

Roses help make a personal fashion statement

Our world is surrounded by the sounds and scenes of spring and the ushering in of the wedding season.

Bells ring, priests pray, clerks pronounce the sanction of the state, vows are exchanged, mothers weep, choirs sing, rice is thrown, wine drunk, tea sipped, cake eaten—and men and women are united in marriage. Like birth and death, this universal symphony is ceaseless.

The origin of the wedding lies too far in the past to be traced. As a ceremony it

has been known and celebrated in all societies for hundreds of years. It is a fundamental experience in the life of mankind, formalizing the partnership of male and female and the family as an institution.

Weddings have evolved in different forms, each elaborated with specific rites, symbols and customs. Many early wedding traditions have survived to our time, although we may have no knowledge of their original purpose and meaning.

When wedding preparations are in the air, so many plans must be made: Ordering the rings, choosing special foods and cakes for the reception, selecting just the right dress and veil for the bride and, most importantly, picking the perfect flowers. The fragrant beauty of flowers have symbolized love and romance dating back to ancient Greece and Rome.

During Greek nuptial ceremonies, flowers were strewn along the path of the newlyweds as a sign of their friends' good wishes.

History dictated that orange blossoms were used as the primary flower in a "good luck headdress" for the bride. Their association with good fortune is thought to have come from the legend of Jupiter, King of the Gods, who presented Juno with a golden apple on his wedding day.

In Rome, hundreds of roses were twined with myrtle into bridal garlands. Roses elegantly signified beauty, purity and innocence. As this ancient Roman tradition was carried on throughout the years, the classic combination of roses and other blooming flowers soon became an established wedding floral trademark.

Ancient wedding customs featuring rose arrangements were revived during the Elizabethan age. The traditions that continue in American weddings today are largely those preserved by Elizabethan custom.

The Elizabethan family played a big part in the celebration. Before the bride awoke, the servants and family prepared the house. They were up all night scrubbing, dusting and cooking—a sweet scent was to pervade the entire home. Rosemary and roses were placed in all the rooms and corridors, forming a soft carpet of blossoms.

Meanwhile, at the groom's house, his men were busy adorning him with rosettes and ribbon streamers in the colors chosen by the bride. They also trimmed his beard and hair.

The groom looked almost as splendid as the bride; Elizabethan male finery had

yet to be sombered by Puritan plainness.

The significance of flowers in today's wedding plans date back to Elizabethan times. Flowers for the contemporary bride are still a high priority and make as unique a fashion statement as her wedding dress.

Roses, the perennial favorite for wedding flowers, are vivid, fragrant, and explode with a brilliant splash of color.

Matching up the rainbow of rose colors and "definitions" with a Victorian traditional or modern bridal color scheme is one of the most delightful aspects of wedding planning.

How to mix and match

To get your thoughts on the right track, *Roses Inc.*, fresh-cut rose growers in the United States and Canada, provide these suggestions for some of this spring's more popular wedding color themes:

Peach dresses—Select white roses, which stand for reverence, humility, innocence and purity—perfect thoughts for young, first-time brides.

Yellow roses, which signify joy and gladness, are another good option.

Pink dresses—Choose from the many shades of pink roses, which symbolize grace and gentility.

Also available are blends of white and pink, combined in a single bloom.

Lavender dresses—White or pink roses go well with this often difficult to coordinate color.

Another very dramatic selection would be red roses, which denote respect, courage and "I love you," or red and white roses, which mean unity.

Green dresses—For holiday weddings, choose red roses. Otherwise, coral or orange roses, "Sonia" which suggest enthusiasm and desire, will set off a green dress.

Red dresses—Red gowns are easy to work with. Choose white roses or use of the many different shades of red.

When talking with your florist, however, don't just say, "red." Instead, bring

along a swatch of the dress material, and make sure the florist has plenty of time to locate just the right rose shade.

By color-coordinating properly, you won't end up with orange-red dresses and blue-red roses!

Yellow dresses—Roses also come in a wide variety of yellow and gold shades. For fall weddings, you may want to consider orange and lavender.

What about the bride's dress? These days, anything goes. *Roses Inc.* says that white roses are the most used and logical choice.

Many brides' magazines suggest mixing all white blossoms. All white bouquets, updated with a sprinkling of pearls, a dollop of lace and streaming ribbons, make a statement that never goes out of style.



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