

Simple Designing Steps for Creating a Silk Floral Arrangement

How would you like to enjoy a silk floral arrangement in your home or office created by you? Intimidated? Don't be! Everyone has a bit of creativity within them and all you have to do is draw it out with a few simple steps. Making your own floral arrangement is not as difficult as you might think. Also, creating is a release of tension and stress and can bring you enjoyment and excitement when your friends and family see what you have designed. Plus, you will also be saving yourself hundreds of dollars when you make your arrangement compared to buying it. Check the prices of ready-made floral arrangements on the shelves of your favorite floral shop.

Placement is an important step in the beginning steps of designing a silk floral arrangement or any project you are thinking of creating. Taking the time to decide where you want to display your finished project will help you in deciding what design you will accomplish and what colors will work best. Will your design sit on a small table in the foyer, as a window display or on the counter in your kitchen near an entrance? Size is also important when visualizing your finished endeavor. You want to have a floral size proportion to its resting place. If the arrangement is huge placed on a small table it will look awkward, not to mention the whole thing could end up on the floor. Color is the next basic decision. You want to go with the theme and color scheme of your home. A southwestern container will not work well in modern surroundings. If your home has more earth tones with deep browns, soft beiges or rich rusts you do not want a pink or blue flower hovering to distract the eye. Stick with the colors already in your home to blend and bring together your arrangement with its environment. If you are using oranges as your primary room color you can still use beiges, browns or the even the different shades of oranges in your arrangement as a nice assortment. These are essential decisions you should make before you head to the store for your supplies and it will eliminate impulsive buying once you get there. If it helps, do a quick sketch on paper with colored crayons in assorted hues, it does not have to be exact; all you are looking for is the blending of colors and shades. You may not be an artist, but you can draw a circle and color it with the colored crayons. Then you will see what your arrangement will look like adjacent to its resting place. When I head to the store, I already have something in mind, and matching my ideas with the flowers on display is always a source of pleasure. Your store might not have exactly the flowers, stems or containers you are looking for, but you can always substitute once you are there. Just do not stray too far from your original idea. Remember you did your groundwork before you left home. Have an open mind when it comes to designing a silk floral arrangement and it will take you to your creative place. Taking your sketch along and referring to what you have created on paper will keep you alert, but it is not an absolute decision maker. Visualizing your finished project will give you a better understanding and direction once you begin your shopping. Knowing where you want to go and getting there will eliminate confusion. Pick silk flowers that group well together mixing colors, shades, and textures. You will need small, tall flowers or stems for the top of your arrangement and work the larger flowers toward the bottom of your container. If you choose to place a rose with a lily in your arrangement, make sure the flower color and size blend well together as a group and it does not look awkward. If

the colors do not work collectively no matter what theme you are using, choose other flowers. Pick different sizes (you want several small flowers grouped together, medium size and a couple of large single stemmed). If your flowers are in a bunch in one group together, you will want to separate the stem and place the stems separately in your arrangement. Do not stick the bunch together as one. Placement is important. Remember leaves, a very important fill for all floral arrangements, such as Ivey vines, ferns of different shapes, grape leaves and even philodendrons mix well with a floral arrangement. You can even mix different types of leaves together. You will want to separate the stems on the vines that are on one stem, but not the stems on the vine and place the individual stems separately in the arrangement to let them stand in-between the flowers. In arrangements I have made, I was creative with my ideas and added real flowers such as baby's breath, for that extra special finish.

I know it is within you to reach deep down inside yourself and dig out your creative side. You will surprise yourself with what is there and your arrangements will last you a long time. You will be ready to create a new arrangement once you have finished the first and again you will surprise yourself.

Your shopping list will consist of the following:

Tools and Supplies:

- Containers (see below)
- Styrofoam sized to fit your container (to place inside the container at the bottom to hold the stems)
- Hot glue gun
- Glue sticks. (always be careful for glue does get very hot)
- Floral picks, different sizes (to secure some stems)
- Floral Tapes – I use green (if needed to wrap frayed stems)

- Wires (secure flower and stems for length)

- Paint *optional

Floral Containers:

There are many different types of containers and there is no limit to what you can use. I have chosen the following only as an example and a starting point. Use your imagination and create your own list. Containers come in so many different styles and sizes. The one thing you want to remember about a container is that one with a well works best for the beginner.

I have used a dinner plate or saucer for my holiday silk floral arrangement, placing the finished design as a tabletop centerpiece for the Christmas holiday table and it works very well. Teapots, glass jars, miniature wheel barrels, or wicker baskets of different shapes and sizes show well in any kitchen windowsill. Ceramic, wood, decorative jewelry boxes or even clay pots make beautiful containers for a silk floral arrangement to place in a bedroom, guest room or guest bathroom. There is no limit to what you can use as a container. Remember you are becoming a real artist with your new silk floral designs.

