

# Flowers

FLOWERS play a major part of a wedding day. Whether a bride is 20, 30, 40 or 50 she wants her wedding to be unforgettable, and beautiful bouquets are an important part of that. But there are any amount of details to consider when choosing bridal bouquets such as the right colours, style, scent, suitability and cost.

"Flowers can make or break a wedding," says Melbourne florist Debbie O'Neill. "Choose an arrangement too big and they can obscure the bridal gown, while the wrong sort of flowers might not stand up to the rigours of the big day."

A floral designer for 21 years, Debbie has won a string of awards over the years, most recently from the Floral Art Society of Victoria. Her business, Debbie O'Neill Freelance Designs, has specialised in wedding and event floristry for the past five years and these days caters for up to a dozen weddings each weekend. Debbie recommends that brides choose the

colour and style of their wedding dress and the colour and style of bridesmaids' gowns, and make an appointment with a floral designer at least six to 12 months prior to the big day.

"Flower types change seasonally, but orchids, oriental lilies, gardenias and good old-fashioned roses remain among the most popular bridal flowers, says Debbie. "While many brides' bouquets are traditionally composed of cream or white flowers, many 21st century brides are opting for a more contemporary look, adds Debbie. "Some brides carry vivid, multi-coloured flowers such as gerberas and sunflowers. There are no hard and fast rules about what type of flowers a bride should carry – it's all up to individual preference."

While wedding flowers from Debbie O'Neill Freelance Designs generally set brides back between \$500 and \$1000, some arrangements are around the \$200

to \$300 mark. "Where possible, try to select flowers that are in season, as this helps to save costs," says Debbie.

"Another hint is to remember that flowers are generally in high demand at certain times of the year, such as Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, so avoiding these dates can also help to keep costs down."

Debbie rises in the early hours of the morning several times a week to drive to the National Flower Centre at Melbourne's wholesale market in Footscray, where 140 growers sell cut flowers from 4.30 am, spending hours sifting through the fragrant stalls seeking out the perfect blooms. "I have flowers delivered three or four days before a wedding so they are in perfect condition for the bridal party on the day," she says.

More information: 0412 513 354, visit [www.debbieoneill.com.au](http://www.debbieoneill.com.au).



Debbie O'Neill

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