container. You do not have to use a conventional vase. Check thrift stores and flea markets for unusual containers. Vintage enamelware pitchers and mugs, galvanized containers (empty vegetable cans), old milk glass or depression glass bowls and glasses, old cans, bottles, tea cups and pots, mason jars in clear or blue glass, cake stands and vintage tins make great vases. Galvanized containers and buckets, lined clay pots, garden urns, old mailboxes, watering cans and colorful rubber boots can be used. It depends on the type of flowers and foliage used, their height and width. Small bottles can be tied together with ribbon or twine or placed in box or tray. Jars or glasses can be covered with ribbon, burlap or a simple brown paper bag tied with jute.

Prepare wide mouth containers to hold flowers securely. Make a grid of sticky floral tape across the opening or place a floral frog into the container to hold the stems. Floral foam that holds water can be used in wide containers. Chicken wire can be molded over openings or made into a ball for the bottom of vases. Insert old jars or glasses into containers that won't hold water. As you begin, keep it simple. Arrangements should be proportional to the container. A vertical design should be 1 ½ times taller than the vase. A horizontal design looks best in a shallow container. Consider the shape that you want your design to be, oval, round, triangle, etc., because that determines the type of container needed.

Now comes the fun part, looking for flowers and foliage. Look along country roads for wildflowers. Black Eyed Susan, wild daisies, blue chicory flowers, golden rod, cosmos, wheat stalks, bare or flowering branches, branches of fall leaves, cat tails, grasses and plumes, feathers and even antlers can be found. Smilax vines can be used to spill over container edges. Look for the wild orange daylilies that grow along southern roads all summer. Sprays of cotton bolls, and sunflowers are sometimes available from farmers with permission. Check to make sure you are not picking in protected areas or on private property.

Look around in your own yard for materials. Phlox, poppies, daylilies, coneflowers, hydrangeas, azaleas, camellias and yarrow, as well as roses, zinnias, marigolds and chrysanthemums are good flowers for arrangements. Add fillers such as rosemary branches, stalks of dill weed, branches of blueberries, privet berries, orange weeping yaupon berries and red pyracantha berries in season. Fern fronds, nadina leaves from cast iron plant, elephant ear, eucalyptus branches, magnolia leaves and pieces of colorful shrubbery are wonderful for the base of the arrangement.

Now that you have the fresh materials, prepare them to last. Using sharp shears, cut about an inch off of stems in a diagonal, creating a point. Remove all leaves that will be below the water line of your container. Place them in lukewarm water with a floral preservative to help reduce bacteria that will shorten the life of the flowers. You can make your own by adding one tablespoon of sugar and one tablespoon of white vinegar to one quart of water. Let the material stand for one hour or up to one day.

In your prepared container, start by placing the largest blooms toward the center, the middle bloom determines the height of the design. Place consecutively shorter blooms toward the out sides. Then fill in with smaller blooms and filler foliage,

working in a circular motion around the vase. Let some of the material spill over the edges creating an airy feel. Look at your design from all sides filling in bare spots. Add stems until you reach your desired effect. For tall arrangements, place a rubber band around stems to hold them in place. Have fun with your designs. There is no correct way to arrange flowers, only the one that is pleasing to you.

As you work with different types of flowers, foliage and containers you will become more proficient. Don't be afraid to combine different textures and colors. A tall umbrella stand holding a cluster of bare branches with white hydrangea blooms at the bottom of the branches creates a stunning effect. A galvanized bucket with a huge arrangement of summer flowers in every color spilling over the edges is just as effective. Use your imagination, even a monochromatic design can be beautiful. Look for unusual materials and then combine them with roses. You can make arrangements with only foliage in different shapes and textures and you won't even miss the flowers. Ornamental grasses, fall leaves and cat tails arranged in a hollowed out pumpkin is gorgeous on a dining table. Keep an eye out for seasonal blooms in your neighborhood and on country roads and combine them with evergreen shrubs and foliage. You can have fresh floral arrangements for every day, not just for special occasions.

Lesson Summary: You can afford floral arrangements by making your own designs from materials you collect in nature and your own yard.

Suggested Activities:

- Have members bring in arrangements they have made themselves for show and tell.
- Cut some flowers and foliage and have members bring containers to make arrangements at the meeting to take home. Members can help each other with suggestions on the designs.

Suggested Materials: Different flowers, foliage, herbs and branches. Unusual containers.

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Sources/References: Pinterest