



Notes: How To Create A Vegetative Style Vase Arrangement

**Rittners Floral School
Boston, Ma.**



Dr Steve--Action Shot!!..."You're going to love this one!!!!!!!"

Hi, Welcome to The Rittners School of Floral Design in Boston. As you can see from the photo I am very excited to welcome you to this distance education workshop "How to Create A Vegetative Style Vase Arrangement." I think you'll really enjoy this lesson!

This arrangement is fun to do and people tend to be fascinated with it. It also looks more complicated than it actually is!

I think you will enjoy learning this one. I also believe that you will find this floral designing technique one that will really help you expand the kinds of things you can make.

Once again be prepared to get bragging rights when you show this one to family and friends! (Remember to tell them you learned it here at Rittners Floral School, Boston.)

What Exactly Is A Vegetative Floral Design?

Good question. Even floral designers are sometimes confused as to what it means. Vegetative floral designing is part of a genre of arranging that is supposed to simulate “natural growth.” Of course natural growth can mean a variety of things. The term “landscape style” is often used interchangeably with “vegetative style.” I like to consider a landscape design as something that is a bit more planned and curated like a park, whereas **“vegetative” is something that feels less planned, and has just grown a lot wilder--more like nature untamed!**



Landscape-‘natural growth’ type arrangement that feels more curated.



Vegetative-‘natural growth’ type arrangement that feels less controlled and wilder.



This look is an interesting one. I have found that people react in very different ways to this style.

It is not for everyone. Some find the “messiness” to be disturbing.

There are others who embrace this untended natural look with great enthusiasm.

I say, simply add it to your bag of floral design tricks dispassionately without any emotion. If it is something that can be marketed and encourages floral use without harm then it is good.

It is another option in your designing that can be used when desired.

Vegetative Floral Design-- Should We Follow Strict or More Loosely Defined Interpretations?



Vegetative-'natural growth' type arrangement that feels less controlled and a bit wilder.

If “vegetative” represents an unplanned and a wilder form of natural growth it would make sense that vegetative arrangements should ideally be created using botanicals that are easily found together in nature.

In other words what botanicals are found at a given time of year, in a given region, that tend to co-exist well next to each other? There are some designers who feel this should be a defining part of vegetative.

I tend to differ with that strict interpretation. It makes gathering “compatible” florals challenging if not nearly impossible. And most viewers wouldn't even care. **I would rather stress the wilder “look” of this kind of arrangement and not overly obsess about the accuracy of whether or not the contents grow in the exact same place at the exact same time.**

Most people casually looking at this kind of design focus on the “look” -- not on the accuracy of what flowers may grow in the same place. If they are “next door neighbors” great, if not, the design still looks just fine. This more loosely defined interpretation makes creating these designs, more easily achieved, and more practical.

Contents That You Will Need To Create This Arrangement:



- °A Container
- °Foam
- °Anchor pins
- °Larkspur (approx half bunch)
- °Hydrangea (6-10 stems divided between several different varieties.)
- °Sunflowers (5 stems)
- °Roses (5-6 stems. Several varieties)
- °Lily (1-2 stems)
- °Some Branches (eg. curly willow) and possibly some vines.
- °Baker Fern

The contents are approximate depending upon the size of your container, what materials are available to you, their level of development, how large and dense you like your design, and your own specific tastes.

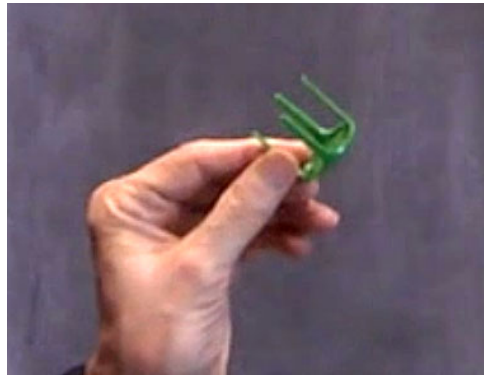
Start With Your Container:



