



Sprit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #15

Floral Timeline

Keeping track of time is important when planning a wedding...Use the following floral timeline to maximize your schedule...

4-12 months before: Begin interviewing prospective florists. Select a wedding floral designer that meets your criteria as early as possible to insure availability.

3-6 months before: Bring color scheme and wedding gown material swatches for coordination. Ask them to design a small sample version of your bridal bouquet for your consideration.

2-4 months before: Pick out your floral blooms to be used in your wedding designs.

3 weeks before: Confirm wedding date, flower delivery time, and location with the florist.

1 week before: Double-check boutonniere and corsage counts and confirm final table count for the centerpieces.

Wedding Day:

- ✓ Have the florist drop off the flowers one or two hours before the ceremony.
- ✓ Assign a family member or wedding party member to help organize the floral decorations.
- ✓ To keep bouquets and boutonnieres fresh don't attach them until just before the ceremony.
- ✓ Have the Tossing Bouquet ready.
- ✓ Save Bridal bouquet for preservation or pressing.

24 hours after: Have a family member take the bridal bouquet to the florist for preservation or pressing.

6-8 weeks after: Pickup preserved Bridal bouquet from florist.

Glossary

Understanding the various "languages" of certain wedding vendors can be challenging...we've provided a floral glossary to help familiarize you with some of the words you may hear...

Biedermeier: Nosegay tightly arranged in concentric circles of various differently colored flowers. The blooms are wired into a holder, with one flower variety per ring.

Boutonniere: A single bloom, bud or several small buds attached to the left lapel of the jacket. Usually, boutonnieres are worn by grooms, attendants, ushers, and the bride's and groom's fathers.

Candelabra: A centerpiece of flowers set at the base, neck, or top of a multi-armed candelabrum. Depending on the style of the wedding in can be adorned with flowing greens or ribbons.

Cascade or shower: A bouquet of blooms usually composed of ivy and long-stemmed flowers that are wired together to create a waterfall-like look.

Chuppah: A traditional Jewish wedding canopy for the Rabbi, decorated with flowers, where the ceremony takes place.

Classic bouquet: A bouquet of densely bunched blooms that are hand-tied, wired, or anchored in a bouquet holder.

Corsage: A pin-on, wrist, or hand-held bouquet of a single bloom or a small cluster of blooms of orchids or gardenias arranged over a tulle or lace doily and often adorned with ribbon.

Composite: A single stem where different petals or buds are wired together to create the look of a giant flower.

Crescent: A hand-held arrangement composed of one full flower and a flowering stem, usually orchids, wired together forming a slender handle. Usually, it is designed as either a semi-crescent, which has only one trailing stem or a full crescent, a half circle with a central flower and blossoms emanating from two sides.

Dais: The bride and groom table's centerpiece which drapes toward the front of the table for visual effect.

Fish bowl: A low centerpiece glass bowl with clusters of flowers.

Garden: A creative and airy look for centerpieces using abstract wildflowers like hollyhock, smilax, rambling roses, Lisianthus, and digitalis.

Garland: Rope or strands that are elaborately woven or arranged to adorn pews and doorways.

Ikebana: Japanese-style arrangements of flowers that are aesthetically in unison with earth, air, size, and spacer.

Nosegays: Round bouquets usually 16-18 inches in diameter that are made of densely packed round flowers, greenery, and sometimes herbs that are wired or tied together.

Oasis: Sponge-like special foam used in flower arrangements for hydrating flowers for extended periods of time.

Pomander: A ball covered with blooms and suspended from a ribbon which is ideal for child attendants.

Posies: A small bouquet even smaller than nosegays but similar in design that often includes extras like silk flowers or ribbons. *This is an ideal selection for small hands.*

Presentation: A bunch of long-stemmed flowers cradled in the bride's arms. It is also called the pageant bouquet.

Taped and wired: A technique for arranging bouquets, headpieces, boutonnieres, and wreaths where the head of a flower is cut at the stem and attached to a wire and then wrapped with floral tape. The wire allows the flowers to be more easily arranged into shapes and styles.

Topiary: Foliage or flowers that are trimmed to resemble miniature trees, animals, and geometric shapes.

Tossing: A copy of the bridal bouquet used for the bridal bouquet tossing ritual.

Trellis: A frame of woven wood that is used as a support or screen for flowers and climbing plants.

Tussy mussy: A posy carried in a hand-held, small, metallic vase.

