

the knot

Photo: Cameron Ingalls, Inc.



Top 10 Expert Tips for the Best Wedding Flowers

We asked hundreds of wedding flower experts across the country for their best tips to getting the wedding flowers you want. Here are their top 10 tips.

1. Do your homework. Interview floral designers as you would interview any other professional to make sure you both have the same vision. "The most important aspect is that you feel comfortable with the designer and you feel you are being listened to," says Sadie Gardner of Sadie's Fine Floral Design in Minneapolis, MN. "If you have that connection with the floral designer, they will be able to bring to life floral designs that execute your vision, even if you can't articulate it or know nothing about flowers."

2. Go local. Picking your wedding flowers based on your wedding destination and date not only saves you money (in-season flowers can be much less expensive than those pricy hot-house peonies you're eyeing!), but also is a great way to give a nod to your locale. The florists at Fleur de Lis Flowers in Saint Paul, MN, say, "Not only is it important to us to support local and pesticide-free product, but it is amazing to have such control over the quality of the flowers we send out to our brides and to feel like we are sending it right from our own garden!"

3. Design a doppelganger. Love the look of hydrangea, but can't invest in this pricey bloom for twenty centerpieces? Candice Ryan from La Petite Fleur in Glenside, PA, says your florist can help you find a less-expensive look-a-like. "Carnations are lovely, accessible, inexpensive flowers that, when bundled, can mimic the ethereal, garden look of a hydrangea," Candice says.

4. Think outside the vase... Breaking away from traditional flower vessels is a simple way to totally change the look of your wedding flowers -- and to get a completely unique centerpiece to boot. "Think about using Morocco-influenced urns, wooden boxes, tea cups, and vintage vases to hold your centerpiece arrangements," says Stephanie Elhayani of Seed Floral Couture in West Hollywood, CA. "And don't be afraid to mix and match. Combining flea-market finds with anything from family heirlooms to hand-me-downs will be a charming touch!"

5. ...and outside flowers! Not a flower person? Don't force it! "To jazz up floral arrangements and personal flowers, try adding feathers, buttons, decorative wire, candy, seashells, branches, wheat grass, and even fruits and veggies like asparagus and pears for an X-factor effect," says Christina Patton of Pretty Witty Floral Design in Irvine, CA.

6. Pick a color and design scheme -- not a flower scheme. "Any florist worth their salt can come up with cutting-edge designs within your budget if you give them colors over 'must-have flowers' that you specifically write into the contract," says

Rosalind of Bells of Ireland, which serves the Greater Worcester, MA, area. "They can show you how some flowers can be swapped in for others, saving you big money! Aside from saving you money, it might just also save the day."

7. Recycle your blooms. Cut costs by making your arrangements pull double duty. "Reuse your ceremony flowers at the reception," says Danielle Prevette of Something Chic Floral in Urbandale, IA. "This helps keep cost down, and your florist is more than happy to come back after the ceremony and move everything to the reception."

8. Don't forget greenery! "Consider foliage your best friend," says Ellen Kim of Gingerleaf Floral in Oakland, CA. "Having your floral designer incorporate foliage with unusual textures and silhouettes can turn a ho-hum arrangement into a precious jewel or a stunning centerpiece. And foliage is comparatively less expensive than most floral blooms, so it can also stretch your floral budget."

9. Make it personal. Select your wedding flowers for a reason. "Do you have memories of your fiance bringing you yellow roses? Does your grandmother grow hydrangea in her garden? Does your mom wear gardenia-scented perfume? Flowers should be chosen for a reason, not just the color," says Mary Coombs of A Garden Party Florist in Elmer, NJ.

10. Bring examples. Your florist isn't a mind reader, so be sure to clue them in to your wedding style. "The tip I give my clients is to put together a 'vision board' with color swatches of your favorite colors or desired color scheme from a local paint store, as well as pictures from magazines and websites that show your style and overall decor preferences," says Sayles Livingston of Sayles Livingston Flowers in Adamsville, RI.

<http://wedding.theknot.com/wedding-planning/wedding-flowers/articles/top-10-expert-wedding-flower-tips.aspx>
