



CENTERPIECES AND TABLE DECORATIONS

Centerpieces and decorations add interest, character and a finishing touch to a home. Table decorations help to carry out a theme and provide an interesting tablescape. They can add a light hearted touch or give a feeling of elegance for special occasions.

Things that we have in our homes reflect our interests, our heritage, and our lifestyle. By putting our things on display in accessory arrangements, we aren't simply making a statement about ourselves. We're also reminding ourselves that this is the place that we call home, and these are the things that we cherish.

Keep centerpieces and table arrangements changing. Your life changes, and your home should change along with moods, seasons and interests. Many of the items used in arrangements can be used over and over again in various ways. Break up arrangements and mix them together in new ways. Put things away and bring out new things. Have fun with your arrangements. Keep them interesting by creating a new interest point. Update and refresh arrangements by buying or making something just because it's lovely, unusual or fun...and then be sure to use it.

An Eye For Design

Experiment with design. Study each object and look for similarities and differences in lines, forms, and ideas between various objects. Try placing two or more items together and look at the spaces created between the objects. Observe how parts of a design balance one another or create a flowing feeling of rhythm. Study colors and textures. Mix antique and modern glass to study the effects. Place all smooth textures together or try combining coarse textures with smooth ones. Combine like colors together and then accent them with a contrasting color.

Keep it simple or make it festive. Tie it to a special occasion or mood. Place a springtime wreath on the head of your favorite teddy bear for a lighthearted seasonal centerpiece. Fill individual pockets of a colorful bun warmer with Easter eggs or small beautifully wrapped holiday packages. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by filling a white pedestal-base bowl with scrubbed Irish potatoes and adding white

pipes trimmed with green bows and green Ivy vines hanging over the edge. Use flowers and candlelight to add sparkling highlights to an evening dinner for two...or more.

The Tools Of Design

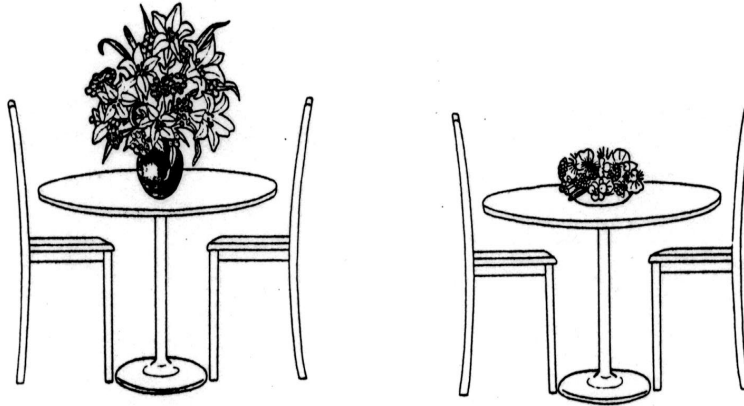
All objects and arrangements have characteristics called the elements of design. Different functional and visual effects are created by working with the design elements. The effectiveness of any design is determined by how the design elements and principles are used and combined.

1. **Space** is something we cannot touch, but it touches us. All objects are within space and are surrounded by space. We cannot make space but we can mold and change it fairly easily.
2. **Form** is the basic tangible element. It has substance and shape. Forms may be geometric or free-form. If functional, the form or shape should be appropriate to the intended use.
3. **Line** gives us the outline of form and separates it from the surrounding space. Lines are highly expressive and make either subtle or strong design statements. Lines also lead our eye movements from one point to another and help unify various parts of a design by visually bringing various objects together.
4. **Texture** and **ornament** are the surface characteristics of form. Texture is always present because everything has a surface. Textures can be coarse and rough, silky and smooth or variations in-between. Ornament is an extension of texture and is an enrichment that gives visual interest.
5. **Light**, like space, is untouchable but touches all. Without it, we cannot see. Varying intensities of light affect the overall design and produces color. Direct or spot lighting produces bright, intense light while candlelight and dimmers create softer light with a yellowish cast.
6. **Color** is always present to some degree and is probably the most powerful of the design elements. Use colors to:
 - ▶ dramatize an effect,
 - ▶ tie a variety of objects together,
 - ▶ create a subtle understated look or
 - ▶ create a mood.

Don't be shy when working with color! A striking value contrast or addition of a contrasting color may be just the touch to add new life to an arrangement.

