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# Arranging Flowers



# Arranging Flowers

ALICE M. ALEXANDER

Arranging flowers is a satisfying activity. It allows for self-expression—it enables you to be creative. When you arrange flowers, you alone select and place them in a way that is truly yours.

Perhaps you have been engaged in this interesting activity for some time. Have you been pleased with your arrangements? Have you been displaying your flowers to their best advantage?

Do you want to do a little more now—go a little deeper? Do you want to know why some arrangements are more pleasing than others—why some are favorites at a flower show—why some seem to be just right for a certain room? The answers to these questions are just a few of the things in store for you as you proceed in this project.

## *Flowers for Home*

Flowers add a note of charm and beauty to our homes. The arrangement Jo Ann made for the coffee table (see picture above) is not only pretty but it makes the living room attractive and inviting. Flowers play an important part in interior decoration. Beautiful flower arrangements can make an ordinary room an interesting one. The arrangement can be the first thing you see. Flowers can even help conceal undesirable features in a room. So use flowers—use them in every room in the house.

Do you need some ideas on arrangements? Magazine pictures may inspire you. Start a collection. Read as much as you can about arranging flowers. There are many good books and magazine articles.

Now back to our assignment of using flowers. Make a notebook of "Flowers for Every Room in the House." Visualize the floor plan of your home, or if you want to daydream a bit, think of an imaginary one. Where could you use flower arrangements? Take it room by room.

Label separate pages of your notebook to correspond to the various rooms. Suggest flower arrangements you

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for HOME

think are appropriate for these rooms. You may use pictures from magazines, or draw your own. Or create word pictures by describing an arrangement or use combinations of all of these possibilities.

You may have several pages for one room. For example, you'll likely want to use arrangements in different places in a living room. The same could be true with any room.

Make your notebook meaningful. Include room color schemes and styles of furniture. Consider the type of entertaining done. What other factors influence the types of flower arrangements that will be appropriate? There is no set pattern for this notebook—be creative.

You will not want to copy the arrangements of others in your own home. This would be impossible since you will be working with different flowers, containers, and backgrounds. But other people's arrangements will suggest ideas.

Each arrangement you make need not be a flower show composition. But after some study and practice you will unconsciously use the art principles we are going to discuss later in the bulletin. Nature uses these art principles so if you build your arrangement around the flowers as they are found in the garden, it will most likely be good. A pleasing composition can be made quickly and easily by putting stems of uneven lengths in an easy, natural manner, similar to the way they grow.

Planning the arrangement while cutting the material saves time, develops your creative ability and eliminates waste of flowers. Look for curves in stems. An unusual shape or color may be better suited than the perfect specimen to make a good arrangement. Cut fully-opened flowers, half-opened, and buds. Materials should be fresh and free from insect or other damage.

The ideal arrangement for your home is one which shows the beauty of the flowers or foliage and at the



for SHOWS



to WEAR

same time provides a decorative accent. The arrangement will be harmonious when all elements—plant materials, containers, accessories, and setting seem to belong together.

The arrangement should be suited to the room and place it is to occupy. It should be distinctive because of an unusual choice of materials, colors, or arrangement. The plant material should play a more important role than the container. Flowers and container should, however, blend in color, design, and texture.

Rooms of definite type or period may require a particular treatment. For example, an arrangement with oriental influence seems to belong in a modern room.

Settings influence the size, color, and shape of arrangements. A miniature arrangement is lost on a large dining table, but it will be quite attractive on a small table or on a breakfast tray. Color is important. Colors within the arrangement should be carefully chosen and the whole composition should fit into the general color scheme of the room. Wall finishes play an important part in the decorative scheme. Plain walls for backgrounds are desirable. Figured wallpaper competes with the arrangement and thus spoils the effect. Will the flowers be seen mostly during daylight or under artificial light? Experiment with different colors to see how light affects them.

Consider how the flowers will be viewed. A grouping that will be seen from every angle or be reflected in a mirror must look well from all sides. If it is to be placed against a wall, only the front and sides need attention. Arrangements seen at or below eye level must look as attractive from the top as from the front and sides.

