

Questions to Ask Your Floral Designer

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Floral designers do much more than just supply the bouquet! They help create the look and mood for your wedding ceremony, as well as centerpieces and other table decorations for the reception. They add the floral flourishes for the wedding party (don't forget that corsage for Grandma!), and some may even work with your cake designer to provide embellishments.

Before sitting down with a floral designer, you should already have reserved your ceremony and reception venue. That way you'll be able to discuss how much additional floral décor will be needed to either achieve a specific look at your site or complement an existing garden and/or room aesthetic.

Another must: Don't design the wedding bouquet until you've ordered your wedding dress. Since that task was hopefully completed at least 6 months before your wedding date (hint, hint!), you should have plenty of time to work out the details of both your accessories and floral décor.

So where to start? Do a little research prior to interviewing floral artists by visiting the websites or shops of vendors you're considering. You want to know that whomever you hire can create bouquets and arrangements that suit your style. (And do explore our Brides Want to Know: Bouquet Brainstorm for more GUIDELines and inspiration.)

Once you've compiled your short list of contenders, use these questions to zero in on your final choice:

The Basics

1. Do you have my date open?
2. Have you done events at my ceremony and reception location(s) before? If not, are you familiar with the sites?
3. How long have you been in business?
4. How many weddings have you done?
5. Where did you receive your training?
6. How many other weddings or events will you schedule on the same day?
7. Will you be doing my arrangements yourself or would it be another floral designer?
8. What design styles (e.g. ikebana, traditional, modern, trendy, European, Oriental) do you work in?
9. Can you work with my budget?
10. What recommendations can you give me to maximize my budget?
11. Do you offer specific packages or is everything customized?
12. Can you provide me with 3-4 recent brides that I can contact for references?

The Flowers

13. What flowers are in season for the month I am getting married?
14. Based on my color scheme and budget, what flowers do you recommend?
15. Is there a difference in price if I use one type of flower vs. a mixed arrangement or bouquet?
16. If I request it, can you provide any organic, pesticide-free or sustainably grown varieties? *TIP: Organic roses cost more, but last so much longer!*
17. What are the different kinds of wraps (called "collars" in florist-speak) you can do for my bouquet?
18. What about coordinating boutonnieres, bridesmaid flowers, and centerpieces? Can you suggest anything special to coordinate with the theme/venue/season of my event?
19. What other décor can you provide (aisle runner, candelabras, trees, arches, votives, mirrors, etc.)? How will these items affect the overall cost?
20. If I provide you with a picture of a bouquet and/or arrangement that I like, can you recreate it?
21. Do you have photos or live examples of florals designed in the style I want?

22. Can you do sketches or mockups of the arrangements you've described before I sign the contract?
23. Will you work with my cake designer if I decide to add flowers to my wedding cake? If so, is there an additional setup fee for this?
24. How far in advance of the wedding will you create the bouquets and arrangements, and how are they stored?
25. Can you assist me in the preservation of my bouquet after the wedding? If not, can you recommend someone?

The Costs

26. Do you charge a delivery fee?
27. Do you have an extra charge for the setup and breakdown of the flower décor?
28. Is there an extra fee if I need you to stay throughout the ceremony to move arrangements to the reception site?
29. Are there any additional fees that I have not already taken into account?

The Contract

30. How far in advance do I need to secure your services? What is the deposit needed to secure my date?
31. Will you provide me with an itemized list of all the elements we've discussed, along with prices?
32. When can I expect to receive my contract from you?
33. What is your refund policy if for some reason I need to cancel my order?

Useful Tips:

- Prior to meeting with potential floral designers, have your color scheme finalized; create a list of the kinds of flowers you like; and have some examples (photos or pictures from magazines) of the kind of bouquets and arrangements that appeal to you.
- After you've met with each floral designer ask yourself, "Did the florist answer all my questions to my satisfaction?" "Do I feel like the florist really listened and understood my vision?" "Am I comfortable with this person?"
- Once you've booked your floral designer you'll want to provide them with a picture of your dress and swatches or photos of the bridesmaids dresses and the linens you'll be using.

For more ideas, read about "Unique Bridal Bouquets," "Bouquet Options for Bridesmaids," "Beachy Boutonnieres," and "Green Centerpieces" in *Articles+Ideas: Flowers*.

And don't forget to browse our *Certified by The Guide* Floral Designers in Northern and Southern California!