

10 Design Tips by Michael Erdman

1. When creating a traditional mass design, decide on the final size and shape/silhouette. Create a framework for your design with twigs or foliage branches and keep the other materials within those outer boundaries.
2. Ideas for inexpensive holiday arrangement materials include bunches of red twig dogwood stems; white pine; cedar; holly; red/white carnations; grey dogwood or hawthorn berries; Christmas tree ornaments; and decorative pinecones.
3. When your design is meant to be viewed from all directions, a cake decorating turntable is useful because you can easily turn your design to monitor your progress from different angles.
4. Create a central point of interest in your design, for example, a triangle of red carnations.
5. "Allow some air circulation between materials so a butterfly can fly through."
6. Add something smooth to lighten the effect and offer some relief from the filigree of some foliage such pine and cedar, and composite flowers. For example, add a few pieces of holly, euonymus, or magnolia leaves; or roses.
7. Sparkling pinecones brighten up holiday arrangements. Simply place fresh pinecones on parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake in the oven at 250 degrees for about

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1.5 hours. This will open the scales, kill any bugs and dry out the sap. Use florist wire to create a 6” bendable “stick” on the bottom end of the cooled pinecones for insertion into your foam. Make a mixture of 1 cup Epsom salts with a pinch of glitter. Spray the pinecones with a sticky hair spray, or spray glue, and dip into the salt/glitter mixture.

8. To help create balance in your design, graduate the size of your flowers from large to small, placing fully opened flowers near the base and centre of the design, and partially open flowers/buds near the top and sides. Placing the flowers so they face different directions and at different levels will give your arrangement more depth and visual interest.
9. Remove leaves and lower needles from plant materials that you insert in water or floral foam as they will tend to rot quite quickly.
10. Water your design weekly if you are using foam, and mist regularly, to keep your design fresh for 2-3 weeks.