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**Fresh Flowers Aren't Just for the Dining Room Table**

**By Claire Bowes**

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Fresh Flowers in All the Traditional Places

When you think of a beautiful floral arrangement, you often think of the dining room table, especially if it is holiday time. And why not? Beautiful dining centerpieces have graced our tables for centuries. Whether you are having a party, decorating for a holiday, or simply adding a beautiful touch, keep in mind that floral arrangements should complement the décor and mood of the room. Remember, too, you don't have to have a traditional arrangement just because you find it in a traditional location. Instead of one big center arrangement, you may want to try a series of vases and candles on a fabric runner for a stunning effect.

Another traditional location for fresh flowers is in the foyer or entranceway. What a great way to make a terrific first impression. Regardless of your style, flowers in the entryway can create the mood from the moment someone walks through your door. Is your home formal? Try an elegant centerpiece or a piece of artwork on a pedestal draped with a garland and flowers. For a homier, friendlier look, place a basket with a garden bouquet on the entry table. No matter what your style, flowers can enhance your home.

Beyond Tradition

Let's not stop with tradition! Fresh flowers are so beautiful that they should not be relegated to the dining room and entryway alone. Why not brighten every room in your house? Let's look at a few ideas to help you think outside the box.

\* **Kitchen:** Think beyond basil and oregano! Fill your kitchen window ledge with pots of herbs and sun-loving plants like kalanchoe, African violets, or primroses. A few well-placed gerbera daisies can help spice up your kitchen, too. The best part is that you can enjoy your mini-harvest every day.

\* **Bedroom:** Add a touch of romance in your bedroom with a few beautiful stems that complement or accent the color of your linens or wallpaper. There is simply nothing like waking up to a delicate scent

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drifting from your nightstand. Tea roses, freesias, peonies, lilac and lilies, all have delicious fragrances.

\* **Guest Bedroom:** Welcome your guest with a bright floral addition. Visitors feel extra special with a bright bunch of cut flowers sitting pretty on the guest room nightstand.

\* **Bathroom:** Flowers in the bathroom? Why not! A simple plastic tumbler filled with fragrant blossoms makes an attractive air freshener. You can even add floating rose-petals in a bath to spoil a friend!

\* **Office:** Any job is more enjoyable when the surroundings are cheerful and attractive, and what is more cheerful than cut flowers? Bring nature indoors and make yourself happier and healthier!

\* **Laundry Room:** I can hear you now - NOT the laundry room, too!! Yes, even the laundry room can

use a bit of sunshine. Rinse out an old bleach or detergent bottle, fill it with cut flowers and place it on your washing machine or shelf. It'll help lighten the load on washday!

\* **Staircase:** Create a "stepped" effect with a series of flowers in interesting containers.

There is nothing wrong with tradition - a big floral arrangement on the dining room table is always a welcomed addition to the décor of the room. Fresh flowers, however, don't have to stay in the dining room. Be creative! Think unique! Put them in all your nooks and crannies! And yes, even put them in your bathroom!

### You Don't Have to be a Floral Designer

You've been to the florist before and know that you can't create the gorgeous centerpieces you find there, nor can you afford to buy them already made. Don't worry! Simply buy some fresh flowers, take them home, and experiment. Anything that can hold water is a possibility for a flower arrangement.

\* Water Pitchers

\* Urns

\* Pots

\* Vases

\* Bowls

\* Watering Cans

\* Soda Bottles

\* Mason Jars

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\* Champagne Bottles

\* Mugs

\* Even a Child's Plastic Cup

Once you have a few containers, the fun begins. Try filling a clear glass with flowers and fill with colored marbles. Create a cluster of different sized flower-filled bottles on a coffee table. Use bowls and shallow dishes for floating flower heads or petals and add floating candles for a bright and shining effect.

Mother Nature has created great beauty in flowers and you simply can't go wrong. Develop your own personal style and taste by experimenting with different colors and types of flowers. Each week try a different look, color, or kind of flower.

The complementary colors of flowers can brighten any part of the house, from the kitchen to the family room to the bedroom. Expand your ideas to different areas throughout your home. The important thing

is to have fun and enjoy.

Claire Bowes is a successful freelance writer and owner of

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tips and ideas for

and

## **The Basic Rules Of Furnishing Your Dining Room**

**By Mart Thomwill**

Realtors often claim that the look of a dining room can be the deciding factor of a property sale. After all, more than any other room the dining area paints a picture of your home - it's the one room in which a prospective buyer will picture their family together. A well-furnished dining area will evoke positive images, encouraging the buyer to imagine a certain style of living. The dining room, therefore, is the heart of any family home.

So, if this is true in sales, why should it be any less true for the dining area in your home? The dining room is a family room – it tells a story about your life. It tells you how your family gathers; how they interact - in fact, it can go as far as telling you how strong your family is.

Your choice of dining room furniture, then, is vital. While this may sound hyperbolic, it can change the way you live your life. Since the dining area is not usually just a place to eat, the furniture you choose

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needs to provide the capacity to be multi-functional; adaptable. Good dining room furniture is expected to last a lifetime of rough but loving treatment, so it has to be sturdy enough to last.

Fortunately, for those on a tight budget the dining room is traditionally sparsely furnished. The only real requirements are a dining table and enough chairs to accommodate your family and any guests. All other furnishings depend entirely on your budget and needs. Where possible, though, you should buy a dining table towards the upper limit of your budget. After all, a good quality table should never need to be replaced.

In selecting a table you should plan for the future. As this particular piece of furniture should last a lifetime you should buy with the future in mind. Perhaps your family will grow in years to come. To avoid the expense of a replacement a few years down the line, then, you should try to buy a table as large as your dining room will accommodate.

You can of course compliment your dining table and chairs by adding other furniture items, such as a china cabinet and sideboard. By carefully considering your dining room furniture needs, you'll be able to dine in stylish and comfortable surroundings for many years to come.

More information and advice on kitting out your dining room in the utmost style can be found at

– Your one stop source for all types of furniture.



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