

## PREP TIME

1. Three days before the event: Go into your garden or floral shop to gather the greens. Depending on the season, you'll need bear grass, boxwood, ferns, fountain grass, flax, evergreens, vines, or whatever suits the style and season. Cut the stems on an angle and soak overnight in cold water in deep buckets.
2. Two days before the event: Whether you are buying or growing the flowers, always choose fresh, tight buds. They will open naturally by the day of the wedding when prepared properly. Cut stems to soak up the water, separate flowers into species, plunge in cold water in a separate bucket from the greens. Cut stamens from lilies to prevent stains.
3. One day before the event: Create your bouquet beginning with the greens and add individual flower stems as you twist the arrangement in one hand until it looks as lush and full as you wish. Don't be afraid to add, subtract, nip, and tuck.
4. If you are adding an ornament, embellishment, beads, or other adornment, do it now. You may need to wire the decoration to the bouquet.
5. Holding your bouquet in one hand, wrap a piece of masking tape around the stems to hold the bouquet in place. Cut your coordinating ribbon and cover the tape and stems, leaving about 2 inches of stems uncovered.
6. Trim a small amount of the stems once again and wrap the entire bouquet with clear wrap, like the coverings of store-bought flowers. Tape the bottom to hold in place and write the name of the bridal party member on the package.
7. Plunge in cold water with ice. An ice bucket works well to keep each bouquet fresh. If you are keeping all the bouquets together, an ice chest is a great asset. Mist the flowers lightly. If you are putting a bouquet in the refrigerator, you must remove any fruit or vegetables. Ethylene gas rots a bouquet quickly.
8. If you hold a Flower Power Party whereby each person constructs her own bouquet, make sure to label each arrangement with the individual's name for easy identification on the wedding day.
9. For boutonnières or corsages, wrap your chosen bud and leaf with the green floral tape. Wrap the ribbon around the floral tape to cover.
10. Finish the ends of the ribbon on the backside with a dab of hot glue. Mist the buds.
11. Place each boutonniere in an individual zip lock bag with a moist cotton ball not touching the flower. Add the name of the person and a couple of pins. Place in the refrigerator. I usually put all the bags in a large plastic container, then, put the container in the refrigerator.

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