AIFD              The Bouquet Experience

What do we consider before we design a bouquet?

• Gown Style
• Gown Color
• Physical Characteristics of the Bride
  ○ (height, coloring, personal style, etc.)
• Time of Day
• Season of the Year
• Wedding Theme

Assisting the bride:

• Select her Colors
• Determine the Form
• Choose the Style
• Gather the Flowers
• Define the Technique(s)

A Few Tips on Pricing

• Establish markups for fresh flowers, foliages and hard goods:
  Industry averages:
Fresh Flowers & Foliages - 3.5 times wholesale cost
Hard goods - 2 to 2.5 times wholesale cost
Plants – 2 to 2.5 times wholesale cost
*remember wholesale costs should include freight and shrink %

- **Create a schedule of labor percentages for everyday or wedding related tasks.**
  Some examples:
  - Simple everyday arrangements 25%
  - More complicated, customized designs 35%
  - Hand tied Bouquets 35%
  - More complex Bouquets with added details 45%
  - Wired and Taped Bouquets 100%
  - Corsages, Boutonnieres and other intricate work 50 to 100%

- For weddings, recipe each design before pricing. Include these recipes in the bride’s file so that each design is actually made according to recipe to control COGS and profit.

- **Calculate the price of each item:**
  Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand tied Bridesmaid’s Bouquet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 stm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 stm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 stm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 yds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Make sure all employees involved with pricing in your shop are on the same page.
  Frequent staff meetings can keep the lines of communication open. Solving problems as they occur and having good clear policies in place can make the difference between profit and loss.

**Essentials of Care and Handling**
(See page 87 in the AIFD Guide for additional information)
• **Cooling** - The optimum storage temperature is the most important key to keeping flowers fresh from grower to consumers. Most fresh flowers must be stored at 33-35 degrees F from the time they’re cut to the time they reach the retail florist. Exceptions are tropical flowers and orchids which should be stored at 50-55 degrees F. Each degree of over these ranges can decrease vase life dramatically. For delivery, flowers should be transported in climate controlled vehicles.

• **Cleanliness** – Fresh cut flowers may have microbes that could multiply in the storage water which may plug cut stems and block water uptake. Retailers must use sterile buckets and cutting tools, and fresh flower food solutions containing biocides that inhibit microbial growth and also acidifies water so stems can take it up more easily. Using flower food will assist in proper flower development. Final water pH in the solution should be 3.5 to 4.0. These practices can control the growth of stem-plugging microorganisms.

• **Care** – Cut flower life is affected by the distribution chain, portions of which may be sources of ethylene. Certain fruits and vegetables, combustible engines and decaying plant materials can all produce ethylene. Are flowers kept at the proper temperature? Are flowers properly hydrated before using? Is there flower food in the storage buckets? Is the flower food mixed according to the manufacturer’s directions? Are buckets sanitized? These are key elements for success.

**Special Tips for care of flowers for weddings:**

• **Ordering** – Make sure flowers are delivered to the shop with enough time allowed for blooms to mature before they are needed to be designed. Lilies, Alstroemeria, Gladiolas, Star of Bethlehem and even Roses need to be at the perfect stage of development to become part of the bouquets or other arrangements.

• **Storage** – It takes some planning to make sure wedding flowers don’t over bloom. Flowers should be watched carefully, balancing the maturing time out of the cooler and then moving the product to the cooler at the proper time for storage. The same goes for completed designs waiting to be delivered. Sometimes leaving designs at room temperature allow the maturing process to continue for the appropriate “Peak of Bloom” effect, however other designs need to be refrigerated until the last minute.

• **Anti-transparent** - Flower finishing sprays can be a great help in prolonging the life of the flowers used for weddings. There are quite a few good products available from you local wholesaler. However these products must be used carefully following manufacturers directions. Spray flowers and allow them to dry completely before refrigerating. It is highly recommended that all flowers are dry before placing in the cooler. Dampness and cold often are the cause of Botrytis.

• **Packing** – Make sure your bouquets are packed carefully using waxed tissue to support the bouquets and keep them covered to reduce the amount of dehydration. Pass on handling tips to the bride and her bridesmaids for the best results.