



# Floral finesse

## Nuptial blooms, from bouquets to decor

**W**EDDINGS AND flowers like love and marriage, just seem to go together.

Brides in ancient times carried nuptial garlands and medieval brides wore wreaths of fresh blooms.

Bouquets and floral arrangements are an integral part of your wedding, and the florist should be one of the first people you contact. Flowers should be ordered at least three months before the nuptials.

There are floral fashions just as there are trends in bridal fashions. Wildflower bouquets reflected the natural mood of the '70s. In the '80s, bouquets got more lavish and traditional. As we enter the '90s, the choice of blooms is entirely up to you.

"The philosophy is 'you are the bride,'" says florist Ryan Gaine. "The emphasis is on the bride's individuality."

"There is a loose, relaxed feel in bridal bouquets," says florist Jani Adair. "Bouquets are less stiff and flowers, such as roses, are open instead of the traditional closed look. The garden effect is very popular. You'll see natural styles with long stems and loose garden-gathered looking bouquets."

While many brides still opt for traditional nosegays of white, ivory and champagne blooms, more want a shot of color, ranging from soft pastels to vivid hues.

"THIS FOLLOWS THE garden look," notes florist Eve Davis.

If you have your heart set on carrying daffodils in a December wedding, you probably can.

"In the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase in the year-round availability of flowers at florists across the country," floral designer Bobby Wiggins told *Bride's* magazine.

Nonetheless, florists encourage brides to use seasonal blossoms. Not only are they more abundant and healthy than hothouse flowers, they are more affordable.

Shapes for bouquets range from the traditional clusters to elegant cascades. Sweet nosegays are perfect for weddings with an Edwardian flair. Sophisticated brides can carry arm bouquets down the aisle. Year-round flowers include or-



Whether it's traditional roses and tulips or more exotic blooms, the bouquet adds a fresh finishing touch to any bride's ensemble. Bridal gown is from *After Six* Bridal Collection.

chids, freesia, iris and rhubrum lily. Asters, daffodils, dahlias, delphinium, jasmine, pansies and peonies are spring-summer specialties. For fall and winter weddings, try amaryllis, calla lilies, heather and holly.

Your floral needs don't stop with bouquets. Look for creative ways to use flowers.

Elaborately decorated wedding and reception sites may only need simple flower arrangements, whereas a spartan reception hall will look

more festive with garlands of flowers, poled palms and bright centerpieces.

For church weddings, use flowers and greenery on pews and at the altar. For a Jewish wedding, request a festive chuppah festooned with flowers.

The florist can also come up with arrangements for buffet and serving tables. Flowers make a nice accent for serving platters and a fresh way to top a wedding cake.

**CENTERPIECES** CAN also create the right mood for your wedding. Baskets filled with black-eyed Susans and hydrangea are perfect for an outdoor wedding. For more formal affairs, use candles and all-white blooms, such as calla lilies and white freesia. (Arrangements should be no higher than 16 inches.)

Another idea is to have the flowers for your decor reflect the region: sultry magnolias for a Southern wedding or terra cotta bowls filled with exotic blossoms in the Southwest.

Start by looking for a florist through recommendations. Friends can give you some names and the people at the wedding site and reception hall can often recommend a good florist.

Arrange for your first consultation to take place at the florist's shop, says *Bride's* magazine. The shop should be efficiently run and the salespeople courteous. And the flowers should look fresh.

Bring along photos of bouquet styles, centerpieces and arrangements you like, as well as fabric swatches from the bride and attendants' dresses. Also bring a sketch or photo of your dress, if possible.

Let the florist know how many guests will attend, whether it's a sit-down meal or buffet and how many tables will be set up.

You should also arrange for a consultation at the wedding and reception sites or at least give the florist the addresses for both if he or she is not already familiar with the sites.

After the florist has an idea of the look you want to achieve, set a budget. Cost-cutting tips include using seasonal locally grown blossoms, as well as mixing dried and silk flowers.

**DON'T FORGET** TO order boutonnières for the groom, fathers and ushers, as well as corsages for the mothers.

When you have agreed on the floral arrangements, both of you should sign a written agreement. Include the date and time for the flowers to be delivered, what types of flowers, bouquet size, number of corsages and boutonnières. Also describe any vases, balloons or ribbons the florist promises to provide, as well as the name of the person who will set up the site.