Wreath: Flowers or other decorative materials that are ring-shaped and can be used as a headpiece, centerpiece, or door hanger.

Floral Styles

Understanding and identifying the various styles associated with weddings is important...Here is a look at Floral styles...

There are generally four styles of wedding floral color design: **Traditional**, **Modern**, **Monochromatic** and **Multicolored**:

Traditional: Whites and/or Pastels are considered “traditional” color schemes.

Modern: Dark colors and citrus shades are utilized for “modern” looks.

Monochromatic: A single-colored theme comprised of different blooms.

Multicolored: Several different colors matched together to create striking combinations.

What to Look For

It is sometimes difficult to know what makes a quality wedding vendor...we've provided a guide to help you identify the key things to look for...

Inspecting the work of a wedding florist is important. The best option is previewing an actual wedding as they set it up. The next best option is photos of their designs and/or pictures of designs they can create. Here is what to look for:

- ✓ **Freshness:** The flowers in their display cases and at a previewed wedding should look fresh, not tired and old.
- ✓ **Color:** Color combinations should be vibrant, not washed out. Complementary colors should blend effectively, not clash.
- ✓ **Composition:** The sizing, color, and design should work together to enhance your wedding ceremony and reception sites, not distract from them.
- ✓ **Variety:** The types of flowers used in their examples should reflect a broad range of blooms.

- ✓ **Size:** The size of the arrangements should match the surroundings. Larger venues can support more floral designs.

New Trends

Wedding trends change and evolve with each New Year...we've provided a run-down of the newest, hottest trends in wedding floral design...

- ✓ Using berries and grasses, greens and herbs, or dark hues and citrus shades are new looks for wedding floral designs.
- ✓ Produce like strawberries, oranges, and apples are being used to create visually-striking and edible centerpieces and arrangements.
- ✓ Balloons and Fabric are exciting ways to add visual splendor to your reception site.
- ✓ Candles are romantic centerpieces as well as effective when used throughout the reception site.
- ✓ Ask if they attend any of the national trade shows-when/how many and who attends from their company. To stay current on trends and techniques, these are excellent places to get updated and learn new styles.

Floral Packages/Options

Understanding the typical wedding floral packages and options is important...Here is a look at what is usually available for weddings...

Package

- ✓ Wedding floral design packages include choices like seasonal blooms and/or exotic flowers and/or greens and herbs and/or Berries and grasses.
- ✓ Color combinations can include monochromatic, multicolored, traditional whites, traditional pastels, and/or modern.
- ✓ For outdoor ceremonies, the florist can design and decorate an altar or chuppah. For church or synagogue ceremonies, the florist can provide floral decorations for the altar or chuppah.
- ✓ Delivery of the floral designs to your ceremony and reception site is usually part of the package.

Options

Setup of the floral designs by the florist at your ceremony and reception site may be an additional charge. It's a wise investment to minimize your wedding day stress.

Pew or Chair Decorations are a classy way to adorn your ceremony site. Combined with Aisle Runners, this will give your wedding an elegant look.

Having the florist decorate your wedding cake with fresh floral accents adds another element of beauty to your cake. Talk about this option with your cake designer.

Throwing rice at the bride and groom as they leave is a past wedding tradition. In most areas however, it is not allowed due to the health risk to birds. Current options include throwing rose petals, throwing small potpourri bags, blowing bubbles, releasing doves, butterflies or balloons.

Preserving the Bridal bouquet can be done by removing the moisture from the arrangement and spraying preservatives on it.

Pressing the Bridal bouquet is done by flattening the drying flowers until they can be mounted behind glass.

Making potpourri is another way to savor your Bridal Bouquet.

Keys to Success

Here are some expert tips to make sure your wedding floral experience is the best it possibly can be...

Previous wedding floral design experience is a key element in selecting a florist. You should choose a company that has designers that have at least three years of experience in weddings.

The length of the planning period determines how involved and detailed the process is. If there is a lot of time available, then it is not advised to lock down design ideas too early as trends and styles do change. Get a basic outline of what you like, and then keep reviewing magazines for ideas. If there is not a lot of time to work with, then the process and options should stay simple.

Ask if the florist will do a sample before the wedding, for example a centerpiece or a bouquet. If a florist is willing to do this, it reflects their service and confidence level. Most will do this at no charge within reason (limit it to one sample).

Ask how many weddings on one day they accept. The companies that give the best service and creativity will only accept one to two weddings per day based on the wedding times.

