

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Silk Or Real? Your Wedding Flower Questions Put To Rest -- At Last

By Blake Kritzberg

Silk or real; what's a bride to do? For many brides, the question is really perplexing -- especially for those who want to mix a dash of "Do-It-Yourself" into their wedding flower preparations.

Obviously, silk comes with some advantages -- it's tough and shelf stable, and the petals won't come off at the worst possible moment. On the other hand, silk flowers don't always look real, and they aren't always a bargain, either.

The fact is, the silk versus real dilemma is more confusing than ever, thanks in part due to the increasing sophistication -- and accompanying cost -- of silk and latex flowers. To navigate this new terrain, we interviewed Paul Ajao, a professional florist and cofounder of Pure Botanics, a UK-based floral designer who specializes in weddings.

You keep hearing that silk flowers have gotten "better and better." Yet when you go to the local craft store, they look just about as artificial as ever. Where are these super-realistic flowers, and how can a bride get her hands on them?

It's true that artificial flowers have improved. But the quality varies widely from brand to brand. In addition to craft stores, take a look at which brands your local florists are using. After all, their reputation depends on delivering a beautiful result. Also, they might be able to order in artificial flowers for you -- ones that you can't get in the craft stores.

One brand with a great reputation that florists use regularly is Sia, which you can find in the UK, US and Australia.

Is it true that artificial flowers photograph poorly? And does that include the high-end latex type?

When you take close-ups of artificial flowers, yes, it can be pretty obvious that the flowers aren't real. But this depends a lot on the quality of the artificial flowers you've used.

Silk Or Real? Your Wedding Flower Questions Put To Rest -- At Last

Remember that any shiny surfaces may cause the camera flash to "bounce," which looks pretty unnatural for flowers. The common off-the-shelf flowers can be pretty shiny.

One argument for silk flowers is that fresh flowers are seasonal, but some florists are suggesting that season isn't so important these days -- that almost everything can be imported all year round. Are you finding this to be true?

Well, some of the most common cut flowers, such as roses, gerberas (gerber daisies) and orchids, are available all year round. So you don't have to worry about seasonality with these flowers.

But others, like peonies, lily of the valley and ranunculus, have a definite season. Expect to pay more if you buy out of season. And the quality may not be as good.

Just to illustrate how important season can be: a florist we know planned her whole wedding around the very brief time in spring when lily of the valley was in season, so she could use fresh!

What's your personal feelings on silk vs. artificial flowers? As a professional florist, would you mix them in arrangements -- for example, use silk for the super-pricy flowers like calla lilies or orchids?

Personally, we love working with real flowers. But it's true that silk definitely comes with some advantages. For starters:

- They won't wilt.
- They're a lasting memento of your big day.
- They're easy to transport if you're getting married abroad.
- You can prepare them long in advance.

The last point's important if you're preparing flowers yourself. By their nature, you have to arrange fresh flowers the day before the wedding at the earliest -- and usually the morning of. This doesn't leave you much time to switch gears if you aren't happy with the results. On the other hand, you can experiment with and arrange silk flowers weeks in advance. That leaves you plenty of time to relax and pamper yourself in the run up to your wedding!

And yes, you can mix artificial and real flowers with great results. A friend of ours loves ranunculus and wanted them in a mixed bouquet with roses and gerberas. Unfortunately, ranunculus was out of season for her wedding date, and would have cost a lot. So she opted to tuck artificial ranunculus into a fresh bouquet. The results, and the photos, were beautiful.

Anything else you want to add?

Contrary to popular opinion, don't think that silk flowers are always going to be cheaper than real. Many of the quality ones are as expensive as the real thing -- if not more.

Paul Ajao is co-founder of Pure Botanics (

<http://wedding-flowers-guide.com/>

), located in Coventry,

central England, UK. His florists specialise in innovative, unforgettable wedding designs. Blake Kritzberg edits

<http://www.favorideas.com>

. For trends and celebrity wedding news, subscribe to our

one-of-a-kind newsletter:

favorideas-news@aweber.com

Using Silk Flowers – Should I?

By Ginger Ruoff

Using Silk Flowers – Should I? by Ginger Ruoff

Many of the silk flowers available for bridal bouquets today look so real only the bride knows for sure whether they are. Using silk flowers in the bridal bouquet may not be for every bride, but many are taking a second look at the advantages.

One of the best reasons for choosing silk flowers for the wedding bouquet is that the beauty of the flowers will remain the same for many tomorrows as it looks today. Too often with a fresh cut bouquet, saving it means drying the bouquet. If you are not adept at drying flowers, they may even end up with mold spots. Even if they are dried appropriately, the colors will be faded. You can get a fresh cut bouquet freeze dried to perpetuate the true colors, but it must be done by a professional and can be expensive. Silk flowers will not wilt, mold, or fade on your wedding day or over the years that pass.

If you choose to have a silk flower wedding, you can plan and order your bouquets far in advance of the wedding. Most brides are very busy in the month before the wedding. Having to coordinate with a florist to have fresh cut flowers delivered to the wedding venue is just one more pressure point on the countdown. Also, if the fresh cut flowers do not look like you envisioned, when you get them it is often too late to change anything. When you order your silk flower bouquets as far in advance as six months before the wedding, you have plenty of time to ask for changes or to order extra pieces if other honored guests appear on your list.

Finally, in terms of the wedding budget, a silk flower wedding can be more economical than fresh cut flowers. The flowers you like are always "in season." Prices are not bumped by seasonal changes. Also, because you will be able to order at a time that you wish to, you can pay for the flower expense months ahead of other expenses that will necessarily come right before the wedding.

Whatever choices you make about your wedding flowers – silk flower or fresh cut – a good wedding flower designer will help you create beauty in your wedding bouquet.

Ginger designs custom-styled bridal bouquets and wedding packages for brides. Visit her website <http://www.bridalsilkbouquets.homestead.com> for ideas.



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!