There are other things to be considered—but these ideas should help you get started. Remember—you are to make several arrangements for your home. So to work!

## Flowers for Show

Arranging flowers for shows can mean many things. The "show" can be a community one your club members plan and carry out. It can be a county event such as a fair or an achievement day. It can be sponsored by a Garden Club.

Naturally you will want to display your very best arrangements at any of these shows. Since you acquire skill through practice, try to make some kind of an arrangement at each project meeting. Why not end these work sessions with a "show?" No prizes, of course. But do judge the arrangements. This procedure will help you to prepare for other shows. Take turns in setting up the display tables, backgrounds, and schedules. In flower show language, schedule means "requirements for a particular class." For example, the picture on page 3 is Jo Ann's idea for the class that required "An arrangement suggesting exhibitor's special interest." The cornflowers and the spools of colored thread are displayed against a bit of blue net. These, with scissors and thimble, suggest that Jo Ann likes to sew.

### Project Requirements

1. Make 12 or more arrangements for your home. (Use at least 4 forms suggested in bulletin.)
2. Make at least 3 corsages or arrangements to wear.
3. Exhibit at least 4 arrangements at shows.
4. Make a notebook on "Arranging Flowers" as described in the bulletin.
5. Make a color wheel.
6. Carry out at least 2 group activities and 4 individual activities. (See suggestions in record blank.)

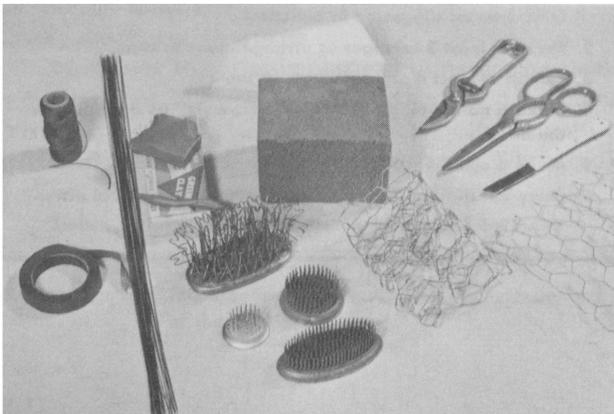


Try dried materials



Lazy susan handy while arranging

Equipment for arranging flowers



## Flowers and Foliage

Where will you get the flowers and foliage for your arrangements? The flower garden of course, but there are other sources. Try the vegetable garden, the berry patch, the orchard, fields and woods. One word of caution. Do not pick any wild flowers without first consulting the restricted list. Common weeds, fresh or dried, may add interesting forms and colors. Methods for cutting and drying flowers and leaves could be a special project for you. There is printed material available. Does this give you an idea for a demonstration?

Flowers and foliage are chosen for their color and form. Many have the added advantage of delightful fragrance. Choose material in different stages of development. Buds and sometimes seed pods can add interest. Select plant materials for their lasting qualities when possible.

Cut flowers early in the morning or in the evening. Place cut plant material in water immediately. Carry a bucket of water to the garden with you. Flowers freshly picked, or left out of water even a short while do not have the full amount of water they are capable of holding. They are actually in a partially wilted state. Before arranging the flowers, they should be "crisped." This process is called *conditioning* or *hardening*. To condition flowers, follow these suggestions:

**Cut the stems**—A fresh cut absorbs water freely. A sharp knife or a pair of shears (not scissors) may be used. Either a straight or slanting cut may be made. A slanting cut prevents the stems from being flat on the bottom of the container and thus restricted in taking up water.