Ask your florist how many suppliers they work with. They should be working with three to four different suppliers from different areas of the world so that if one supplier has challenges, the florist is not affected.

In your initial meetings, give as many details as possible, from location(s) to timelines. Plus, give them the names and phone numbers of all the other vendors involved. Bring in fabric swatches and a diagram of the table layout. Keep the florist informed of any changes.

The cake is usually decorated by the florist, so pictures/description of the cake are helpful-also the florist needs to know when the cake will be there. In general, the more information the better!

The bride's gown (fabric, style and color) dictates the style, color and design of the bouquets. The eyes need to come to the bride and then the bouquet, not the other way around. The flowers are there to complement, not overtake. There is a real "art" to creating the right balance. Bring in samples of your wedding colors along with a swatch of your wedding gown fabric to the florist when you meet to pick out flowers.

The bride's bouquet should create a visual balance between the couple. The bouquet can make the bride look smaller or taller. For example, if the bride is petite, her bouquet needs to be petite with a few trails of ivy to give her height. She would actually look even smaller carrying a large lavish bouquet. A bride that wants to look a little thinner should go with a trailing bouquet. If the bride is taller than the groom then her bouquet can actually help give balance by being more rounded.

Meeting with your florist more than once is a necessity. The number of times to meet depends on the length of the planning period. The average number of times to sit down with your florist is four. Between the initial meeting and day of the wedding, there needs to be a real sense of trust created.

The location and style of the wedding has a big effect on the arrangements. If the ceremony is outdoors, the style will be less formal with maybe lots of natural elements brought in.

Typically, an "altar" or "chuppah" is created by the florist.

In case the weather is bad, it's important to know which back up area will be used so that the floral arrangements will also complement that setting, or at least be adjusted accordingly.

If the wedding is at a church or synagogue, the style will probably be more formal.

Flowers can give the setting a simple, intimate ambiance, or they can create a lavish feeling.

If the ceremony is at a church, they usually have specific rules that need to be respected. Plus, there are typically beautiful decorations at the church, so the flowers need to add to that and not detract. If there are beautiful pews, then draw attention to those with floral accents. Otherwise, focus on altar if there are chairs. Check with your ceremony site to make certain that there aren't any floral restrictions. It is also a good idea to check with your reception site as well.

If the ceremony and/or reception is a small area, then the arrangements should be smaller; if it is a large area, the flowers can actually create more of a private feel. The reception table layouts and arrangements can use flowers to create space or take away space.

With consideration to budget, determine what the most important part of the day is, the ceremony or the reception. The ceremony is always important, but it is a much shorter time, so if budget is a concern, more priority may be given to the bouquets, as they will be in every picture. Then, put the focus on centerpieces or arrangements at the reception. Delivery is usually included in your floral design package. Sometimes the venue setup service is included as well. If it's not, then it is a good idea to spend a little more and have the florist place the arrangements on-location. It will save you time, effort, and the headaches of worrying about decorating each location.

Use candles with your arrangements to add to the romantic mood of your reception. If you're using potted trees, adorn them with white twinkle lights to add to the ambience.

Check in advance of your wedding day with your florist if you wish to have your bridal bouquet preserved. Some florists don't offer that service but can refer you to a preservation specialist.

Timeliness is key to preserving your bouquet once your wedding day has passed, so make sure a trusted friend or family takes your bouquet to them while you're on your Honeymoon.

If budget is a concern, don't let a florist's reputation intimidate you. A good company will take care of you no matter what your budget. You will definitely know the difference on the day when breathtaking arrangements and bouquets are created that last all day! The risk of the lower-end florist is quality of flowers and workmanship. Flowers won't last as well and probably won't be stunning. A quality florist can make lots of recommendations to accommodate a smaller budget.

Florist Questions

When you meet with your prospective wedding florist, you'll want to ask all the right questions...we've provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with them about your wedding. Their responses, as well as their attitude, will speak volumes about whether you'll want to include them in your "Dream Team"...

1. How much wedding floral design experience does the florist have? We recommend that the designers have at least three years of wedding experience.

2. What is the design philosophy of the florist? Traditional? Minimal? Elegant? Modern? Do the florist's views match your own ideas?

3. Do the designers in the shop attend any national conferences or trade shows? When was the last one they attended? We recommend choosing a florist that frequents national trade shows, as that keeps the designers up on new trends.

4. Does the style of the florist and overall look of the shop fit your style?

5. Can you see live examples or photographs of past work? Are they pictures of actual works or representative of what they can do?

