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The all-American garden wedding, informal yet traditional, is gaining in popularity among the brides of today.

If there isn't room at her own home, she will choose a garden setting at the home of a relative or any other number of available settings, such as Botsford Inn in Farmington.

Or she may choose to be married in a church, chapel or synagogue and hold the wedding reception in the garden of their parent's home.

Ruth Theiss, of the Boulevard Bridal Salon, has been dressing brides, the bridal party and mothers for 40 years.

"We are doing a lot of garden weddings at home," she said. "The weddings are large and traditional, based on the theory that they will be long-lasting."

Brides come in all ages today, too, said Ms. Theiss, "from 17 to 70. I have dressed many brides for the third time," she said.

"Brides are not all youngsters. The second-time-around bride usually chooses an ivory gown or her favorite pastel color, without a train and, of course, does not a veil," she said.

Ms. Theiss said a bride may select a gown from her vast in-store stock and can expect to pay from \$150 to \$1,000 for her wedding dress. Bridesmaids gowns are priced from \$45 to \$79.

The first thing a bride-to-be thinks of after she has set the wedding date is her bridal gown," said Ms. Theiss. "They come in a wide variety of styles and prices."

It is important, she said, for the bride to allow time to enjoy shopping to find the gown she really loves and to take the necessary precautions to be absolutely sure it fits perfectly.

The first consideration after you have decided the time and place for the wedding ceremony is an honest look at your own figure type.

If you are average in height and weight, anything goes. Otherwise, there are certain figure guidelines to follow.

For instance, if you are tall and thin, consider the big skirt idea with a blouse or peasant type top and look for opaque fabrics.

If you are tall, medium weight, you will find the slightly raised waist in the traditional styling of a full A-line skirt, fitted bodice, long bishop sleeves and Queen Ann neckline to be the most flattering.

Chiffons and organzas lend themselves easily to this style.

The heavy set bride can slim her silhouette by choosing a princess style gown which gives long vertical lines that don't cut at the waist or hips. Stay away from round, open necklines, billowy sleeves and full skirts. Choose, instead, a small square or V neck with long straight sleeves.

The short, thin bride will find petite styles specifically designed for the short bride. To add height, an empire waist is a good idea. A chapel-length mantilla and train will add a longer look. The short, plump figure is best in a lifted waistline and V neck. Look for a dress with lace or beading at the bodice and hem to keep the focal point from the mid-section. Sheer fabrics will help to lighten the overall look.

The stock of wedding gowns at the Boulevard Bridal Shop extends from size three to 44.

"There are still many customers," said Ms. Theiss, "who bring their antique wedding gowns in to be remodeled—perhaps originally worn by their grandmother."

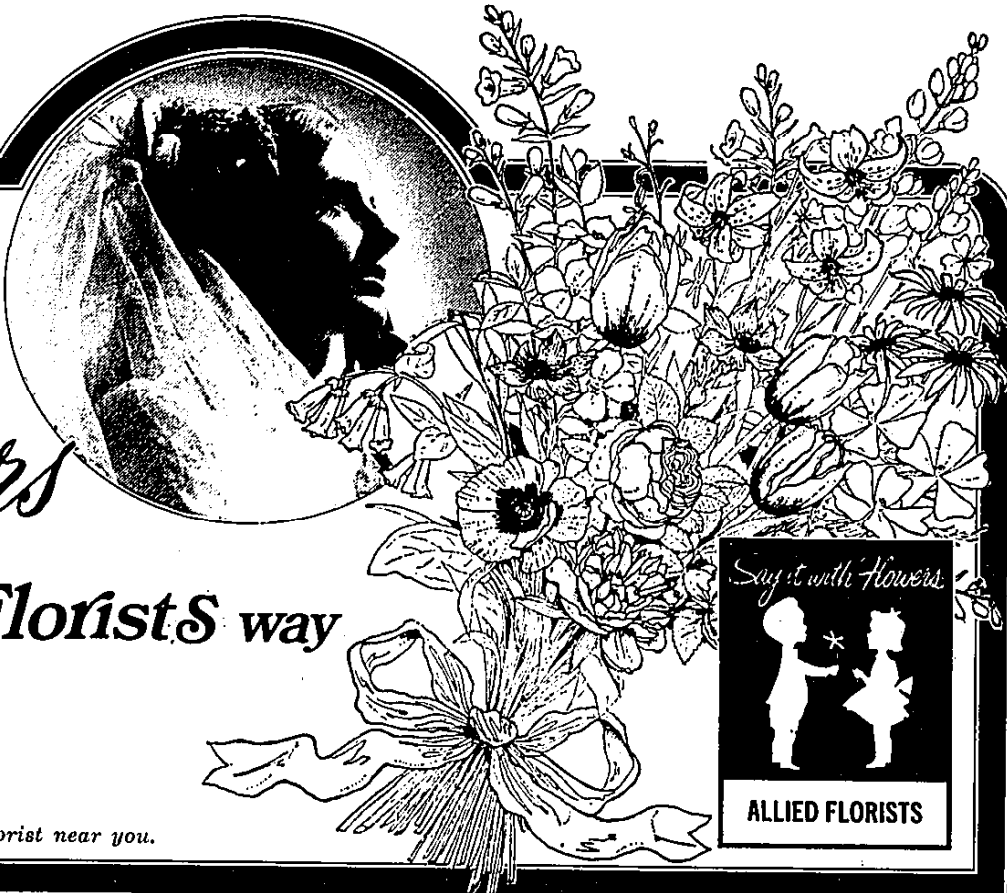
Mantillas are updated and the gowns are fitted and refurbished in the shop.

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