- Glass

- Metal

- Wooden, wire, wicker baskets

- Teapots or jars

- Plates, small, large, round or flat

- Jewelry boxes, all sizes

- Clay pots

- Seasonal decorative containers, Halloween pumpkins with the tops cut out,
- Christmas wreaths and greenery

Additional supplies optional:

There are several design compliments to place inside your floral arrangement. I like to keep it simple with bows, beads and fruit or miniature breads. However, your creative talent should take over when you have completed your project. Keeping it simple is my best policy of things.

- Bows, figurines, or miniature objects to place in your arrangements
- Beads to drape loosely within your arrangement

Creating:

Turn on the music, grab your cup of coffee or favorite beverage, use the bathroom, clear your social calendar, step into your work cloths, and set your mood for creating. Fun is the key word here; creating should be fun, whimsical and you should have a clear mindset, be relaxed shake out the dust and be ready to create. Design what you feel and be confident in what you are about to do. Assemble all your supplies, placing them around you on a clean tabletop. Have a secure, heat resistant place for your glue gun with wires out of the way of someone pulling or stepping on them and have your glue sticks handy to add when needed. Place the glue gun on top of a rubber mat or in a secured pie tin because the hot glue will drip out the end and you do not want glue dripping on your counter top. Dried glue is sometimes hard to clean up and hot glue can burn your skin. Be sure to read the manufacture instructions, for the glue gun before use for the first time so you are familiar with the equipment and its safety rules.

To start your silk floral design make sure your container is clean and dry especially if you have recently painted your container to change the outside color. My suggestion is to paint one day and create the next giving the paint an overnight drying time.

Ok! Let's get started:

- Plug in the glue gun to get the glue hot and ready to use
- While waiting for the glue to get hot separate all your flowers and stems (if in bunches) and place them separately around you. If needed secure the ends of each stem with a floral pick wrapping securely each stem with the floral tape, and set wrapped stems aside.
- Place your container in the middle of your work space
- Glue the Styrofoam in the center of the container and hot glue it enough to hold in place at the bottom on your container. Let set and dry before continuing with the first stem.
- Working with a small, tall flower slightly hot glue the bottom of the stem (not a lot is needed) and place the stem in the center of the Styrofoam so it is secured.
 1. You will be working from the center of the arrangement (with the taller pieces in the middle) to the outer sides and down as you place each stem, letting them dry about a minute before going to the next stem or leaf. You should continually turn your arrangement in a circle after placing each stem to keep a consistent even flow of the arrangement. Separate the flowers by color. You do not want to place all the same color in one area. Each layer of floral, stem or leaf will progressively grow shorter and wider as the flowers grow larger while working outward and down toward the bottom of the opened container.
 2. Be careful where you have decided to set your stem into the Styrofoam remembering that you have glued the bottom of the piece and you want to be certain of the exact placement. Pulling out a dried glue stem is sometimes difficult, and can ruin the effect of the arrangement. After your arrangement has set overnight, it will be very difficult to pull the stems out without upsetting the arrangement. So be certain where you want to place your stem.
 3. Be very careful with the hot wax from the glue gun. After you have touched the wax to the stem from the glue gun and before you place the stem into the Styrofoam because the wax at the end of the stem will be very hot and if it touches your skin, it could leave a burn on you. Especially monitor the glue gun and hot wax if little children are around. Little hands are very fragile and you would not want to burn them.

4. After you have placed all your stems and leaves into the Styrofoam in your container, and you are satisfied, you might decide you want to insert a few baby's breaths into your arrangement for a delicate effect. They offer lightness to your arrangement and are pleasing to the eye.

You will be certain you have completed your silk floral design when you can step back, look at your arrangement, and see its personality shining through the design. Each design will stand proudly and take on a personality of its own, and you will be bonded with your new design and be proud. That is why I said that you should first decide where you want your silk floral arrangement to rest. Each time I walk into a room, where I have placed my floral arrangement I am proud of my accomplishments and I have been designing for years.

Maintenance:

If someone in your home has allergies, you want to be sure to free your silks floral arrangement of dust and one way to do this: Place you silk floral arrangement into a large paper bag. Sprinkle with salt and shake gently. The salt will settle on the leave and flower buds and collect the dust that will float to the bottom of the bag. Remove your plant from the bag and using a hair dryer blow off the dust. Your beautiful silk floral arrangement will look like new again.