6. Can you go to an actual wedding that they will be setting up? We highly recommend this, it is an excellent way to preview your florist at work and see the designs they have created.

7. How large is the staff and who will work on your wedding? We recommend that due to the complexity of the average wedding, that there be at least three designers who prepare your flowers. Will the floral designer you're speaking with actually create the arrangements?

8. What flowers will be in season on your wedding day? What are some less expensive alternatives to flowers beyond your price range?

9. How many suppliers does the florist work with? We recommend that a florist have relationships with at least three to four suppliers from different regions in case of weather or political challenges.

10. What are the most popular floral trends right now? Why do they work or not work? What's the most progressive concept the florist has recently brought to a design project?

11. Do they offer balloon service?

12. If your wedding is during the summer, which flowers are least likely to wilt in hot weather? What are some hot weather tips?

13. What is the florist's approach to decorating an outdoor event vs. indoor?

14. Has the florist done weddings at your ceremony and/or reception sites before? If so, they may have pictures of arrangements done at your site. They should know which sizes, shapes, and colors already work in that space.

15. Will the florist deliver flowers for your wedding or spend time at the site, setting up, pinning on corsages/boutonnieres, and making sure everything is in order?

16. On your wedding day and weekend is the florist doing any other weddings? How many? We recommend that in order to receive the best possible service that the florist limits their day to two weddings, based on timings.

17. Are rental items like vases, potted plants, arches, trellises, candelabras, and urns available through the florist or must you contact a rental company?

18. Does the florist preserve bouquets? It may be necessary to make an appointment before your wedding in order for your bouquet to be preserved directly afterward.

19. In general, assess the attitude of the florist, are they excited about your wedding dreams? Are they eager to work with you within your budget? Are they helpful by offering ideas and suggestions?

Things to Avoid

Knowing the pitfalls and traps ahead of time can help save you money, time, and your sanity...Here's a list of things to avoid when planning your wedding florals...

- ✓ If budget is a consideration, out of season flowers are more expensive per stem than in season varieties.
- ✓ Traditional days like Valentine's Day and Mother's Day cause the per stem price of roses to be higher than other times of the year. If your wedding is scheduled on or near these holidays, be aware of this when planning your wedding budget and choosing the type of flowers to have in your arrangements.
- ✓ Determine if the florist has good quality suppliers. You can do this by purchasing flowers from them a couple of times. Notice the consistency of what they have in their displays. If they have a wide range of quality flowers one day, but not another, it might mean a problem with the supplier. Also, notice how well the flowers last after you purchase them.
- ✓ Be aware of quotes that are given based on the number of certain flowers that will be used per bouquet or arrangement. What is more important is how stunning the creation is, not the number of flowers. On the actual day, the delivery may include larger or smaller flowers, so counts need to be adjusted. What is most important is not the number, but the creation. This is why it is so important to go with a top-of-the-line florist-- they will create, not count.
- ✓ Certain churches, synagogues, temples, and private facilities restrict or do not allow floral designs. It is imperative to make certain what, if any, restrictions may need to be addressed before arriving on-site.
- ✓ Choosing of the flowers can be tricky. Some brides want to use flowers that are not designed for arrangements. Sometimes a bride will request flowers that she grew up with, but are not standard in floral arrangements. These may not hold up for the whole day and she needs to understand that risk.
- ✓ If the ceremony is outdoors, the time of year and typical temperature is an important factor for selecting flowers since excessive heat is a real challenge. If you're getting married in a hot and/or humid climate, check with your florist for the best flowers for those conditions. Certain blooms are very susceptible to heat or humidity and will wilt.
- ✓ Weather is the greatest concern for outdoor weddings and receptions. It is vital to have a contingency plan in place that can serve as a backup for the wedding ceremony and reception. If the weather looks threatening, don't compromise the guests' comfort in order to stay with your original plan. Flexibility is key!

References

Checking the reputation, credentials, and service record of a prospective wedding florist is important before you hire them...

There are several resources available to check the references of a particular wedding florist:

- ✓ Family and friends who have recently been married.
- ✓ Better Business Bureau (B.B.B.).

- ✓ Local Resorts/Country Clubs.
- ✓ Other local wedding vendors.
- ✓ Florist's past wedding clients

Florist Contract/Payment

Knowing what to include in a contract with a wedding florist is important...we've created a list of important points to consider...

