

Flowers of Tudor Times

The first evidence of indoor flower arrangements in Britain comes from the Tudor period. This age of exploration and discovery led to many new plants and flowers being found and brought back to this country. These new introductions were much prized and given pride of place in collectors' arrangements.

Shakespeare mentioned over a hundred wild flowers, trees, herbs and fruits in his works and amongst the most popular for indoor use were Pinks, Carnations, Sweet Williams, Wallflowers, Cornflowers, Roses, Rosemary, and Violets. Scented flowers and fragrant herbs such as Thyme, Marjoram, Rue and Lavender were used effectively as early forms of air freshener. Floors would be strewn with rushes and herbs and Rosemary would often be added to improve the ambience.

Flowers would be arranged decoratively in containers, often ordinary household vessels, such as wooden jugs or glass decanters. Some vases made at that time had removable lids with holes in for flower stems. Although flower paintings of the period tend not to show foliage included in arrangements, paintings which depict flowers show that foliage was used. Hoefnagel's Wedding Feast at

Bermondsey shows an arrangement consisting of a large bunch of Rosemary with just five flowers, which appear to be Pinks, in it. Other paintings show arrangements which tend to have flowers clustered around the neck of the container, with other flowers rising up, away from the others, to be displayed as individuals. These prominent flowers would be prized specimens, perhaps newly imported flowers. There were many introductions during this period, including the exotic-looking Crown imperial from the Middle East, Sunflowers from North America or the Turk's-Cap Lily from Europe.

Although flowers were not used for decorating the dining table, indoor plants were a feature of Tudor interiors, using plants and herbs such as Carnations, Marjoram, and Rosemary. It was popular at the time to grow plants in indoor window boxes, and train the plants to grow around the window and even across the ceiling.

In order both to ward off disease, and to cover unpleasant smells, people would carry nosegays. A nosegay could be either a posy that was carried, or an arrangement in a vase. A tussie-mussie was a posy of pleasant scented herbs and flowers that was carried. These are quite easy to make.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Complete



Step 5

To Make A Tussie Mussie

You will need:

- Small bunches of scented herbs or flowers, for example: Bay, Rosemary, Thyme, Mint, Roses and Feverfew
- One flower for the centre of the posy
- Florist's tape (or improvise with thin masking tape)

Step 1: Place the central flower in your hand.

Step 2: Attach florist's tape to the stem, approximately 7cms below the base of the flower-head

Step 3: Take the next bunch of herbs or flowers and encircle the main flower, wrapping the tape around to keep the bunch tight

Step 4: Build up the layers in this way, finishing with a large-leaved herb or plant such as Angelica, or Ivy

Step 5: Trim the stems to the same length