

Winter compositions

Exclusively for Colliers Magazine: Virginia Kostova, landscape architect

No matter whether made on the occasion of a holiday or just in an ordinary day, the arrangement of fresh and dry flowers, branches, ribbons, candles and other decorative elements elevate winter spirits and give a particular coziness to the interior. In order to create an effective composition, however, several facts about colors, proportions, balance and the form of the compositions need to be taken into account.

Colors

This is one of the first details that you notice in a composition. Although tastes differ, there are specific rules to follow in order to achieve harmonious arrangement with a certain influence. Warm colors – i.e. red, yellow and orange – bring a vivid and dynamic effect and visually attract closer the whole composition. Cold colors – blue, green, purple – have a calming effect, provoking contemplation and visually move away the decorative elements. The brighter the color, the more dominant it is, and vice versa. It is recommended to choose at least one dominant color in your composition – the others need to be complementary.

Visual and physical balance

When creating a decorative composition, all elements need to be firmly attached to the foundation (a container or vase, etc.). The foundation needs to be steady enough in order to hold the arrangement and if needed, some sand, ballast or another heavy material needs to be added. This is especially important in asymmetrical arrangements and can be achieved in different ways. For instance, by placing darker colors on a lighter construction, it can look heavier. Bigger elements (flowers), placed on the lower or middle part of the composition, add stability and balance.

The proportion of the composition is another important aspect. Elements and containers/foundations need to correspond to each other. For example, if the composition is made in a high container, it is recommended that the arrangement is 1.5 times higher than the container itself; if the decoration is placed in a lower container, the arrangement needs to be 1.5 times wider than the container.

Winter holidays

You just need to surrender to your imagination: combining fresh or dried flowers with leaves, fruits, fir-cones, nuts, candles, ribbons and other variety of accessories can create real pieces of art and add to the coziness of the interior. When preparing the winter decoration, it is recommended to place few bigger accents here and there than scattering many smaller ones. It would be better if they are chosen to have one uniting composition or color/nuance.

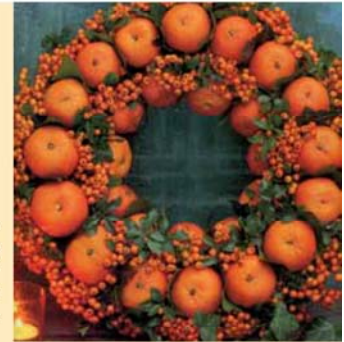
Here are some ideas for winter arrangements which can be followed step-by-step or just used as a base for improvisation for our own models.

Tangerine wreath

Difficulty: ***

Necessary materials:

A thin wire; 25–30 tangerines; a plastic foam ring approximately 30 cm – sold in florists shops, pyracanthus berries and foliage, ivy leaves.



Steps:



1. Soak the plastic foam ring in water.
2. Arrange the tangerines closely to one another in a circle on the top of the ring. Push the wire across and through the base of each tangerine from one side to the other and attach them to the plastic foam ring. Arrange a second inner circle the same way.

3. Small stems of pyracanthus are stuck in the ring around the tangerines, covering the whole base.

4. The ivy leaves are also pinned to the ring, so that there is one leaf between each tangerine.

The wreath will look spectacular as a table decoration with a large candle at its centre, or perhaps a cluster of smaller candles of various heights. It can also be hung on a door or wall as but it is heavy, be sure to fix it securely.





Attractive table composition

Difficulty: *

Materials:

Ribbon (7–8 cm width) in two patterns; 3 small round cakes, transparent adhesive tape, scissors, gold twine, 1 glass cake stand, 1 handful of cranberries, 1 handful of small cones, fresh flowers (only the buds), 1 stem camellia leaves (or other), gold dust, tea candles.

Steps:

1. Wrap the ribbon around the outside of each of the cakes and secure with a piece of clear adhesive tape.
2. Tie the gold twine around the middle of each cake, over the ribbon, finishing with a bow in the front.
3. Place the cakes on the stand and scatter cranberries and cones between them. Pull the petals from the flowers and scatter them amongst the sweets. Sprinkle the leaves with gold dust and place the tea candles last.



Legend:

- **** hard
- *** medium
- ** easy
- * piece of cake

For St. Valentine's day or just for the good mood: Tulips and roses

Difficulty: *

Materials:

A simple vase (ceramic or glass), scissors, 20 red roses, 10 tulips, 10 sticks of camellia leaves, broad ribbon.

Steps:

Fill in $\frac{3}{4}$ of the vase with water. Arrange the camellia sticks first, then half of the roses amongst them. Cut the tulips in order to be appr. 7 cm. higher than the vase, removing the lower leaves. Arrange them amongst the other flowers. Tie the ribbon around the vase.