Contract

- Name and contact information for you and the florist.
- Date, exact times, and locations of your ceremony and reception.
- Itemized list of every flower arrangement, including: Names, colors, and approximate amounts of each flower.
- Substitute flowers if certain types are unavailable including types that are unacceptable to you.
- List of additional items to be used by the florist including: Centerpiece vases, trellis, etc.).
- Arrival times and setup time required at ceremony and reception locations.
- Date and location where bouquets and boutonnieres should be delivered.
- Name of location floral supervisor for your wedding day.
- Total cost, itemized if possible.
- Deposit amount due.
- Balance and balance due date.
- Cancellation and refund policy.
- Florist's signature
- Your signatures.

Payment

Most wedding florists require half payment before your wedding day. Some will ask for a 50% deposit upon booking and the remaining 50% due one week prior to the wedding when table numbers are confirmed.

Backup Plans

Having a "Plan B" is always a good idea when it comes to planning your wedding...Here's a look at some ways to cover your bases...

It is important to have contingency plans in place for such emergencies as a last-minute change of venue(s), inclement weather, backup flowers and backup florist.

Backup Location: Have a secondary location standing by for your wedding in case of weather or disaster. Inform your florist what that alternate location is.

Backup Flowers: In case your special and/or exotic flowers cannot be acquired, your florist should discuss a second and third choice flower with you.

Backup Florist: In case of emergency you should keep the names and numbers of other florists you liked.

Contract Tip: Be sure to address the contingency plans in your written contract.

Checklists

Styles

- Select Traditional Coloring
- Select Modern Coloring
- Select Monochromatic Coloring
- Select Multicolored Coloring

Keys to Success

- Check Experience
- Assess Planning Length
- Request Sample
- Weddings Per Day
- Wedding Details
- Gown Fabric Swatch
- Bouquet Size
- Multiple Meetings
- Outdoor Ceremony
- Church or Synagogue Ceremony
- Check Floral Restrictions
- Arrangement Size
- Assign Budget Priority
- Confirm Delivery Package
- Use Candles
- Bouquet Preservation
- Bring Color Samples
- Bring Gown Swatch
- Check Delivery and Setup
- Use Hot Weather Flowers
- Add Candles
- Add Twinkle Lights
- Preserve Bouquet

Timeline

- Interview Florists
- Select Florist
- Choose Flowers
- Confirm Date & Time
- Confirm Boutonniere Totals
- Confirm Corsage Totals
- Confirm Arrangement Totals
- Assign Family Member
- Make Tossing Bouquet

- Preserve Bouquet
- Press Bouquet

What to Look For

- Freshness
- Color
- Composition
- Variety
- Size

Things to Avoid

- Out-of-Season Flowers
- In-Season Flowers
- Be Aware of Higher Pricing due to
- Holidays
- Check Venue Restrictions
- Check Weather

Contract/Payment

- Review Contract
- Revise Contract
- Sign Contract
- Pay Deposit
- Pay Balance As Specified

Backup Plans

- Backup Location
- Select Backup Flowers
- Backup Florist

Packages/Options

References

- Family References
- Friend References
- Check BBB/Visit BBB online
- Check with Resorts and Country Clubs
- Check with Other Vendors

Other Details

- Choose Floral Package
- Choose Color Combinations
- Create/Decorate Altar
- Create/Decorate Chuppah
- Confirm Delivery Package
- Add Location Setup Package
- Pew Decorations
- Decorate Cake
- Flower Petals for Tossing
- Bubbles
- Dove Release

Special Items for Release

- Balloons

- Doves
- Butterflies

Floral Style

- Tightly Arranged
- Natural-look
- Minimalist
- Elaborate
- Subtle
- Striking

Colors

- Traditional (whites and/or pastels)
- Modern (dark hues and/or citrus shades)

Flowers

- Seasonal
- Local
- Exotic
- Greens & Herbs
- Berries & Grasses

Floral Needs

- Bridal Bouquet
- Tossing Bouquet
- Bridesmaids' Bouquets
- Flower Girl's Flowers
- Corsages for Mothers and Grandmothers
- Groom's Boutonniere
- Boutonnieres for Groomsmen/Ushers/Fathers/Grandfathers
- Altar Arrangements and/or Flower-covered Arch or Chuppah
- Aisle Runner Rose Petals
- Rose Petals for tossing
- Reception Table Centerpieces
- Reception Cake Table Flowers
- Doorway Decorations
- Aisle Runner
- Pew or Chair Decorations
- Fabric
- Furniture
- Lighting

This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.