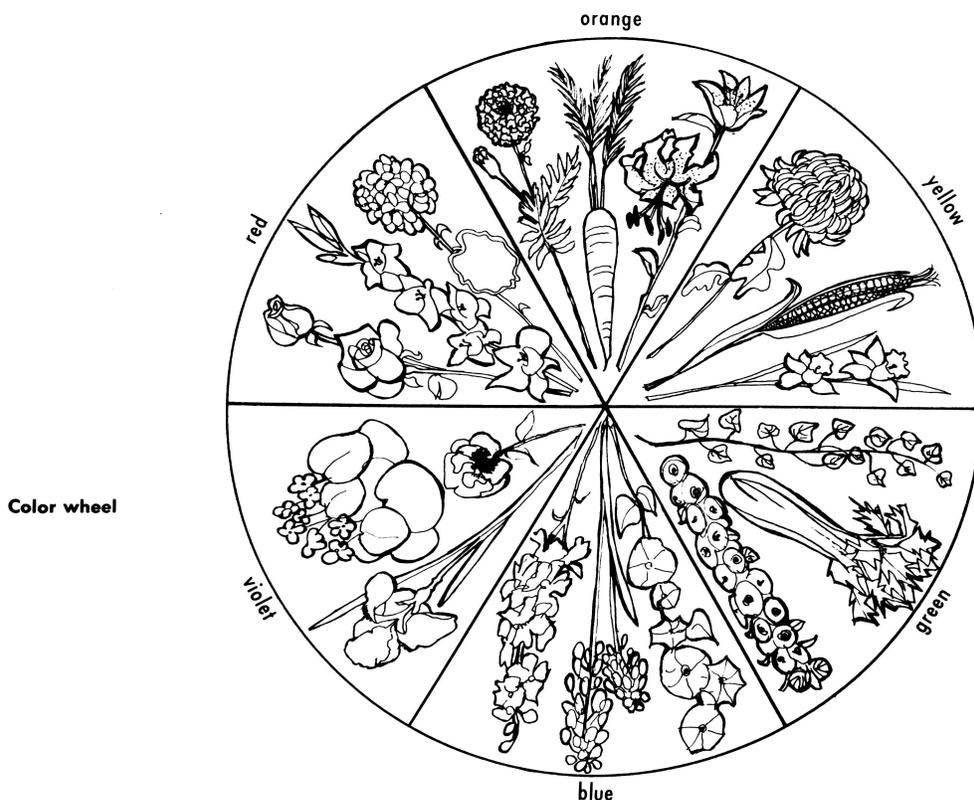
**Remove excess foliage**—Water escapes from the pores of the leaves and leaves under water deteriorate.

**Use warm water**—110° F. Water moves more freely at warm temperatures; therefore, it is preferable to cold water.

**Special treatment may be required**—Juicy sap which oozes from cut stems of poinsettias, poppies, and dahlias clogs up the water-conducting cells. To seal off this sap, put about one inch of the stem in boiling water for 30 seconds, or sear the stem end with a flame (a candle works well). After this put the stem in warm water as with other flowers. Each time the stem is cut repeat the treatment. Slash or mash heavy, woody stems such as tree and shrub branches to encourage water intake.

**Wrap the flowers**—After the flowers are put in water, wrap them with wax paper or cellophane. A large cellophane bag can be inverted over the flowers. This prevents air movement and reduces loss of water through evaporation. The flowers should be put in a cool dark place for at least two hours. Conditioning over night is good. If wilting occurs, recondition.

**Wash the container**—with soap and water to remove any bacteria.



**Keep flowers from heat and drafts**—Warm air removes water from the flowers quicker than they can replace it. This causes wilting.

**Store flowers in a cool place**—Flowers keep better at a temperature just above freezing—around 35° F. You can double the life of your flower arrangement by putting it in a cold room, basement, or refrigerator at night or whenever you are not at home to enjoy it. Any cool place just above freezing is satisfactory.

**Recut stems**—Stem ends gradually clog up and seal over. If the arrangement is expected to last a long time, recut the stems every two or three days. A rearrangement may be necessary—and even desirable.

**Foliage**—Treat foliage the same as flowers.

**Containers for conditioning**—Flowers and foliage should be kept in pails or cans of water until they are made into arrangements. The water should cover the lower one-third of the stem at least. Number 10 cans are a good size for all but the tallest stalks.

### Container for Arrangements

Flowers play the most important role in a flower arrangement, the container a secondary one. The container's purpose is to keep the flowers in water so they will not wilt. Hence, select one with ample water capacity and one that is not too highly ornamented.

