



# The Flower Workshop: Lessons in Arranging Blooms, Branches, Fruits, and Foraged Materials

By Ariella Chezar, Julie Michaels

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**Written by a celebrated floral designer and lavishly illustrated with full-color photography, this book not only provides step-by-step instructions for 50 stunning floral projects from simple to spectacular, but also equips readers with the skills to customize arrangements at home.**

Whether hosting a party, helping out with a friend's wedding, or wishing to incorporate the beauty of flowers into everyday life, *The Flower Workshop* allows you to create dazzling arrangements that go beyond merely pretty and into realms of the dramatic, the unexpected, and sometimes even the magical. Written by a celebrated floral designer and lavishly illustrated with full-color photography, this book not only provides step-by-step instructions for more than forty-five stunning floral projects from simple to spectacular, but also equips you with the skills to customize arrangements at home.

Known for her hands-on flower workshops at FlowerSchool New York, Ariella Chezar walks you through the nuts and bolts of creating a variety of small flourishes, tonal arrangements, branch arrangements, handheld bouquets, wreathes, garlands, grand gestures, and more—all accompanied by detailed photography. Chezar offers advice and philosophy on everything from texture and color to foliage and containers, providing an overall approach to living and working with flowers, with an eye toward fresh, local, wild, seasonally influenced floral design. For every occasion, from relaxed and simple to lavish and monumental, *The Flower Workshop* celebrates the special moments in your life with glorious, fragrant floral arrangements and enhances your surroundings with abundant beauty.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Bring a bit of beauty into your home with stunning floral arrangements....these desirable yet both simple and complex projects are paired with stunning photography. Chezar's loose, natural arrangement are fabulous and sure to be popular. A must for flower lovers."

—*Library Journal* (Starred Review)

"Offers practical guidelines alongside eye-pleasing color photographs....[An] essential flower-arranging guide."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Ariella Chezar is a true floral icon. In *The Flower Workshop*, we are inspired by her love of nature and her respect for the inherent beauty of botanicals in every season. Ariella generously teaches the craft of floristry and its essential techniques, and she shows students of this book that floral arranging is a means of personal and artistic expression."

—Debra Prinzing, author of *Slow Flowers* and *The 50 Mile Bouquet*

"These days it's very fashionable for floral designers to grow their own blooms, forage for material, and create arrangements in a loose, organic style. But Ariella has been a master of this style for decades. An innovator rather than a follower, Ariella always creates floral designs that surprise and delight."

—Kate Berry, creative director of *Martha Stewart Weddings* and editor-at-large of *Martha Stewart Living*

"Ariella has developed a new vocabulary of floral design, one based almost entirely on the natural gesture of a plant and the way it grows in the garden. She's inspired me (and a whole school of floral design) to avoid rigid perfection, and to rely more on cultivating an artist's intimate eye on the world of flowers."

—Stephen Orr, author of *The New American Herbal*

"I am constantly inspired by the beauty of Ariella's organic, creative, and thoughtful designs. Her arrangements have a sense of elegance and a natural aesthetic. Ariella's touch is subtle, yet always innovative, and the artistry of her work is stunning without fail."

—Darcy Miller, editorial director of *Martha Stewart Weddings*

#### About the Author

ARIELLA CHEZAR is the author of *Flowers for the Table* and a master floral designer whose work has graced the covers and pages of *Martha Stewart Living*, *O Magazine*, *Smitten*, *Sunset*, *Garden Design*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Domino*, *Real Simple*, *Sweet Paul*, and many more. She is a teacher at FlowerSchool New York and has designed flower arrangements for the White House. Read more about her work at [www.ariellaflowers.com](http://www.ariellaflowers.com).

JULIE MICHAELS is a former editor for the *Boston Globe* and has written for the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and numerous magazines.

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Introduction

Is there anything that can transform a moment, a morning, a mood, or a space as instantly as an array of fresh flowers? Their color and aliveness, their fragrance, their movement, their ability to attract the eye (and distract it!), and the sheer sensual pleasure they give make them nearly miraculous.

While some of my favorite varieties, combinations, and ingredients have changed since I started my company almost twenty years ago, my design philosophy and devotion to color, texture, and seasonality are as vital to me as ever.

Over the years, I've been asked to share my floral philosophy in a variety of workshop settings. I've held these classes on flower farms in California and the Netherlands, at Hawaiian resorts, and in New York, Charleston, and other major cities. Depending on the location, I'll take my students foraging in the woods or roaming the aisles of a local flower market. We'll then spend time prepping each blossom; studying color, containers, and placement; and fashioning arrangements and bouquets that reflect not only my design philosophy but my deep love of flowers. My aim, to quote poet Mary Oliver, is to work until "I can hear the almost unheard sound of the roses singing."

