Lesson B2–9

Designing Sympathy Arrangements

Unit B. Floriculture

Problem Area 2. Floral Design

Lesson 9. Designing Sympathy Arrangements

New Mexico Content Standard:

Pathway Strand: Plant Systems

Standard: IV: Exercise elements of design to enhance an environment (e.g., floral, forest, landscape, farm).

Benchmark: IV-A: Apply basic design elements and principles to create a design using plants.

Performance Standard: 2. Apply elements of design (e.g., line, form, texture, color). 3. Incorporate principles of design (e.g., space, scale, proportion, order). 6. Select plant(s) for design.

Student Learning Objectives. Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Explain the importance of sympathy flowers.
2. Identify and describe typical sympathy pieces.
**List of Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

**Recommended Resources.** One of the following resources should be selected to accompany the lesson:


**Other Resources.** The following resources will be useful to students and teachers:


**List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- Writing surface
- Overhead projector
- Transparencies from attached masters
- Copies of student lab sheets

**Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- Casket saddle
- Casket inset piece
- Casket spray
- Easel
- Easel spray
- Fireside basket
- Flat sprays
- Full couch
- Full-couch casket spray
- Full-couch lid spray
- Half couch
- Half-couch casket spray
- Paper-maché
- Set pieces

**Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

*Hold a discussion with students about the last funeral they attended and what types of arrangements were present. This will lead to further discussion of why flowers are sent as part of the sympathy process.*
Objective 1: Explain the importance of sympathy flowers.

Anticipated Problem: Why is it important to have flowers at the funeral?

I. Flowers have been used in honoring the dead since ancient Egyptian times. Flowers are sent to the funeral to honor the deceased and comfort the family in their time of grief. Flowers add warmth, vitality, and a soft appearance to what is otherwise an uncomfortable atmosphere. The family will select flowers that will be placed on the casket or nearby in honor of the deceased.

Hold a discussion as to why flower arrangements are present at a funeral home; the students need to have a clear understanding as to the sociology involved in this tradition.

Objective 2: Identify and describe typical sympathy pieces.

Anticipated Problem: What types of sympathy floral designs and accessories exist?

II. The family will order the casket spray, usually a casket inset and possibly matching arrangements. A casket spray is a floral arrangement that is placed on the top of a casket during the funeral service. There are a variety of types of casket sprays. The family will determine the style, depending on the type of visitation and funeral that is to be held.

A. A full-couch casket spray is a large arrangement placed in the center of a closed full couch casket. A full couch is a casket with a one-piece lid, which may be open or closed. These arrangements are usually four to five feet wide, based on a casket typically being about six feet long.

B. A full-couch lid spray is a large casket piece placed in the center of the open lid of a full couch. This arrangement is usually placed on a stand that is hidden by the lid. In some funeral homes, there is a bracket on the wall that holds this design piece in place.

C. A half-couch casket spray is a floral piece that is placed on the right side of a half couch. A half couch has a two-piece lid; the head (the left side) of the half couch is open during the visitation. This arrangement is usually 3 to 3.5 feet wide.

1. Casket sprays are made from the following materials:
   a. The foundation for all casket sprays is a mechanic called a casket saddle. A casket saddle is a container with a rounded base which fits the curving contour of a casket lid. The saddles are usually made of molded plastic and are available in many sizes and shapes. The flowers and foliage of the casket spray should cover the entire saddle.

   b. Basic shapes of casket sprays are oval, crescent, and triangular. It is important to watch the height (12 to 14 inches) of sprays because the flowers need to be trans-
Ported in a hearse or van by the funeral director. Script denoting the relationship of the deceased is often attached to ribbon streamers from the bow.

D. A **casket inset piece** is a small design to be placed in the casket lid, usually designated from children or grandchildren. Often these pieces are created in the form of a corsage and attached to a satin pillow, heart or a cross. Another example of a casket inset is a floral rosary often created for Catholic funerals. This item is draped and secured to the fabric in the lid of the casket.