Types of containers are unlimited. Besides the varie-

ty of vases and bowls, there are any number of things around the house that are suitable. Start with the kitchen. Try using pitchers, tea pots, sugar bowls, cups, cookie jars, and flat casseroles. Here is a chance to use imagination. Regardless of what you choose, remember the container should be simple in design and color so it does not detract from the arrangement. Since it serves as a background for the flowers, the color should be neutral unless the container is a part of the color scheme. Consider texture and weight as well as size and shape.

Blossoms themselves may suggest the type of container in which they are most effective. For example, delicate flowers look best in glass rather than a heavy pottery container.

Much has been written about containers—this would be a splendid topic for some special reports. You could find so many examples to illustrate your points.

### Mechanics of Arranging Flowers

You will need some tools and equipment for arranging flowers. Whether your collection is large or small, store it in a convenient place. You may have a special cabinet or just a handy shelf. A basket, box, or tray may be large enough to keep your things within easy reach.

### Tools

Start your collection with a sharp knife and heavy duty shears.



**A base can add height or lend a feeling of stability to an arrangement.**

## Holders

You will need a supply of holders to anchor flowers in containers. There are many kinds. It's a good idea to know the possibilities and the limitations of several.

### For Low Bowls—

*Needlepoint and hairpin holders* have a heavy metal base with either closely spaced "needles" or hairpin loops. The stems are either wedged on the points or fixed between them. Either kind allows much freedom in placement of stems.

*Metal spirals* or coiled strips of lead are used for holding individual stems. The number of stems you can use is limited to the number of spirals. These are rather difficult and might be considered less satisfactory.

*The "frog"*, a glass or pottery block with holes bored or molded in it, is quite restricted. The number of holes is limited and the size of the hole limits the size of the stem. There is no chance to set the stems at an interesting angle.

*The basket holder* comes in several variations but the general form is two or three layers of one of the following: wire or metal mesh, metal circles with holes punched through them, or metal grills. The stems of the flowers are threaded through the spaces.

*Other holders* include commercial products of foam plastic which hold water somewhat like a sponge. They can be obtained in either solid brick form or in a crumpled state. In addition to their use in containers, the bricks may be used alone since they hold water in suspension and do not leak if covered with foil.

### For Tall Vases or Round Bowls—

*One-inch mesh chicken wire* can be crumpled and placed in the container or it can be folded and rolled.

*Evergreens* (short needle type) can be packed in a container closely enough to hold flowers in the desired position. Trim tops off level with the top of the container so that they do not show.

*Shredded plastic foam* is easy to use because it will fill up any size or shape of container. Although the crumpled pieces do not absorb water, the water fills in around them. A wire cover is necessary to prevent them from floating.

*Coarse sand and gravel* can be used as a holder for rather large branches.

## Floral clay

Use floral clay on the bottom of holders in low containers. It fastens the holder to the container so that the arrangement will not tip over. Make a long thin roll of clay about the size of a lead pencil. Then coil this around the bottom edge of the holder. The container and holder must be dry. Press against container to fasten in position.

## Accessories

Accessories should be of such types and so placed that they do not lead the eye away from the flowers. Test the value of an accessory to a grouping by taking it completely out of the picture. If its loss is not noticed, do not put it back. If it helps to tell the story or complete the theme of the arrangement, use it.

## Bases

Bases of wood, pottery, metal, and other materials are sometimes needed to give added height or a feeling of stability to an arrangement. The base or stand should be considered as a part of the composition. The container and the arrangement will suggest the size, shape, color, and texture of the base. In addition to their artistic value, bases protect surfaces from water spots and scratches.

## Turn Table or a Lazy Susan

This mechanical aid enables the arranger to see all sides of an arrangement quickly and easily. There are many ways to make this handy tool—see what you can do.

## Types of Arrangements

*Line* arrangements are derived from Oriental designs. The lineal effect is created with a few flowers and branches. The whole composition should be a simple line design, mostly in silhouette.

*Mass* arrangements require several flowers. They are usually circular or triangular in shape. One kind of flower with its buds or several harmonious kinds of flowers may be used. One flower form and color should dominate the arrangement, while others are of minor importance.

