

Arranging Flowers

When I was in 11th grade I worked over the Christmas holidays at our local florist, [Johnson Flowers and Gifts](#) in Norwich, Connecticut. In hindsight, I wish I had paid more attention to the ins and outs of flower arranging, but being 17, I'm sure I was more interested in boys vs. blossoms.

Over the last few years I have been asked to create centerpieces for various charitable events. In 2012, I offered to make 120 centerpieces for my son's high school fashion show. I was promised a committee to help, but funny how those things don't always work out. To have a professional do it would have been cost prohibitive so I thought, how hard can this be? I should know by now that when I hear that question in my head, warning signals should go off.



The centerpiece had to include a keepsake item (etched wine bucket) and be in the school colors (red and white). The good news was the event was a success, the centerpieces were perfect and it only took a few weeks for my back to stop aching.

Leading up to the event, I practiced making various flower

arrangements of different sizes, flowers, and containers. Since it has been a while since I made a centerpiece that didn't consist of putting cut flowers in a vase, I was inspired to do so this weekend.

I went to our local Safeway and purchased a dozen white roses, mini hydrangea, white carnations and green spider mums.



The container is actually one I had purchased online as a sample for the above mentioned event—it has an elegant look but was very affordable. The bowl is 9" in diameter and 5" high.



It's important to use Wet Foam vs. dry foam (I made that mistake once~~dry foam works with artificial flowers). I purchased a FloraCraft 4 brick pack at [Michael's](#) for \$6.99. The foam is very easy to cut to fit the container you are using.







Soak the foam in a container with clean water for 1-2 minutes, until the water is fully absorbed into the brick.



Since my foam is packed into my bowl, I did not need to secure it with waterproof anchor tape.

Determine what size and shape you want your arrangement. Using floral shears or garden clippers, cut the stems at a 45 degree angle before inserting them into the foam. This angle allows for easier insertion and insures maximum water uptake. I started with my roses and created a "dome" to outline the approximate size of the arrangement.



I then used the hydrangeas, spider mums, and carnations to fill in the gaps. Remember to count your stems and spread them out accordingly. Make sure stems do not come out on the other side of the foam.



Carnations are such a great filler and can be spread apart to give them more volume .



The spider mums and the carnations were the most difficult to push into the foam. I broke a few in the process. Also, as much as I LOVE hydrangeas, I haven't had good luck with them once they are cut. They don't seem to last as long as other flowers in an arrangement. But I keep trying!

When the arrangement is complete, add water to the bowl and check the water level every day.



Here is the finished product which I placed on the table in the front entry!



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Someday when I have lots of time, I would love to have an abundant flower garden where I could experiment with more

dramatic arrangements.

Thank you to my two daughters for being hand models~~it's a bit of a challenge to do the tasks and take photos!

Mary