E. Arrangements for funerals are often referred to as sympathy tributes. They come in various shapes but are often oval, fan, or triangular, and are usually symmetrical in design. The most common container for these designs is made of **paper-maché**, a sturdy, molded, water-holding, paper-like material available in various shapes and sizes.

F. Baskets may be used to create sympathy tributes as well. A **fireside basket** is a curved open basket with a handle. It may be created as a centerpiece or a one-sided arrangement, and is often placed on the floor under or near the casket.

G. Easel designs are created to be suspended from an **easel**, which is a tripod stand for holding such arrangements. An **easel spray** also called standing spray is a one-sided flower arrangement placed on an easel. Easel sprays are often symmetrical or asymmetrical, using the radiating oval, vertical, triangular, tear drop, or diamond styles of design. Common mechanics used in these designs are spray bars or plastic cages, which are secured to the easel for display and delivery. In some regions of the country, **flat sprays**, triangular, one-sided sprays, which may be hand-tied like a wedding arm bouquet are popular.

H. **Set pieces** are easel designs that are designed as special shapes, such as wreaths, crosses, hearts, pillows or organizational emblems. These pieces can be partially covered in ribbon with a small arrangement placed into the design, or they may be totally created from foliage and flowers. The flowers are either glued into place or attached to picks that are inserted into a hard foam base.

I. Attaching a sympathy card and delivery are the final steps for the florist. The card needs to identify the deceased, the delivery location, and the sender. The florist will often keep obituary notices to help remember times and locations of funeral services. Deliveries are usually made in the rear of a funeral home. Once the pieces are left at the funeral home, the funeral director will place them in the casket area.

The transparencies included in this lesson (TM: B2–9A through TM: B2–9E) form the basis for a discussion of the types of arrangements that might be seen at a funeral. Because funeral arrangements are expensive, it will be nearly impossible to have each student create every piece. However, in an advanced floral design class, the instructor might have students work in groups to create several of the pieces one might find at a funeral (casket spray, inset piece, matching family arrangements, etc.). LS: B2–9A and LS: B2–9B will give students practice in creating two types of sympathy arrangements.

**Review/Summary.** Sympathy arrangements are important to the floral industry because they generate considerable sales for florists. Having the ability to offer a variety of types of sympathy pieces is key for a florist. Students should have an understanding of casket piece designs and
how to use casket saddles, the various inset pieces, funeral arrangements, easel designs, and set pieces.

**Application.** It would be a benefit for the students if a florist and a funeral director could address this topic at the conclusion of covering the information in class. Many education departments have learned that partnering with a funeral home is a good way to obtain flowers because families sometimes have no desire to take all of the flowers home. This would allow for the opportunity to use actual arrangements when discussing this topic or when recreating arrangements that are used in a lab activity.


**Evaluation.** There are several ways to evaluate the students on the material covered in this lesson. There is an evaluation tool included with each of the labs. An oral questioning period could be conducted by the teacher to test the students to see if they met the objectives. A small written quiz is also attached.

**Answers to Sample Test:**

**Part One: Matching**

1=f, 2=g, 3=h, 4=b, 5=c, 6=a, 7=i, 8=e, 9=d, 10=j

**Part Two: Completion**

1. Family
2. Casket
3. Full
4. Saddle
5. Streamer
6. Pillow
7. Casket
8. Standing
9. Hard foam
10. Glued
11. Back or Rear
12. Sympathy card

**Part Three: Short Answer**

Oval
Fan
Triangular
Lesson B2–9: Designing Sympathy Arrangements

Part One: Matching

Instructions. Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

- a. casket inset piece
- b. casket spray
- c. casket saddle
- d. easels
- e. easel spray
- f. full-couch casket spray
- g. full-couch lid spray
- h. half-couch casket spray
- i. paper-maché
- j. set pieces