The design elements are the raw ingredients of design. The principles provide flexible guidelines that relate to the way in which these ingredients are combined in order to achieve a successful design.

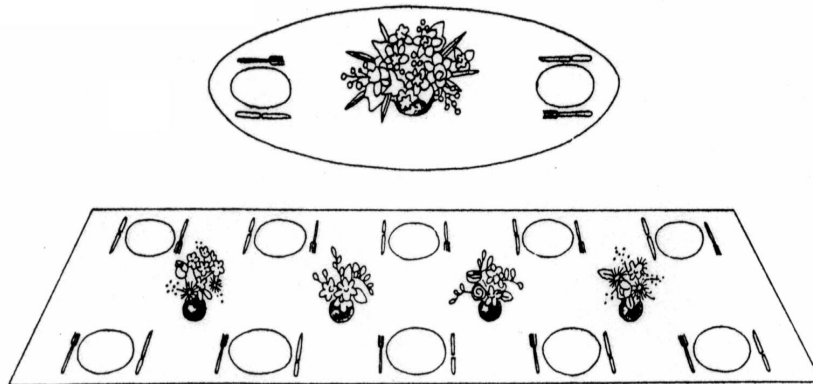
1. **Scale** is a standard of measurement for relating objects to each other and to the space that they occupy. For instance, a large centerpiece is needed for a large table and a small one for a small table.



Small tables call for small arrangements. Avoid large arrangements that block view of people seated on each side.

2. **Proportion** is a more specific measurement than scale. It refers to the comparative relationship between one part and the whole. Generally, proportion has to do with height, width and length. For instance, a centerpiece is usually not over one-third the length of the table on which it is placed.

Keep arrangements in proportion to table and number of place settings.



3. **Balance** relates to a law of physics that deals with actual and visual weight. One part of a design should appear visually balanced (of equal importance or 'weight') with another. The three categories of balance are:

A. **Symmetrical** (formal)--mirror image.

B. **Asymmetrical** (informal)--each design half different yet visually of equal importance or 'weight'.

C . **Radial**--all points moving from center out, such as a sunburst design.

4. **Rhythm** in design leads the eye from one area to another in a flowing movement. Rhythm can be produced through repetition and transition. **Repetition** is the use of the same element more than once. **Transition** is the relative change in size from large to small; the gradation in color from light to dark, from dull to bright and from color to color; and in texture from rough to smooth or coarse to fine.
5. **Emphasis** produces a focal point or center of interest within the design. It attracts the eye to a central outstanding feature or idea to which all else is subordinate. One kind of line, shape, direction, texture or color needs to dominate or the design falls apart. Contrast is needed for interest. Sameness becomes monotonous. Contrasts emphasize the dominant idea.
6. **Harmony** is achieved when different forms and colors have a feeling of unity.

Be selective. Don't try to use everything at once. Experiment. It takes practice to organize spontaneously, but don't be discouraged. Try an arrangement one way for a while, and then try the same objects another way. Study the shape, color and texture relationships. By adding or taking out one color or shape, you often can tell what needs to be changed or added.

When placing accessories in an arrangement, keep the following hints in mind:

- ▶ Your composition should be attractive from every angle;
- ▶ Odd numbers of accessories make a more interesting grouping than even numbers;
- ▶ Vary the heights of two or more pieces for a more pleasing effect; and
- ▶ Place surface accessories so that they do not interfere with either wall arrangements or table settings around a dining table.

