

# Easy and elegant holiday arrangements

By Blair Farris

**F**lower arranging doesn't need to be difficult or stressful. Shopping, parties and family create enough stress. I know. Flower "arranging" and "easy" aren't usually in the same sentence, but here are a few steps to create beautiful arrangements for your table in less than 30 minutes. A few small but stunning vases set on a table can be gorgeous but are not nearly as difficult to arrange as a large centerpiece.



## Step 1

Choose your vases. They can be identical or made of the same material, but different sizes. Think of a silver mint julep cup as the perfect size — not too big and not too little.

## Step 2

Choose the flowers. In this situation less is more! Pick three kinds of flowers and stop. Sticking with a monochromatic palette is easier. For example, red roses, hot pink Gerber daisies and red tulips look beautiful together. They aren't exactly the same color and the different petal shapes give the arrangement depth. I used one bunch of roses, two bunches of tulips, two bunches of Gerber daisies and one bunch of a filler called Hypericum. Stay within your budget. Less-expensive flowers can make a big impact in mass, but never use baby's breath. The Blossom Shop always has freshly cut flowers marked 30-percent-off that you can arrange yourself.



## Step 3

Prepare the flowers by stripping them of their leaves and possibly thorns. This will help to eliminate bacteria that can build up in the water. It will keep the flowers looking fresher for longer.

## Step 4

Put two or three of the flowers in your left hand and then keep adding flowers with your right hand, trying to keep the flowers at the same level. Group them in bunches for more impact.

## Step 5

As you hold the flowers, wrap some twine around the stems up close to the flowers to keep them secure. This step can be skipped, but it does help to keep the flowers in place when you put them in the vase. This is especially important when you have a container with a larger mouth.

## Step 6

Cut the stems off at the same level with your right hand. Test the stems in the vase to see if they are OK. You might need to recut if they are too long.

## Step 7

The arrangements don't have to be perfect. Once you put them in the vases, you can fill in with extra flowers where there are holes. Voilà! You have a table arrangement. Because the vases are smaller and the stems short, make sure to keep the vases filled up with water.

If you are not interested in doing it yourself and you want something absolutely fabulous, call The Blossom Shop. Ted Todd and Debbie Sacra, my longtime friends and owners of the Blossom Shop, taught me the basics of flower arranging. Nineteen years



Steps 3 & 4



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7





*An elegant yet easy holiday arrangement by The Blossom Shop.*

ago, when I was a newlywed, I had just moved to Charlotte and knew no one so they took pity on me and gave me a job arranging flowers. I consider their flower-arranging skills an art form. With an eye for color and scale, they create stunning arrangements that can transform a dining room or ballroom. ■

*For more than 16 years, Blair Farris, a Charlotte-based landscape designer, has used her education and talents to create beautiful and interesting spaces for commercial and residential properties. Visit her website at [www.blairfarrisdesigns.com](http://www.blairfarrisdesigns.com).*

***Photos by Olga Faison.***

## Holiday arrangement and table design

The Blossom Shop  
2242 Park Road  
Charlotte NC 28203  
704.376.3526  
[www.blossomshopflorist.com](http://www.blossomshopflorist.com)

## For the reader

*The Center of Attention* by Ron Morgan. Many of us have this book from a few years ago when Morgan spoke at The Mint Museum's Home and Garden Symposium. Pull it off the shelf again. Not only is it a beautiful book, it is full of creative ideas and tips.

## Tip of the Month

Don't know what to do with all the ashes from your fireplace? Sprinkle them on your garden beds. They are an invaluable addition to the garden and to compost.