This book is meant to inspire. The following chapters show how to make arrangements that light up a dinner, spark a party, or decorate a wedding. Step-by-step instructions are included for every arrangement, but don't feel limited to the flowers I've selected. I'd prefer that you adopt my philosophy of floral design and use these recipes as a starting point. If you understand the concept of tone-on-tone arranging, of using a variety of blooms in similar colors, and if you learn to forage in your backyard and let what you find spark your creativity, you will come away with a point of view that can be applied to any occasion. My goal is for you to learn to create arrangements that go beyond pretty and into the realm of the dramatic, the unexpected, and sometimes even the magical.

Sometimes I wonder whether I would have ever worked in the flower world if I'd grown up in a big city. As luck would have it, I grew up in the country, in a very small village in western Massachusetts. Over the years, I have also lived in bigger, busier places like Brooklyn and Berkeley, California, but I find myself returning to the fields and woods of my childhood for many reasons: peace, fresh air, starlight, and inspiration for my work. Whenever I'm away from the country for too long—designing a wedding in San Francisco or New York, teaching workshops in Amsterdam or Maui, or making bouquets for a photo shoot in Chicago—I long to return to the Berkshire hills, to the place and home where I grew up. The influence of that quiet, river-laced, vine-covered land is all over my soul, and it colors the work I do with plants, flowers, and interiors.

My parents were typical of many couples who moved from New York City to the Berkshires in the early 1970s. They wanted to make things and grow their own food, to be close to the land, and to raise their children in a peaceful place where we would be free to play and explore. My father, Howard Chezar, a carpenter and fine woodworker, built our home by hand with local timber. He designed our kitchen, dining area, and living room as one large space, surrounded by oversized windows, and with so many views and such light that sometimes it seemed as if we lived outdoors. From my earliest days, I remember sitting at our kitchen table staring at trees and miles of fields all the way to Catamount Mountain in the distance.

My mother, Famke Zonneveld, was an artist and teacher who grew up in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Like my father, she loved making things, and she had an innate appreciation for the beauty of the land. In addition to making our home a warm, comforting place, she spent time cooking, gardening, and painting landscapes inspired by the world outside our window. Anything she touched was an extension of her creative self. She encouraged my sister and me to run around outdoors as if it was our very own playground.

In many ways, that world was also our classroom. My mother, who studied art and later taught at Waldorf Schools, instilled in us a deep appreciation for art and the natural world. We learned about color and form by constantly drawing from nature. We knew that paper came from trees because she showed us how to make it; we distilled dyes from plants and dipped beeswax candles. Wanting us to have direct experiences with those resources, our mom helped us plant and tend our own little gardens, taught us to sculpt with clay, knit with wool, and bake bread, and even showed us the beauty in something as simple as laundry drying in the sun.

When my city cousins visited, they often said they were bored. My sister and I never were! We got dirty making forts and fairy houses; we pretended to be cooks, using lettuce and comfrey leaves as the “bread” for our make-believe sandwiches. We stalked caterpillars and fireflies and rescued countless wounded birds. Every summer, my mother’s Dutch art-school friends came to visit, eager to paint the landscape and portraits of us dressed as fairies or wood nymphs. They marveled at all the raw material we possessed in our own backyard.

Walking among brambles, primroses, and fiddlehead ferns with my sister and our dogs back then was like heaven to me, and it’s an activity I now happily share with my own children. The outdoors is still where I feel most at ease. It’s where it all comes together, where so many things just seem to make more sense.

My country childhood informs the way I arrange flowers. My goal is always to enhance nature—that’s what resonates for me. From my mother and a few other visionaries who made their living by landscape and floral design, I learned how to bring in elements from the outdoors and reinterpret them, to make something beautiful and new while retaining the allure of the wild.

In my desire to capture the wild, I am motivated by a variety of visual elements. Sometimes, for instance, a color calls out to me, inspiring me to create an arrangement. It can happen almost anywhere: when I see pretty fabrics spilling out of my suitcase, a luscious cake in a pastry case, or a superstar flower that seems to call my name. We’re all drawn to certain shades, and—no surprise—we tend to like the colors that look good on us. I am fascinated also by the relationship between palettes—the power of contrast and juxtaposition—whether in a clothing combination or, on a larger scale, in the impact of color on a party or wedding I’m designing.

Most often, the flowers themselves motivate my arrangements. I might head to the market in search of one kind of garden rose, but find a gorgeous new carnation that simply takes my breath away. When that happens, I will build my arrangement around this showstopper.