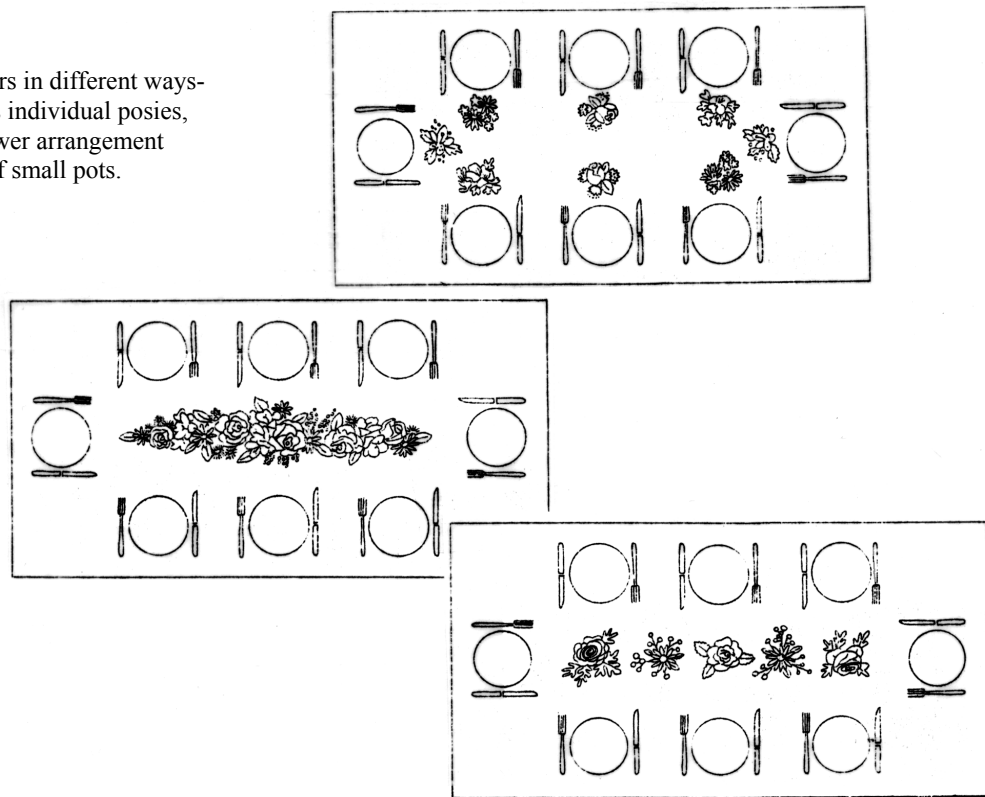
When arranging a number of items, avoid a cluttered look by using items that are related in some way, such as in shape, color, type of material or purpose. Arrange small objects on a tray, cloth or mirror for unity and convenience. Small items may be lost by themselves but make an impact when combined with other items. Add an element of surprise by varying the texture, shape or scale of objects in the grouping. For instance, if you have a grouping of round objects of varying sizes, try adding a rectangular shape. Or place a heavy glass sculpture next to a pottery teapot. An unusual combination or arrangement of objects adds an element of surprise. This can be fun for you and interesting to others.

Enjoy accessories, but don't feel that you have to hang on to them forever. Remember, accessories go out of style, get tired-looking and are subject to damage. Restore them, if possible. Polish, brighten or coat metals. Clean glass pieces. Clean, refinish and repair other accessories as needed. But don't hesitate to replace them when needed.

Table Arrangements

Give thought to the placement of the centerpiece on the table. It may be in the center of the table, off center, at one end or both ends, in the corners or at center back. Your originality, sense of visual balance, knowledge of design, the number of guests and type of service planned will determine the most attractive and convenient placement. If the centerpiece will be viewed from all sides (not placed against a wall) it should be finished all around. All sides do not have to be alike, however. If two arrangements are used (matched pairs at each end of a table) the visual weight or balance should be the same even though the arrangements may not exactly match.

Use flowers in different ways- perhaps as individual posies, a long flower arrangement or a line of small pots.



Candle Arrangements

Candlelight is living light...both decorative and functional. Group candles together for a magical feeling and to help set the mood for a special occasion. Combine candlelight with artificial light to accent features and give a flickering glow to the room. Emphasize the mood of candlelight by using dimmers and keeping other room lighting low.

