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Save a bundle on wedding flowers

You don't have to break the bank for beautiful bouquets. Use these ideas to create a lovely ceremony and reception.

By Donna_Freedman 21 hours ago

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Planning a wedding? Get ready to drop a couple of thousand on pretty things. According to The Knot, a wedding website, the average bridal couple drops \$1,988 on flowers and décor.

But a little imagination and creativity lets you cut costs without sacrificing effect.

For example, my daughter bought her wedding flowers from a couple of supermarkets with quality floral departments. My niece, who previously worked in the industry, turned the blossoms into lovely bouquets and boutonnières.

And here's a new way to spend money: the "throw" bouquet. Seems a new custom is to buy a replica of the bride's flower arrangement -- which isn't cheap -- in order to throw it at the unmarried female guests. Really? (Post continues after video.)

Emily McCollin of Occasions By Emily in Charlotte, N.C., has a way around this pricey trend: "Use a bridesmaid's bouquet, rather than paying for a (duplicate)."

Truckloads of flowers are essential to some. To others, the number of blooms is negotiable. Decide what you want, then use these tips to bring your dream in under budget.

Cheaper by the dozen?

April Masini of the "Ask April" online advice column suggests ordering directly from a rose farm. Vases stuffed with roses "shriek 'luxury.'"

Don't want roses? Do an online search for other types of flower farms that sell to the public.

The cheapest flowers are generally those currently in season. West Palm Beach, Fla., event planner Rhonda Davis suggests three nontraditional choices:

- Hydrangea: "Very large and requires less to make a statement."
- Carnations: "When clustered together, (they) look sophisticated."
- Tulips: "In vases of different styles and heights, (they) add drama and impact."

Marisa Manna of So Eventful recommends that you "supersize" your arrangements with larger blossoms. "Choosing bigger buds means you'll need fewer stems," says Manna, who's based in San Francisco.

But don't overdo the flowers at the church: "Have two large arrangements at the altar. This will direct everyone's attention to exactly where you want them to focus: the bride and groom."

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Donna Freedman's Frugal Cool blog is for readers who want to live cheaply -- whether due to necessity or a lifestyle choice. It explores living sustainably and making life more meaningful at the same time.

ABOUT DONNA FREEDMAN



Donna Freedman, a freelancer in Seattle, writes the Frugal Cool blog for MSN Money. She won regional and national prizes during an 18-year newspaper career and earned a college degree in midlife without taking out student loans. She also writes about the frugal life for her own site, Surviving and Thriving.

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"Floral" doesn't necessarily mean a cut bloom. Use flowering branches (forsythia, cherry) or branches of curly willow, suggests New York City event planner [Karen Brown](#). If you're lucky, friends or relatives have these trees on their properties.

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Or skip florals altogether. Jan McBee of [La Fete](#) in Atlanta suggests decorating tables with pillar candles of varying heights, floating candles, or "citrus fruits, pine cones, shells and other items from nature (in) vases surrounded by candles."

Stephania Andrade, who's helping her sister with a summer wedding, says guests will enjoy framed photos of the bride and groom, from childhood up through engagement.

"They'll become conversation pieces and will add that personal touch every wedding should have," the San Diego resident says.

Cut flower costs

Want flowers on the tables? Reuse the ones from the ceremony. At one wedding, photographer [Catherine Fiehn](#) saw decorative buckets hanging from the church pews. Later these buckets showed up as centerpieces.

"I've (seen) other ladies skip the bridesmaids' bouquets altogether and have each girl carry a single rose, which they one by one placed in an empty vase on the altar after coming down the aisle," says Fiehn, who's based in Darien, Conn.

And when the party's over? Event planner Afrin Khan of [Red Elephant](#) suggests arranging to donate flowers to a hospital, hospice or senior center.

"This simple, powerful gesture helps share your joyous day with others," says Khan, of Merrick, N.Y.

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Larisa G. 15 hours ago

I am a wedding planner and a certified floral designer. There are many ways to handle your wedding flowers and a bit of information may be helpful. Please see my blog post "Confessions of a Wedding Planner: Not all flowers are created equal." <http://blog.momentsbywayne.com/2012/01/confessions-of-a-wedding-planner-not-all-flowers-are-created-equal/>. Hope that you find this information useful - there is no right or wrong - professional route or DIY. Pick the one that suits you best and know what you are signing up for in terms of cost and time.

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