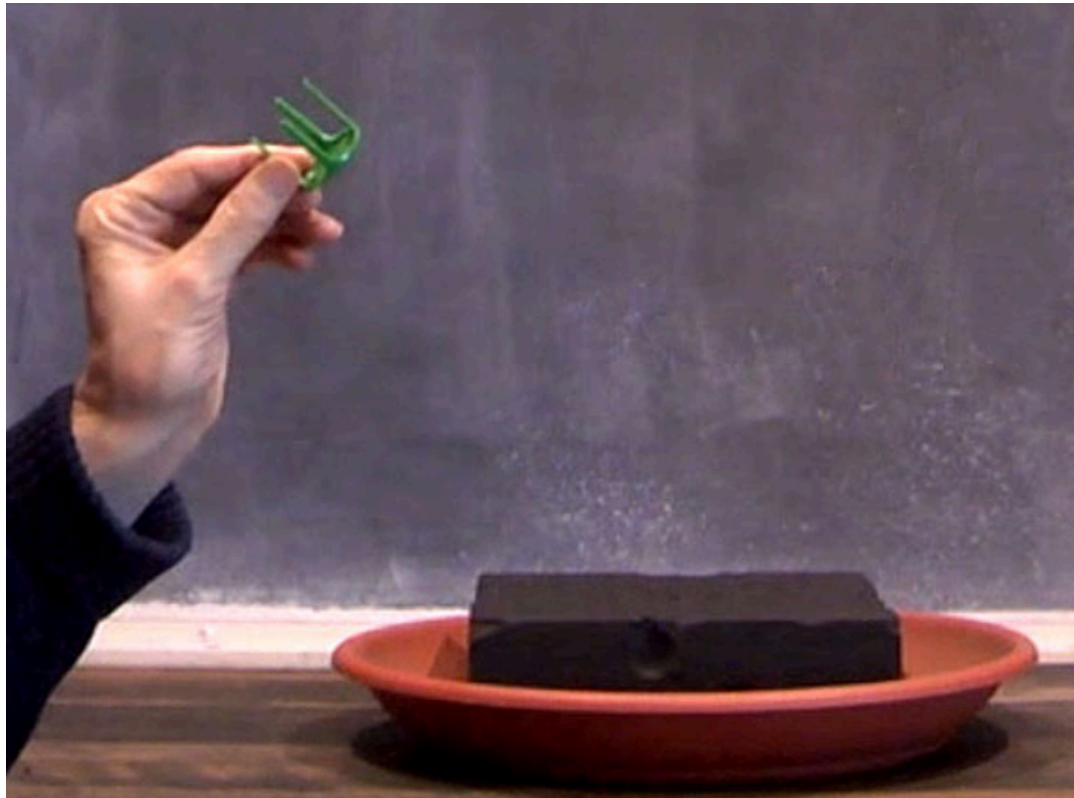
We could use many different containers for this arrangement. Vegetative and landscape designs usually are more easily constructed in containers that allow at least a block or two of saturated foam to be placed.



We do have a unique problem with a very shallow container. How do we get the foam to stay without moving around? It is not easy to “wedge your foam” in place. Even using florist tape without overdoing it, could still allow your foam to move around. Fortunately there is a little invention that can help. It’s called an anchor pin.



Anchor pins look like a little table turned upside down. The “legs” of the little table can hold your foam in place. They are efficient, and relatively inexpensive.