*Line-Mass* arrangements combine lineal and mass. It is a line quality with a more filled-in effect. Most of the illustrations shown here could fit into this class. A crescent, vertical line, and Hogarth curve are forms easily made into line-mass.

*Floating* arrangements are those where a bit of foliage and the heads of flowers are placed in a flat container, such as a platter or tray.



## HORIZONTAL

### Basic Principles for Arranging Flowers

**Design** is the basic pattern of the arrangement. It consists of a planned relationship among flowers, foliage and container.

**Scale** and **proportion** are achieved by selecting materials related in size to each other and to their container. An arrangement should be designed for its use and location and therefore in scale with the surroundings. For good proportion, the height of the flower showing above the container is usually one and one-half times the height of the container. The height in a flat bowl may be one and one-half times the width of the bowl. A horizontal arrangement may extend one and one-half times the width of the bowl in both directions. The kind of container and visual or apparent weight of the material may modify these proportions.

**Form** is dictated by location of the arrangement and shape of the container. Forms are basically developed from straight or curved lines of the sphere, cube, and pyramid. Some examples are:

1. Vertical—upright, of straight materials.
2. Horizontal—prostrate, of straight materials.
3. Triangle—(a) symmetrical or (b) asymmetrical.
4. Circle—globular or circular outline.
5. Oval—usually a mass arrangement.
6. Crescent—the “new moon look.”
7. Hogarth curve—the lazy “S.”
8. “L” or right angle—weight at base of vertical line.

**Dominance** may be of line, form, or color. Either the vertical or the horizontal line should dominate. The form or outline should be distinct. When two colors are used, one should be in greater quantity.

**Focus** is a focal area of interest and the position of greatest attraction. It is located just above the edge of the container, at the imaginary center of bal-

ance, and should never be an empty space. Focus is achieved by: (1) the largest, most perfect specimen if a one kind arrangement; (2) a greater concentration if all of one size; (3) a contrasting round flower of the same color but a different kind; (4) a contrasting color in the same or different kind of flower; (5) a more intense or vivid color; and other ways you will discover in your illustrations.

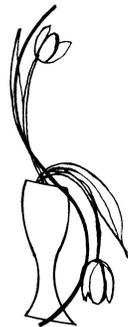
**Balance** is the placing of materials to give a feeling of stability. Symmetric balance implies that both sides at an imaginary center of the arrangement are virtually the same. *Asymmetric* means the two sides are distinctly different but have equal visual weight and therefore balance each other. Balance is achieved by working from light, delicate form (bud and foliage tips) at the edges of the arrangement to larger or more vivid materials at the focal area.

**Rhythm** is the feeling of motion achieved by harmonious lines and spaces which lead the eye to the focus, or through the focal area and vanish at the opposite side.

**Color** is very important and would make an interesting subject for special study. Briefly—grouped color is more effective than spotty or mixed color; different tints and shades of the same color go well together; contrasting or complementary colors, such as yellow-orange pansies with blue-violet grape hyacinths, may be used; an arrangement of related or analogous colors is a good combination.

The color chart or wheel is an aid in making up good color combinations. Make one of flowers and vegetables as shown here. Use seed and nursery catalogs for your cut-outs.

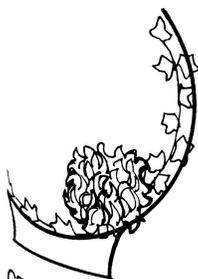
**Harmony** is created by a unification of all materials so that the flowers, containers, accessories, and setting are perfectly blended.



HOGARTH CURVE



RIGHT ANGLE



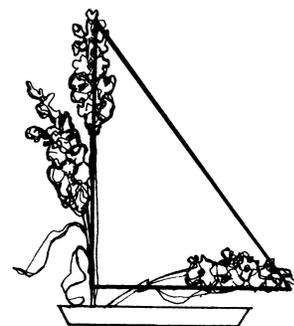
CRESCENT



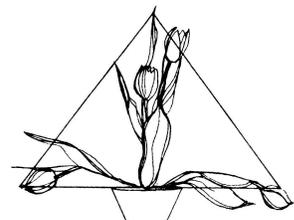
CIRCULAR OR GLOBULAR



VERTICAL



ASYMMETRICAL TRIANGLE



SYMMETRICAL TRIANGLE



HORIZONTAL OVAL

## Corsages

Want to do something very nice for someone? Make a corsage. Everyone enjoys wearing flowers.