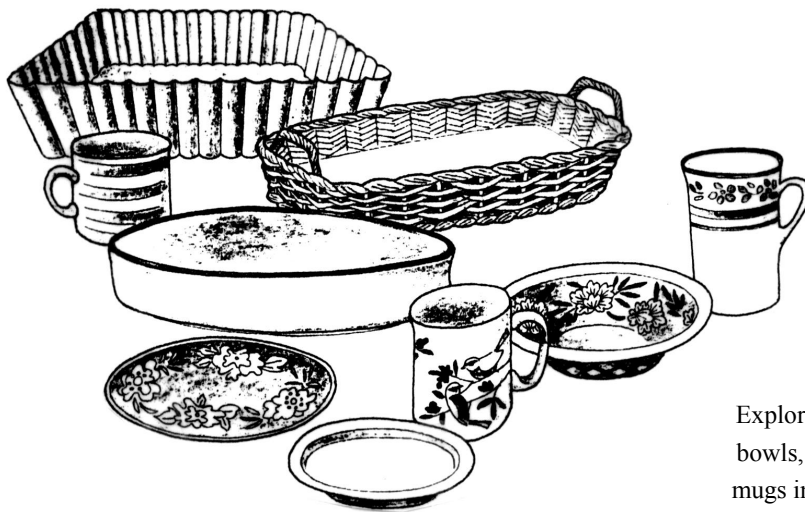
Add a festive, romantic look to any table setting with candles. When using candles in centerpieces, either keep them above or below eye level of the people seated at the table or place them to one end of the table. Floating candles are another lovely option for dining tables.

Double your pleasure by using mirrors to reflect an arrangement or flickering candlelight. Place candles and greens on a mirror or add green moss around a mirror to create the effect of a "lake" with small houses or other objects on the "grass" surrounding it.

Candleholders are often grouped in pairs. More interesting arrangements can be made, however, by using a variety of candles and candleholders that are united by colors, shapes, lines or types of materials.

Centerpiece Pointers

- ➔ Be bold with special accessories. Mix and match a variety of items to create a unique look with bright colors and adventurous shapes. All items don't need to be authentic. Simply work toward the spirit or general feeling you wish to create.



Explore all possibilities! Try shallow bowls, baskets, kitchen utensils and mugs in different ways.

- ➔ Garlands, arranged in an "S" shape, create an easy and elegant centerpiece. Dress them up with golden artichokes, lacquered pine cones and gilded pomegranates or other trimmings of your choice. Add finishing touches with candles of various heights. This style is especially suited for long tables.
- ➔ Apples and evergreen make a perfect centerpiece for the holiday dinner table. Remove the stems from eight lady apples or crab apples and scoop out holes large enough for 5-inch candles.

Coat the apples with clear lacquer to keep them looking good throughout the holidays. Insert a length of heavy 14 gauge wire (about 38 inches long) through the apples and then bend the wire into a circle. Close the circle by inserting both ends into one apple. Use melted candle wax to fasten the candles into the apple “candleholders”. Hide the wire with evergreen sprigs. Select a large apple to use in the center of the circle. Again, scoop out the stem and insert a tall candle. Arrange securely on the table and finish with sprigs of evergreen.

- ➔ The often-used bowl of fruit is actually based on good sense. Fruit is visually beautiful and helps to make a room seem lived in. Remember, however, that fruit bowls are functional, too. They must be large enough and the arrangement relaxed enough to allow a piece of fruit to be removed without spoiling the effect. Buff fruit for a glossy shine. Here’s a tip: Mix in fake fruit at the bottom of the bowl where real fruit usually goes bad.
- ➔ Short of storage space for vegetables brought home from the grocery store? Let them sit where you can see them and enjoy their shapes and colors. Simply arrange vegetables as you would flowers: Group them together, but let their shapes form their own patterns. A casual arrangement is often effective with neither an arranged or fixed look. Mix colors and shapes and sizes for interest.

Five-minute Ideas

Most of us have neither the time nor the money to spend on elaborate table decorations for day-to-day eating. However, expensive flowers and complicated ideas aren't necessary in creating stunning results, and you don't have to spend hours to create something worth looking at. Here are just a few quick and easy ideas that can be put together in a few minutes time.



Combine fragrant lilies with smooth shiny stones for a sophisticated, yet simple arrangement. Just cut two lily flower heads from a stem and insert into 2 small inconspicuous containers. Add one or two leaves for color. Finish by arranging several small, rounded stones around the containers.



Small, scented violets are perfect table decorations for springtime meals. They blend with plain white or decorated china. Simply insert a waterproof container securely into a small basket and fill with water. Shake out a bunch of violets to make them fuller and then fill basket with the flowers. Let a few hang over the edge for a natural look. Cut stems as needed. Mist them occasionally to keep them fresh.



Combine eggcups and daisies; add limes or lemons for a dash of color. Simply fill eggcups with water and place a daisy or two along with a few leaves in each eggcup. Arrange randomly, in rows or in a circle surrounding a plate of limes or lemons.

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