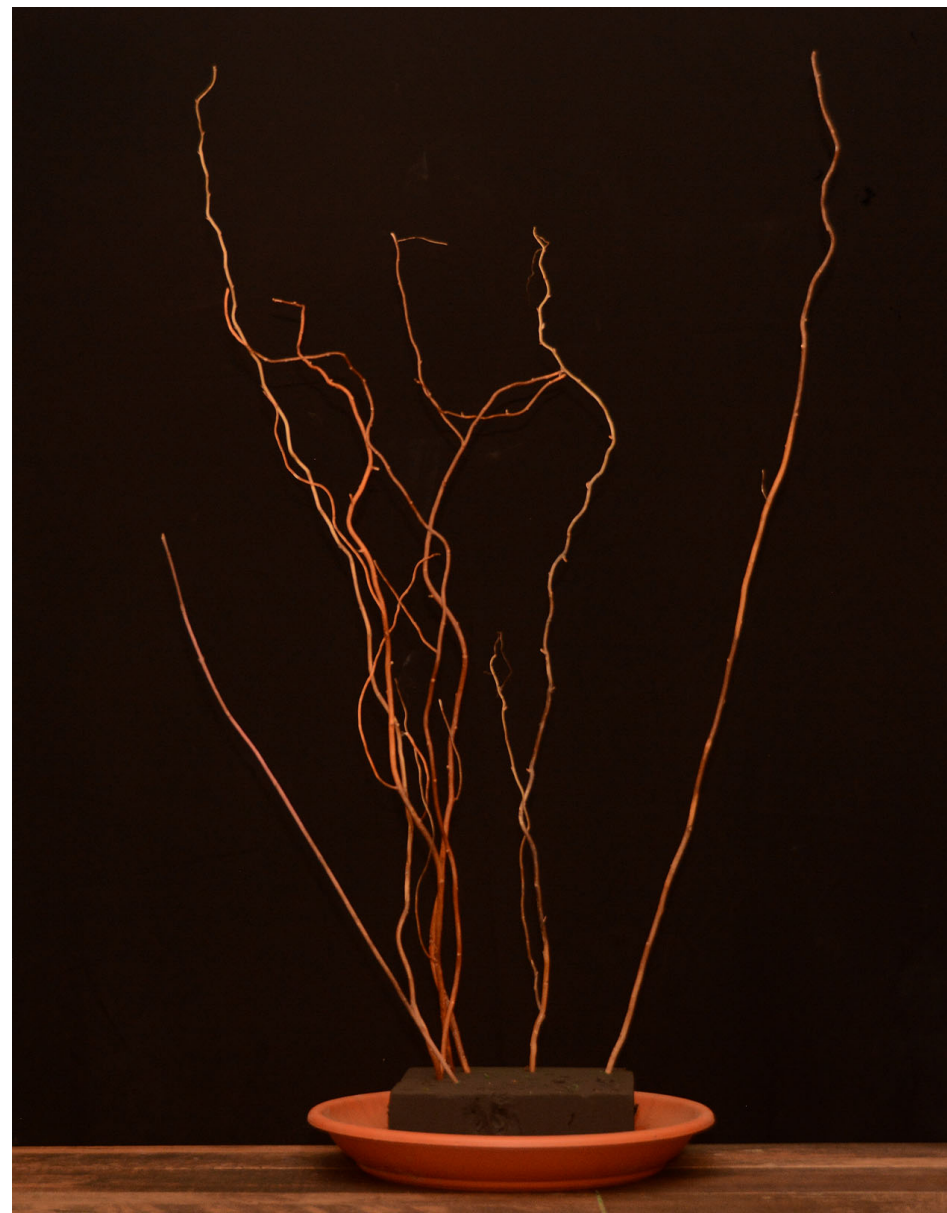
Glue the anchor pin to the base. You can use either hot or cold glues. You can also use sticky florist clay to hold them on the base with the “feet” upright. Impale your foam on top of the anchor pin(s).

In this arrangement I used florist clay to attach two anchor pins to the base for each of the two blocks of foam. (Four anchor pins total.)



Vegetative designs can be one sided or viewed all the way around. They are more easily made one sided with a front and back side. We will make ours one sided.

Let's start at the left back side of the arrangement. Place some branches like curly willow in a cluster and place additional pieces to the right as shown.





This is Hydrangea Paniculata Tardiva. It is a lovely flower and fills space nicely.

Alternatively we could use any variety of hydrangea, lilies, lilacs (if available) or any of a variety of linear flowers over on the right side of the design.



Add two or three pieces of larkspur in front of the curly willow and hydrangea.





Add a stem of lily to the left of the design and perhaps another branch or two.

I tend to remove the pollen from lilies used in arrangements. It may not be strictly compatible with the concept of untamed natural growth but it does allow cleaner maintenance.

Notice the way this is developing. A cluster of three sunflowers faces slightly differing directions.

If you have been looking at these pictures carefully you'll note that some of the foliage is changing color or curling up as foliage on flowers tends to do as it ages. In a typical vase arrangement I might trim some of that foliage.

In an arrangement based on natural growth I would be less concerned about foliage that seems to be "aging." If this is simulating a small section of nature it is less likely that an "imperfect" leaf would be trimmed.

