How to Get Started - Buying the Proper Flowers

What to buy? When you purchase flowers at the farmers’ market, flower mart or the grocery store, it can be a tough decision to choose what types of flowers to get. You may wonder: What will look nice together? How can I make this easy on myself and end up with a very nice result? Below are some steps to help you with these choices.

Flower Duet - Flower Design Tips

Step 1: Buying the flowers: Which do you choose?

Mixed Bouquets: These bouquets consist of a variety of flowers – often in contrasting colors with a little bit of greenery.

Contrast Textures: Choose two bunches of different types of flowers in the same color. For example: Yellow Roses and Yellow Alstromeria. Orange Gerber Daisies and Orange Mini Calla Lilies. Green Kermit Mums and Green Parrot Tulips.

Contrast Colors: Choose the same flower in two colors. For example: White and Yellow Tulips. Purple and White Orchids. Red and Orange Roses.

All One Color and Type: For an elegant look, buy a few bunches of the same flower in the same color. Nothing creates drama like many stems of the same flower.

Step 2: I've got them on the kitchen counter, what next?

Prep Work: Take apart the stems and place them on your work surface in groups by flower type. Clean off foliage that would fall below the vase water line. (For bulb flowers like Tulips and Iris, keep the foliage.)

Step 3: Cut the stems

Arranging Tips: Always cut the stems longer than you think you need at first. Don't be afraid to change your design if it's not looking as you expected. Long-stemmed arrangements can be adapted after a few days to be a low-cut centerpiece. Recycle your flowers into different arrangements.

Step 4: Display flowers throughout your home

Spread the wealth: You have more than one room in your house, why not brighten up the whole house? Put a main bouquet in the entryway or dining room and place accent bouquets in the powder room, bedroom or office.
How to Get Started - Some Simple Design Ideas

**Design Idea #1 - Divide by three:** After step 2, all your flowers should be on a table or counter in front of you. Divide them into three groups. Cut each group at different heights (7, 9, and 11 inches for example). Put the shortest group around the outside of the vase. Put the medium group inside the short group and the tall group inside the medium group. Finally, move the stems until you have a pleasing composition. If your vase is too wide, try adding greenery from your garden to fill in the holes.

**Design Idea #2 – Color-block:** Group the flowers by color. Cut each “color-set” of flowers at different heights. Arrange in a vase in a one-sided arrangement where each color is at a different level.

**Design Idea #3 – Low and modern:** Sometimes the most dramatic flower arrangements are really quite small. Use a short vase or an unusual shape like a boxy vase. Use only one flower – like the Red Roses. Cut the stems short all at one length.

**Design Idea #4 – Use an easy vase:** Vases that have narrow necks make it easy to arrange flowers. Small vases use fewer flowers. An old silver teapot makes for an interesting vase. Use a porcelain water pitcher for a country look. Fill the vase with fruit like cranberries, lime slices or kumquats to help anchor stems.

**Design Idea #5 – Use floral foam:** Using wet floral foam, called by its brand name of Oasis, is a great way to help you arrange flowers. Flower Duet can teach you how to use this type of tool. It’s great for centerpieces and topiaries.