Consider these points before you start: the personality of the one who will wear the corsage; the occasion and time where it will be worn; the kind and color of costume. Remember you can use one rose or a large chrysanthemum, you don't need a quantity of flowers. A tailored suit, for instance, looks best with a small corsage or a boutonniere. Use your imagination and experiment.

Start your corsage just as if you were making any arrangement. Condition the flowers and foliage. Any garden flower that keeps well can be used. Early spring favorites are daffodils, narcissus, lilies-of-the-valley, pansies, violets, and Dutch Iris. Late spring and summer bring roses, gladiolus, daisies, calendulas, cornflowers, carnations, pinks and lilies. Chrysanthemums, asters, and marguerites are fine for fall. Flowering shrubs and trees provide blossoms as do house plants. Cones, seed pods, and dried material can be used.

Collect your supplies. You will need wire of different gauges, floral tape, scissors or a knife. The wire is used to replace the natural stem for lighter weight and to provide a pliable stem. The floral tape covers the wire and is used in assembling. Ribbons may or may not be used, depending upon the design. Accessories of various kinds may be used for special effects.

There are many ways to wire, tape, and arrange flowers in corsages. If possible, have a guest demonstrate some for your club. But try working with some roses and daisies as pictured here.

For the rose, cut the stem just below the hip or swollen part under the petals. Push the length of wire through the

hip until there is an equal amount of wire on each side. Now bend the wires down together to form a new stem. Take the wired flower in one hand and hold the end of the tape slightly above the point where the wire was inserted, twirl the stem bringing the tape in a spiral wrap all the way down to the length of the desired stem. Pull the tape, stretching it as you twirl, so it completely covers the wire and fits snugly. Wire and tape foliage in much the same manner.

Small flowers with a flat head, such as the daisy, require a different method of wiring. Notice the hook being pulled down into the head out of sight. Taping is the same as for the rose. Flowers of different sizes—even to a tight bud—make this corsage interesting.

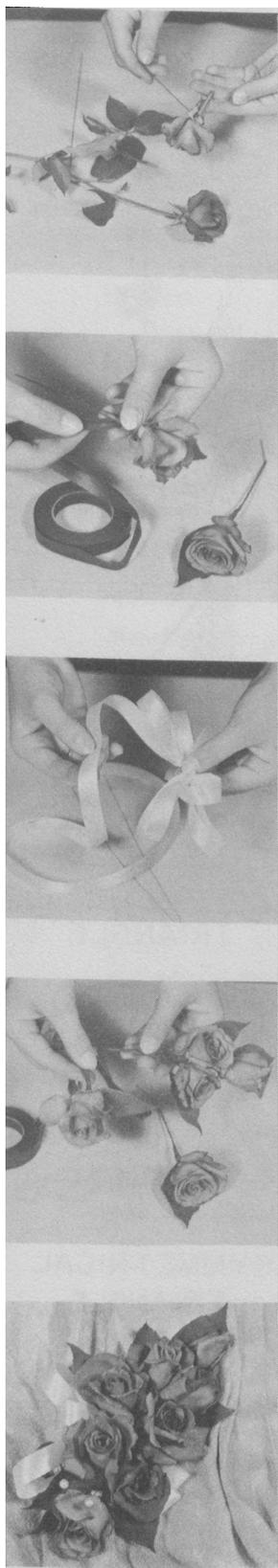
The rules for assembling a corsage are the same art principles: line, form, color, texture, proportion, and balance to achieve a pleasing design. The ribbon should be the focal area or *accent* the focal area.

Corsages should be worn with the flowers in their natural growing position—stems down, heads up.