I find inspiration, as well, in the luscious abundance of fruits. I like the sculptural element they add, the freedom they allow as I break the traditional “frame” of the bouquet. The grand scale of large branches also inspires, as they allow me the space to create a painterly tableau. Finally, I like working with compotes—footed bowls that allow me to create lush seasonal displays that lift an arrangement but keep it below eye level so it never blocks the view of guests across a table.

To me, working in a lush, painterly style involves two other related components: curating unusual flowers and doing so in their seasons. The life cycle of a plant has an apex, a moment when it is freshest and most replete, when it has a unique life force. For example, tulips in August seem wan and out of place, but late-summer dahlias burst with life. I try to capture that optimal moment in my work, which often leads me to my own garden or to other local growers who complement what I find at the flower market.

I realize not all of us are lucky enough to have such ready resources, but I urge you all to look at what nature has to offer. Sometimes when I want to distinguish a bouquet or elevate an entire look to a grand level, I’ll take to the fields or woods. I’ve often pulled my car to the side of the road because a splash of color caught

my eye. There, I'll discover a perfect wild crabapple that will find its way into an evening arrangement. Often, what you are liberating from the roadside are vines and weeds that choke more established plantings. In such cases, your foraging will be welcome. If you are going after something other than a weed, always ask permission.

I like to use branches in intimate as well as large spaces. Working big is a challenge, but once we get the hang of scale (and the right containers), it becomes easy to master. What are some other constants in my work? Vines! These are the ultimate finishing touch, the one that makes small arrangements span several feet and magically transforms simple bouquets into belles of the ball.

I'm charmed by small, gemlike bouquets in sweet little vessels like julep cups, delicate goblets, and shapely containers. Simple stems can surprise. Every season or so, I find that an overlooked blossom becomes an obsession. At the moment, I cannot get enough carnations into my work. For years, I have been mad for all species of fritillaria, especially the checkered lily, *Fritillaria meleagris*, a tiny, burgundy checkerboard of a flower that blooms from bulbs in early spring. During their short window, I use them in almost every arrangement. Also, keep in mind that single varieties of almost any flower grouped together, unadorned, can make a big impression.

Some flowers capture your attention and refuse to let go. Walk into a room where a single peony reposes in a glass, and you are mesmerized by the sheer mass of its frilly petals and saturated color. Pointy golden tulips make it seem as if spring just invited you on a date. Stare into a gardenia's creamy face, and marvel at how it looks like porcelain. Inside a plain white tent for a wedding reception, find a magical green grotto, lavish with bright ferns, cool moss, and pale orchids, and you are transported to the tropics.

There are some arrangements I return to again and again, each time using seasonal flowers and inspired accents to create something unique. For party tabletops, I'm fond of compotes. In springtime, I let them brim with checkered lilies, hellebores, and trailing akebia vines. In another season, I might use the same container filled with peonies and dogwood. For high-ceilinged spaces, no matter what the season, I often begin with blossoming tree limbs in a heavy urn, which, by the way, I urge everyone to invest in. Put one in your living room or entryway, and you'll be surprised how much fun it is to fill every month with long-lasting branches. For hand-tied bouquets, I like to create "little worlds," clustering loose blooms like peonies and garden roses alongside tight buds and something fluttery like clematis. Whatever I'm working on, I try to keep the concept of handcrafted in mind.

The hypnotic pleasure of plants and flowers still astonishes me. We call upon them to make special occasions even more momentous. Their abundant beauty enhances our surroundings, reminding us that just being alive is worth celebrating. Though the finished pieces are ephemeral, working with flowers can be every bit as satisfying as painting a watercolor or crafting a piece of furniture. Choosing and placing each element with care makes me feel as deliberate and devoted to a fine result as a jeweler, woodworker, or pastry chef. With this book, I'd like to deepen our shared knowledge of this craft and honor its practitioners. And I'd love to help you create the glorious, fragrant, flowing profusion that's destined for your next celebration.

I hope you'll accept my invitation.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Rebecca Walton:**

What do you consider book? It is just for students because they are still students or this for all people in the



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#### **Sunny Weaver:**

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#### **Brian Robinson:**

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A number of people said that they feel uninterested when they reading a guide. They are directly felt this when they get a half areas of the book. You can choose typically the book *The Flower Workshop: Lessons in Arranging Blooms, Branches, Fruits, and Foraged Materials* to make your own reading is interesting. Your skill of reading talent is developing when you like reading. Try to choose very simple book to make you enjoy to learn it and mingle the sensation about book and examining especially. It is to be first opinion for you to like to start a book and examine it. Beside that the publication *The Flower Workshop: Lessons in Arranging Blooms, Branches, Fruits, and Foraged Materials* can to be your friend when you're experience alone and confuse in doing what must you're doing of this time.

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