

The finishing touch that says it all — flowers

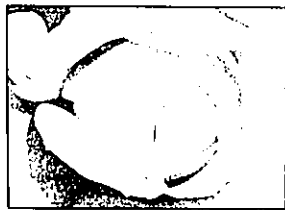
WHAT DOES A bride, whether it's her first marriage or a remarriage, need to know to select the flowers that will give just the right finishing touch to her bridal look?

"The first step in choosing wedding flowers," says Millie Martini, associate editor of *Bride's* magazine, "is to find a good florist, one who has been recommended or whose window display you particularly admire." You should do this about three months before the wedding. Then, with his skilled help, you can work out answers to the following questions:

What is your budget? Your florist can tell you which flowers will be "in season" at the time of your wedding — that's when they're least expensive and most abundant. Some wedding favorites — gladiolus, baby's breath, roses, mums, statice, carnations, cymbidium orchids — are available year-round.

Your florist can help you sort out your priorities. For instance, if, for your bouquet, you have your heart set on a long, flowing cascade of orchids and lilies of the valley, you might have to cut costs in other areas. Remember, besides the bride's bouquet, you'll also need bouquets for your honor attendant and bridesmaids, boutonnieres for all the men, including the fathers, corsages for both mothers and flowers to decorate the ceremony and reception sites.

WHAT FLOWERS will best complement your wedding? Give your florist a description of your dress and your bridesmaids' dresses so he can suggest



bouquets that harmonize in shape and style. There are many alternatives. Besides the classic nosegay or cascade, you could carry a single long-stemmed flower, a covered prayer book or a lush, loosely tied armful of blooms. As an additional accessory you could wear a wreath or hair comb entwined with orange blossoms or another light flower.

Also, bring along fabric swatches to give the florist an idea of your color scheme. There are so many different flowers, in every hue from dazzling pink to soft sea blue that you'll find the perfect ones to match or complement the dresses your attendants will wear.

In spring, for example, your bridesmaids might wear pink and carry dogwood, lilacs or anemones. Yellow daffodils, forsythia and tulips are also pretty with light blue or lavender dresses. Bridesmaids in a summer wedding might wear pale pink and carry blush-pink roses.

For a fall wedding consider the richness of forest green dresses and russet chrysanthemums mixed with autumn leaves. And, finally, for the winter holiday season there's nothing prettier than a red and white color scheme using poinsettia, roses or holly.

What flowers have special meaning for you? Does your fiancé always bring you daisies? Is the softness of rose petals your idea of the height of romance? You'll want to work these flowers into your plan.

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