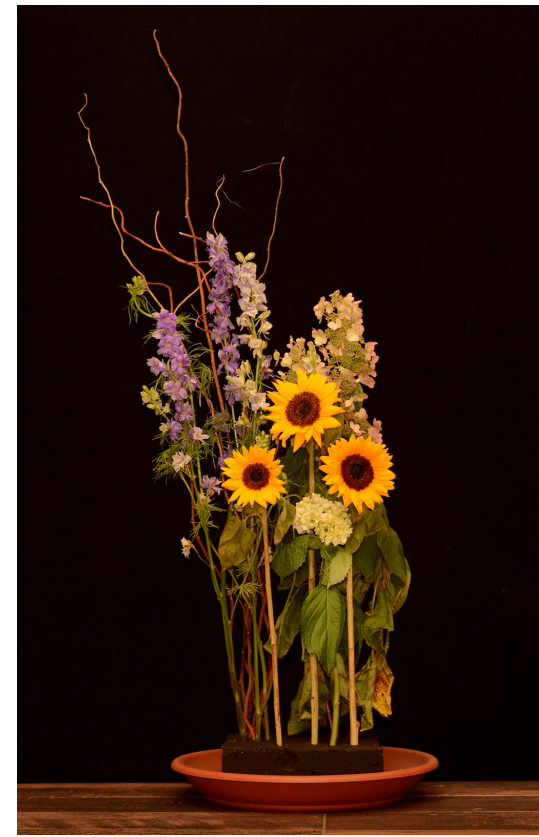




Let's place another little cluster of flowers slightly lower than the sunflowers. I am using a small mint green variety of hydrangea.

For comparison--the landscape look, below feels more "controlled."

The vegetative design to the left has flowers flaying out every which way. Similar content. Different "feel."



Now add a grouping of roses over to the left. True to form as a slice of nature that has not been tended, we can angle these flowers loosely, in various directions.





Two pink roses are placed right in the middle of all the yellow flowers again reinforcing the feeling of botanicals growing rather wildly without being controlled.



Continue to add flowers towards the front of the arrangement with additional larkspur. We could stop at this point... But wait.....There's more!!!!





Sometimes in my yard, flowers seem to magically go astray and move around...

We can do the same thing here..... First with a lily that has appeared towards the bottom left.

And then with a couple of sunflowers that seem to have found their way down to the bottom right of the arrangement.....

Once again we could consider the arrangement to be completed. But let's play with it just a little more....





We could add some pieces of stemming at the bottom of the arrangement.



A little baker fern at the bottom of the design, as well as some vine/branchy stuff woven through the center also reinforce the nature gone wild kind of feeling.....

While I have not added it here, how about considering an artificial bird or butterflies worked here and there through the arrangement.

Uses For This Arrangement



This design could be used at just about any time through the year. If you are living in an area with nasty winters, it feels like you've transported lovely outdoor scenery into your home....

As presented here the design is large. It could work well in an entry area, a reception area at a business or a bay window.

It could be used in public areas such as on a table across from elevator doors.

It could be placed on a larger dresser or side table.

It could be scaled smaller, although I believe it is especially effective as a larger piece.

Although it is made with a front and a back here, it could be made to be viewed on both sides.

It also could be placed in a boat shape or rectangular base, and extended farther to the left or to the right....

Some Questions To Consider:

- 1. What genre of design does the “vegetative arrangement” belong to?**
- 2. What is the difference between a landscape arrangement and a vegetative arrangement?**
- 3. Why would selecting flowers that are all available at the same time of year in the same region be important in a vegetative arrangement?**
- 4. Dr. Steve feels that the variables mentioned in the 3rd question are critical to the success of a vegetative flower arrangement. True or false and why?**
- 5. Vegetative Arrangements are universally loved by one and all. True or false and why?**
- 6. A tall vase with a diameter of around six inches would be the best container for a vegetative design. True or false and why?**
- 7. What is a good way to attach foam to a flat dish container?**
- 8. Do you think a pinholder would also be a good choice to attach foam to a flat base? Why? Why not?**
- 9. Landscape designs tend to be wilder looking arrangements than vegetative designs. True or false and why?**
- 10. Why would a vegetative arrangement be particularly effective in the winter?**
- 11. What are some places where a vegetative arrangement could be placed?**

Vegetative design is a design style that is based on “natural growth.” It is a more of a wild, untamed look than an ordered and curated one.

It is another amazing technique/approach that will impress people and increase your floral designing options.

Please remember to add some water to the design every couple of days. The flowers (and the foam) like that!

We hope you enjoyed this online lesson. We certainly enjoyed presenting it to you.



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At Rittners Floral School in Boston we provide floral design instruction that includes a wide range of different styles and techniques.

Folks from all over the US as well as abroad, learn floral art skills from Rittners Floral School because we are great floral designers, and just as importantly because, as you can see, we are outstanding teachers!!