ABOUT OUR COVER

FLOWER SHOP MANAGEMENT AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

The creative art of floral design as illustrated on the front and back covers is achieved through an understanding of spacial design elements and a knowledge of plants materials. The design on the front cover presents a microcosm: the ceramic sphere provides an “earth” from which bursts forth Acer palmatum, Alstroemeria ‘Campfire’, and Rosa ‘Woben Abby’. On the back cover, a contemporary juxtaposition of aluminum wire, bleached matsumata branches, Chlorophytum comosum ‘Vittatum’, Lilium longiflora, Gypsophila, and Dianthus ‘White Sim’ contrast texture, form, and line.

Clearly, the successful florist must possess a unique combination of talents. He or she is not only expected to be an artist and knowledgeable about horticulture but also must be a combination of entrepreneur and manager. Transfer of the ability to blend art, science, and business is the goal of a unique program in Retail Florist Management in the Department of Horticulture at Mississippi State University.

The Retail Florist Management program is designed to give the student the broadest possible education while at the same time providing the specific educational needs that will be encountered in the industry. The courses taken in this curriculum are divided into three general areas of study: plant sciences, design, and business management.

The plant sciences, including horticulture, provide the student a basis for understanding growth and development, as well as professional plant production and care. Classes in greenhouse management, floriculture production, and tropical foliage plants are included in the schedule of courses required, so that the student learns not only the fundamentals of basic retail floriculture but, as a professional florist, will be better aware of the problems that are often encountered in the production of those materials used by florists. This allows the student in Retail Florist Management to have a better grasp and understanding of all aspects of the floral industry and to be better able to cope with the fluctuations in market supply and demand. While there is a decline in self-produced plants and cut flowers in the floral industry, a background in horticultural production provides the student with sufficient information in order to have the option of growing floricultural crops for their own operation. The florist also often serves as a counselor and advisor to customers in the care, selection, and maintenance of foliage plants, flowering plants, and cut flowers. An understanding of all areas of horticulture is important in order to be able to function effectively in the competitive marketplace.

Since the florist is a blender of both science and art, a strong background in art and design is essential. Classes in interior design, graphics, sketching and drawing, painting, sculpture, and floral design allow the student to broaden artistic capabilities. Often the retail florist is called upon to offer advice on the selection of plants and many decorative accessories. An understanding and appreciation for interiors and architecture as well as landscape design can be an asset in relating to other professionals with whom the florist must deal.

Floral designs by Ralph Null. Color photograph courtesy of Mami Flower Schools, Tokyo, Japan.

For further information on the Retail Florist Management curriculum, contact the Department of Horticulture, Drawer T, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762. Mississippi State University does not discriminate based on race, creed, or color.