_____ 1. A large arrangement placed in the center of a closed full couch casket.
_____ 2. A large casket piece placed in the center of the open lid of a full couch.
_____ 3. A floral piece that is placed on the right side of a half couch.
_____ 4. A floral arrangement that is placed on the top of a casket during the funeral service.
_____ 5. A container with a rounded base which fits the curving contour of a casket lid.
_____ 6. A small design placed in the casket lid usually presented by children or grandchildren.
_____ 7. Sturdy, molded, water-holding, paper-like containers for sympathy pieces.
_____ 8. A one-sided flower arrangement placed on a tripod.
_____ 9. Tripod stands for holding arrangements.
_____ 10. Easel designs in special shapes, such as wreaths, crosses, hearts, pillows, or organizational emblems.

Part Two: Completion

Instructions. Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. Sympathy flowers are sent by the ____________ to honor the deceased.
2. The family traditionally picks the ______________ spray and selects the style based on the type of casket.
3. If the casket is to remain closed a __________ couch casket spray is the preferred style.
4. The foundation of a casket spray is the casket ________________.
5. Relationship script of the deceased is often found on a ________________ from the bow attached to the casket spray.
6. The casket inset piece is often attached to a silk ________________.
7. Fireside baskets are usually placed under or in front of the ________________.
8. Easel sprays are also called ________________ sprays.
9. A set piece is usually created on a ________________ base.
10. Flowers are sometimes ________________ onto a set piece base.
11. Deliveries are usually made at the ________________ of the funeral home.
12. Each sympathy arrangement should have a ____________ attached to it.

**Part Three: Short Answer**

*Instructions.* Provide information to answer the following questions.

Name three common shapes of arrangements found at a funeral

1.

2.

3.
CASKET SPRAYS

Half Couch Casket Spray

Casket Inset Piece

Full Couch Lid Spray

Open Full Couch Casket Spray

Full Couch Casket Spray

(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)
WREATH SET PIECE
FLOWER PLACEMENT

(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)
HEART SET PIECES

(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)
EXAMPLES OF SYMPATHY CARDS
PATTERN AND LENGTHS OF FLOWERS FOR A DOUBLE SPRAY
Lab Sheet

Creating a Casket Spray

**Equipment**

- Floral design equipment
- Casket saddle
- Floral foam
- Greens
- Flowers with fairly long stems
- #40 ribbon

**Instructions**

1. Position the bricks of floral foam to fit the casket saddle, moisten and securely attach to saddle, using the accompanying supports or by taping.

2. Green up the outline of the design—oval, crescent, or triangular shape. Use a combination of greens to form the basic framework. Softer greens can be used to add softness and interest.

3. Add flowers to form the width and contour placements. Some flowers should be angled toward the back of the design because some casket sprays will be viewed from the back.

4. Add the center of interest flowers, such as fully open or unique ones.

5. Place the bow in the central or slightly off center position.

6. Place additional mass or form flowers in a radiating pattern to fill in the desired outline.

7. Add filler flowers and additional foliage as needed to complete the shape, add softness, and cover the floral foam.
## Evaluation

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<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Achieved</th>
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<tr>
<td>Green up</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing the shape</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating the focal point — bow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filling in with flowers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design technique</td>
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<td>Covering up mechanics</td>
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Lab Sheet

Creating a Easel Spray

Equipment

- Floral design equipment
- Spray bar with floral foam
- Greens
- Mass flowers
- Line flowers with long stems
- #40 ribbon

Instructions

1. Attach the spray bar or cage with saturated floral foam to the easel.
2. Green up the design to form a framework in the desired shape.
3. Add line flowers to the outline.
4. Place striking or fully opened mass flowers near the center of interest. If a bow is to be added, make one and position it near the center of interest.
5. Add additional mass flowers to fill in the shape. Repeat the center of interest flowers elsewhere in the design.
6. Cover any exposed floral foam with foliage and filler.
### Evaluation

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