### Judging Arrangements

#### A Score Card:

Condition of Materials	20
Distinction (Type well defined)	15
Design—	(40)
Scale and Proportion	10
Dominance	5
Focal Area	5
Balance	5
Rhythm	5
Color	10
Suitability or Interpretation	15
Originality	10
Total	<u>100</u>

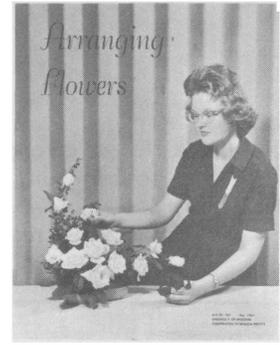


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ARRANGING FLOWERS

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Club \_\_\_\_\_

Years Enrolled in Home Grounds \_\_\_\_\_ Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Name \_\_\_\_\_

My Participation

Club meetings attended during year \_\_\_\_\_. Project meetings held \_\_\_\_\_. Project meetings attended \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of demonstrations given at: project meetings\_\_\_\_\_, community club meetings\_\_\_\_\_, county meetings\_\_\_\_\_, district meetings\_\_\_\_\_, and state meetings\_\_\_\_\_.

Number of times participated in judging work in: project meetings\_\_\_\_\_, county\_\_\_\_\_, district\_\_\_\_\_, state\_\_\_\_\_, interstate\_\_\_\_\_.

Number of exhibits made in: community\_\_\_\_\_, county\_\_\_\_\_, district\_\_\_\_\_, state\_\_\_\_\_, interstate\_\_\_\_\_.

Participated In:

County Achievement Day\_\_\_\_\_, District Achievement Day\_\_\_\_\_, State Achievement Day\_\_\_\_\_, national contests\_\_\_\_\_, county fair or show\_\_\_\_\_, district fair\_\_\_\_\_, State Fair\_\_\_\_\_.

Interstate Show\_\_\_\_\_, marketing days\_\_\_\_\_, county camp\_\_\_\_\_, district camp\_\_\_\_\_.

State Club Week\_\_\_\_\_, National Club Congress on National 4-H Conference\_\_\_\_\_.

Number of news stories published \_\_\_\_\_. Number of radio and T.V. programs participated in \_\_\_\_\_. Number of public speeches made\_\_\_\_\_.

Served on \_\_\_\_\_ standing committee in club.

--PROJECT REQUIREMENTS--

If you enroll in this project, your club leader will expect you to complete the following:

1. Make twelve or more arrangements for your home. (Use at least four different forms suggested in bulletin.)
2. Make at least three corsages or arrangements to wear.
3. Exhibit at least four arrangements at shows (community, county, etc.).
4. Make a notebook on "Arranging Flowers" as described in the bulletin.
5. Make a color wheel.
6. Carry out at least two group activities and four individual activities. (See suggestions in report form.)

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has met the requirements of this

Member's Name

4-H project as outlined.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Project Leader



4. I exhibited things pertaining to project:

<u>What</u> (Example) Color Wheel	<u>Where</u> Local and State Fair	<u>Rating</u> Blue---Blue
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

5. I gave \_\_\_\_\_ demonstrations.

<u>Title of demonstration</u>	<u>For whom given</u>	<u>Where</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

6. I checked the activities we did as a group. (Details in story.)

- A. Staged a club flower show \_\_\_\_\_ assisted with community show \_\_\_\_\_ other shows \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Arranged flowers for special events or special places \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Visited a florist shop to see supplies etc. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Conducted workshop for friends interested in arranging flowers \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Held a school where each of us acted as "teacher" for very young flower arrangers \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Went on a field trip to collect material for drying and preserving \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Things we thought of \_\_\_\_\_

I checked the activities I did by myself. (Details in story.)

- A. Made a turn table or Lazy Susan. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Made a color wheel of flower cut-outs. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Provided convenient and adequate storage for supplies needed in arranging flowers. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Made a collection of flower containers and holders. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Did research on "ways to condition" certain flowers and reported to club. \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Made some bases or stands for flower containers. \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Compiled a list of books and articles on flowering arranging read during the time enrolled in the project. \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Started my own flower library. \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Made a rose jar or pot pouri. \_\_\_\_\_
- J. Things I thought of. \_\_\_\_\_

## STORY



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