

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: All

TH Activity Plan: Garden Style Floral Arrangement

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Materials

For each participant:
One container, preferably rectangular in shape.

An assortment of fresh flower stems and greenery:
(shown in top photo)

- 5 Snap dragons
- 3 roses
- 3 gerbera daisies
- 5 tulips
- 2 stems myrtle
- 2 stems ruscus

Supplies for group to share:
Clear floral tape (1/8" or 1/4" wide)

- Floral clippers/scissors
- Floral "food"
- Water
- Water buckets/containers
- Gloves, wipes

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Participants will make a simple garden style floral arrangement.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Participate in creative expression using plants; follow flower arranging styling as directed by facilitator

Physical: Use fine motor skills; self-regulate the amount of flowers/materials used demonstrating ability to restrain self

Psychological/Emotional: Connect with nature using natural plant materials; express self creatively through flower arrangement design, plant & color choices

Sensory: Practice self-regulation by limiting self to the specified number of flowers or managing impulses of taking excessive amount of flowers

Social: Gauge appropriate amount of plant material for personal use based on leader's direction or consideration of other participants & sharing of available materials

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather materials. Place the arrangement container at each participants' place along with a bucket of water with the groupings of fresh flower stems (in pails of water) as indicated in the list of materials. Shared supplies (tape, clippers, etc.) should be placed on the table so they are reachable by all participants.
2. Facilitator begins with participants filling containers with water and adding flower "food" (preservative). Next, a grid will be created across the top of the container using clear floral tape for secure placement of flower stems. (photo below)
3. Next, re-cut all stems at a 45 degree angle. Place some greenery in grid, being careful to remove leaves from the bottom of stems so that no leaves are submerged in the water (this applies to floral stems as well).
4. Place tallest (i.e., snap dragons) floral stems first so that the height of the arrangement is established, followed by mid and lower-level lines of flowers (i.e., roses, daisies), then adding tulips in between lines. Other flowers can be substituted. Locally grown flowers recommended for budget and sustainable best practices.
5. Finish arrangement by filling in any empty spaces with remaining greenery.
6. Optional: Add accents such as craft butterflies, dragonflies, bumble bees, etc. (not shown).

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This creative therapeutic horticulture activity is appropriate for most populations, with particular appeal to those who will benefit from joyful, mood enhancing, creative sessions. This can include those who are dealing with adversity, recent health diagnoses, as well as bereaved, wellness, senior, hospitalized groups or individuals.

The use of colorful, fragrant and texturally diverse plant material will enhance the sensory component of this activity. It may be challenging for people with self-regulation, impulsive or immature behavior. They may be overwhelmed and wanting to use all of the plant materials. Session can address these behaviors, with facilitator limiting (setting rules) materials per person, discussing strategies to manage behaviors deemed inappropriate, and identifying specific goals for working cooperatively in groups where materials are shared.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Safety protocols should be covered at beginning of session including use of sharp clippers, handling of floral food/preservative, use of gloves, and sensitivities to preservatives, pesticides, flowers, sap, and use of glass containers. Sharp cutting tools and/or plant preservative may not be appropriate for some populations. For facilities with restrictions on glass containers, plastic or wooden vases can be substituted. Some participants may have allergy sensitivity. Identifying plant materials in a prior session can alert participants who would be uncomfortable in close proximity to allergy-inducing plants. An alternative - use fabric flowers.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: This activity can be expensive depending on number of flowers used per person. Cutting from a facility garden, especially greenery (or blossoms) can manage the costs. Some facilities have relationships with funeral homes whereby arrangements/flowers are donated for use by TH programs.

Care of cut flower arrangements should be covered in session. These include: using a clean vase, refreshing/changing water daily, re-cutting or removing stems that are spent/past, keeping out of direct sunlight or hot conditions and careful transportation of arrangement so that it doesn't tip and spill water in vehicle.

Recommended flowers for arrangements: sunflowers, ageratum, tulips, daffodils, zinnia, echinacea, salvia, camellias, roses, peonies, yarrow, with many more options. Consider using seasonal blooms in the particular geographical area, these more readily available and less costly. This activity can be expanded by planning and planting a cutting garden prior to this session (generally a season ahead), as well as a session harvesting flowers for the arrangements. There are many types and styles of flower arrangements: ikebana, vertical, horizontal, crescent and triangular shaped (Johnson, 2014). These could be separate sessions or workshops with a floral arrangement programming theme.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Feaster, F. (n.d.). 20 flowers for a cutting garden.

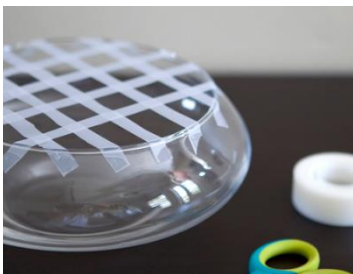
<https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/flowers/20-flowers-for-a-cutting-garden-pictures>

Johnson, J.L. (2014). Principles of design: A course in design production. Texas State Florists' Association.

https://www.tsfa.org/objects/NEW_Principles_of_Design.pdf

Stewart, M. (2023). 6 ways to keep your cut flowers fresher for longer.

<https://www.marthastewart.com/1539442/tips-prolong-life-fresh-cut-flowers>



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2023.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.