

## Tricks of the Wedding Trade

By Cindy Hoogasian

“OUR WORK IS ONLY AS GOOD as the tools we are using,” says Carol Caggiano, AIFD, PFCI, of A. Caggiano Inc. in Jeffersonton, Va. When it comes to wedding arrangements and bouquets, designers can’t live without certain tools. Expert florists offered these 13 tools as must-haves for wedding work:

**1. Clean, sharp shears and knives for cutting stems.** Every florist has a favorite knife. Ardith Beveridge AAF, AIFD, PFCI, of Koehler & Dramm’s Institute of Floristry in Minneapolis recommends alternating between a knife, an original-handled Oriental shear and a butterfly-handled Oriental shear. With a variety of tools, designers can use different muscles and motions, reducing the risk of repetitive-motion injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome. Beveridge keeps a knife sharpener handy, a maintenance tip Caggiano agrees with. “Make sure your tools are in good shape and function properly,” she says. “Replace them when necessary.”

**2. Shears for ribbon and French-wired ribbon.** Beveridge recommends the Clauss 4258 High Leverage Floral Craft Shears, which cut wire quickly and snip ribbon cleanly.

**3. Cold glue.** While hot-pan glue has its place, designers swear by Oasis Floral Adhesive, particularly for bridal bouquets and body flowers. “The trick with the floral adhesive is not to spread it on the bloom,” says Tina Stoecker, AIFD, PFCI, of Designs of the Times in Melbourne, Fla. “Put it on a piece of cardboard and dip the flower in the cardboard. It seems to set faster, and you don’t end up holding the flower until it sets.”

**4. Spray adhesives.** Use spray adhesives, such as Design Master’s Tack 1000, for delicate floral materials and Tack 2000 to secure foliage and wet moss. FloraLock stem adhesive

secures stems inserted into foam. “These are my security blankets for design,” Beveridge says. “I know the flowers will stay in place.”

**5. Stay Fresh stephanotis stems** from Stemson make designing with these florets a cinch. The fabric-covered wire has a moisture reservoir at the end, which gets dipped in water and inserted into the stephanotis — which means you can work with stephanotis blooms a day ahead.

**6. Craft scissors with decorative patterns.** Typically used for scrapbooks, craft scissors create interesting edges on foliage and fabric. Caggiano likes scissors that cut a pattern identical to the edges of galax leaves. (If you trim the brown edges of galax leaves, you can use all the leaves profitably.)

**7. Bouquet stand.** When designing a bridal bouquet, Beveridge uses the Stemson Bouquet Stand, which attaches firmly to the design table or cooler shelf and holds most bouquet forms. Brides can rent the stands for the bridal table, making the bouquets a part of the head-table flowers.

**8. Antitranspirant** is a must because wedding sites rarely have good water sources. Antitranspirants prevent blooms from emitting water vapor and help extend their beauty and longevity. There is a specific one for foliage and another for flowers. Remember, add water to church and reception designs after delivery.


**9. Decorative, pre-finished bouquet handles.** Caggiano likes the Posy Pocket bouquet handle, which is fashioned from elegant fabrics and adorned with beads and jewel-like accessories to provide the perfect finishing touch for bouquets.

**10. Wrapsits cable ties** from Syndicate Sales. Versatile, floral-green plastic cable ties are perfect for securing hand-tied bouquets or attaching garlands and cage designs to banisters and furnishings.

**11. Waxed string** provides another way to secure flowers to structures safely. The attachment point is less bulky than a cable-tie point.

**12. Wrap Stem tape** around the base of candles to keep them upright. It’s fast, easy and clean, and it’s in every designer’s tool kit, Stoecker says.

**13. Clean-up tools.** A hand vacuum will suck up any floral material that sheds at the church or reception site. Stoecker works over an old vinyl tablecloth when she designs on site, making clean up fast and easy. She also keeps an old paintbrush and masking tape handy to remove any last-minute debris from the cake or reception tables.

Hoogasian thanks Robbin Yelverton, AIFD, PFCI, of Blumz ... by JR Designs in Detroit for his help on this column. 

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**Cindy Hoogasian** is co-author of “In Season,” a post-harvest care book. She has been widely published in industry publications and has written numerous articles on the care and handling of flowers from the retail florist’s perspective.



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