

Flower power on the big day

By Nancy Chang

Leading up to their big day, couples have a lot to worry about before they finally get to walk down the aisle as man and wife. The trials and tribulations of planning a wedding is no small task, as even the most minor details must be accounted for.

Such is the case with the floral arrangements. Though not a minor detail in any way, preparing a wedding day floral arrangement does have its minor details, particularly when it comes to the more individual aspects of a floral plan. The color, texture, fragrance and arrangement of flowers can add just the right touch to make your wedding the one you've always dreamed of.

The owners of Expressions of Love Florist in Fuquay-Varina know a thing or two about wedding flowers. In business for nearly 10 years, mother and daughter team Irene Goslaw and Shelley Pearson have around 50 years of floral experience between them.

Their shop was deemed by wedding site The Knot as a Best of Weddings Pick in the Triangle area for the past three years. They provide flowers for weddings both locally and across the state, from the coast to the mountains.

For those who are in the early stages of wedding planning, Pearson recommends contacting a florist six months in advance of the wedding to discuss their floral options.

"You need to be thinking of everyone who takes an active role



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For those looking to cut costs in the flower area, choosing in-season flowers can cut back on expenses, as well as reducing the ratio of flowers to other fillers. Or consider mixing flowers with greenery or even fruit in centerpieces.

in the wedding – the bridal party, the attendants, and the family. And then there's the ceremony décor and reception décor," she said.

Expressions of Love offers a free consultation for couples, and Pearson encourages brides to have an inspiration board where they collect photos, color schemes and ideas of the details they want to go into their weddings. That way, all the vendors they work with can get a feel for the couples' personal tastes and styles.

Numerous wedding websites suggest that the average couple spends anywhere between five to 13 percent of their overall wedding budget on flowers. The percentage, of course, varies widely depending on whether the flowers are in season, the number and type of arrangements needed, the venue

and more. Pearson says most of the couples' flower budgets go toward decorating for the reception.

Regardless of how much a couple has to spend on a wedding, Pearson says they can work with any budget.

"We like to meet with a bride individually. We don't ask for a budget beforehand, because we want to get every detail and hope they have for their wedding without feeling like we're adjusting our prices to fit their budget," said Pearson.

"We start at the top, give them an estimate, and then see if they need to scale back. And a lot of times, brides are surprised to find out that they don't, that they really can get everything they wanted."

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According to Pearson, roses are still very popular for weddings, along with hydrangeas, peonies and orchids. For her, it's being surrounded by these buds that make coming to work each day a joy.

"I just love the beauty of flowers," she said. "I think it's just amazing how they're made and created, with all of the different colors, fragrances and textures. Each one is beautiful in its own way."

And although the flowers will eventually wilt and die, Pearson says their image will remain captured forever.

"Twenty years down the road when you're looking back at your wedding photos, chances are those flowers are going to be in almost all of them," she said. "They just help to add a freshness and warmth and color to the whole day."

Expressions of Love is located at 1501 Lakestone Village Lane in Fuquay-Varina. For more information, call (919) 552-4512 or go to www.expressionsofloveflorist.com.

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