

Flowers for Funerals

There is no hard and fast rule about flower or plant selection for a funeral. Flowers are generally accepted as an appropriate way to comfort the grieving family. Remember to keep in mind that plants will need care after the funeral, and flowers will need to be disposed of by the family. Take some care in your flower selection to keep in mind the ultimate purpose of the gift -- that is, to comfort the loved ones and to honor the memory of the deceased.

CASKET SPRAYS

Casket sprays are flowers lain over the casket. These are usually ordered by the closest relatives of the deceased. In cases where the deceased has no close living relatives, friends or other family members may order the casket sprays. In hardship cases, where there are no living relatives and no pre-arrangements, a friend or business partner or other community organization may provide casket sprays.

VETERANS

Military personnel often have a flag placed on the casket. In this instance, if a casket spray has been ordered, it is usually displayed above and behind the portion of the casket draped with the flag. Flowers are NEVER placed on top of the flag, so if there is a casket spray in addition to the flag, it is usually displayed on a stand beside the casket. In some cases, a properly folded flag will be displayed on a stand, allowing the casket spray to be placed over the casket as usual.

FLORAL PIECES

Floral pieces from relatives are usually placed closest to the casket. Often, relatives choose matching baskets for each end of the casket, or standing sprays, floral hearts and pillows, wreaths, fireside baskets, and even rosaries. Specialty arrangements can be ordered, also.

SPECIALTY ARRANGEMENTS

Specialty arrangements include flowers with figurines or other items indicating a connection to the deceased. These options may be sent by relatives or friends and are often chosen by those who have shared a particular interest or pastime with the deceased. For example: using a sheaf of wheat or a tractor in an arrangement for a farmer; or a ball of yarn and knitting needles for someone who liked to knit. Almost anything can be incorporated into a floral arrangement, depending on the ability of your florist to accommodate them. You are limited only by your imagination.

LID ARRANGEMENTS

Lid arrangements are floral pieces placed inside the casket. These are often gifts from the children, grandchildren or someone especially close to the deceased. Generally, lid arrangements are in the form of satin pillows, hearts or crosses with roses on them. Hand bouquets, nosegays, corsages and/or boutonnieres may be used. Always check with the immediate family before ordering an arrangement to be placed inside the casket.

RESPECT FAMILY WISHES

Flowers may be sent regardless of a funeral notice requesting charitable donations 'in lieu of flowers'. However, there are times, especially with someone who was well known in life, when the grieving family can be overwhelmed by the donation of large groups of flowers and plants. For example: when a prominent person dies, and the family has requested a charitable donation 'in lieu of flowers', it is best to respect the family's wishes. If you feel compelled to send flowers, ask the florist how many pieces have already been sent or ordered, and make your decision from there.

GROUP FLOWERS

Groups of people that might wish to send flowers include employees, co-workers, neighbors and colleagues. Ask for a group sympathy card from the florist. Special cards can be purchased and sent with the flowers, if you like. Formal associations such as the Masons, Loyal Order of the Moose or Eastern Star, have their own emblems and will want to have them represented.

IDENTIFICATION

Ask the florist to include a brief description of what flowers are in your arrangement, and who sent them, when you make your order. This will help the family when it comes time to send out thank you cards. Some florists will automatically include this information, having learned from experience, but it doesn't hurt to ask anyway.

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Flowers may also be sent well after the funeral is over. Many people appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who attend the funeral to pay their respects, then send a floral gift to the home sometime after the funeral to show they are still thinking of the family in their time of sorrow.