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31

AESTHETICS AT HOME

Apart from keeping any accommodation neat, clean and comfortable, there has to be something more added to it, to make it inviting and give a welcome and pleasant look. You must have visited some hotel and found everything there, i.e., the draperies, sofa, carpets, paintings very beautiful. Appropriate wall paintings, floor decorations, flower arrangements and accessories can add to the décor of any accommodation. But this does not mean that all beautiful and expensive things available in the market, when put together will give a beautiful room. You can buy less expensive items and arrange them in a decorative manner. For this, all you need to learn is to make the right selection and arrange them at appropriate places. In this lesson, you will read about various ways of decorating your house.



OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the importance of arranging things in the house in an orderly and decorative manner;
- arrange flowers artistically;
- create appropriate floor decorations;
- suggest ways to beautify the place by arranging decorative items attractively in the house.

31.1 IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS AT HOME

Cleaning also involves putting the things in place. For this, a specific place is decided for every household item. What happens if such type of cleaning is not done on a regular basis?

Yes, you can never find things on time. You waste time trying to find them. When in a hurry, you may topple half the things and leave a mess behind. More things get misplaced, more time wasted and this cycle goes on.... You will find yourself always running short of time, unorganized and unsystematic.



Notes

On the other hand, if all the things are kept clean and are in their proper place, you will have no such problems and meanwhile you will also save a lot of time and energy.

Imagine yourself living in a house which is cluttered with furniture and paintings, and curtains that are not matching. There are too many decorations in the showcases. There is hardly any space to move about, as a result your movements are restricted. I am sure you would not like to live in such a house.

On the other hand, picture yourself in a home in which the furniture is proportionate to the size of the room. Other objects are well arranged; curtains give uniformity to the room; colours create an informal atmosphere and are pleasing to the eye; the lighting is adequate and there is enough space for free movement. Living in such houses is a pleasure. In all, you feel rested and comfortable.

Thus we see that if the rooms are arranged beautifully and at the same time, satisfy our needs of work, we can derive optimum satisfaction from them. One has to provide an artistic touch to make the same things look beautiful as well as comfortable.

So you see, if you have good taste and understand art, you can decorate any room in a desirable and pleasant way.

31.2 FLOWER DECORATION

You must have seen flowers decorated in the halls of marriage parties or hotels. Don't you think they look beautiful? You too, can make flower decorations with whatever locally available materials you have.

Whether it is an informal party, a formal dinner, an office, a conference room, a living room, a bedroom etc., all will call for different kinds of flower arrangements. Thus, the purpose of composing an arrangement and the atmosphere of the surrounding should always be kept in mind. For this, it is important to know various aspects of flower arrangements.

1. Collection of materials

First you need to collect materials such as flower vase, pin holder or oasis, fresh or artificial flowers, green leaves, twigs etc.



Fig. 31.1 Vases, pin holder, oasis



- i. Vases come in different materials and colours. You can also make your own vase with a flat pot, hollow of a wood etc. Vases should be chosen so as to match the surrounding décor and mood. For a living room having cane furniture and coir coverings, a small basket as a vase will be more suitable than a porcelain one. A contrasting vase or one matching the flowers creates harmony in a flower arrangement.
- ii. Normally odd numbers of flowers are used in any arrangement. You can use as less as three flowers (as in case of ikebana- a Japanese art of flower arrangement). You should choose flowers of varying sizes.
- iii. You can also use natural looking, artificial flowers with fresh leaves to give a natural look. Use of fresh green leaves besides adding beauty and giving background to the flowers, can help the arrangement to resemble nature.
- iv. Pin holders are iron nails fitted on to a heavy metal base. These should be closely spaced, rust free and should be long enough to hold stems of flowers and leaves.
- v. Alternatively, a device known as oasis is also available in the market. This can absorb a lot of water and keep flowers moist. These should be soaked in the water until the air bubbles disappear and water enters right up to its core. These can be reused 2-4 times. Oasis is easier to handle for beginners who may find it difficult to balance flowers in pin holders.
- vi. Twigs help to enhance and give a natural look to the arrangement. These twigs can be collected from curved branches, roots, etc.
- vii. Leaves are used to fill up space between flowers and should be washed if dirty. Trim off unwanted, wilted and brown leaves. Some foliage can be used instead of flowers.

2. Method of flower arrangement

To arrange the flowers, one needs a lot of imagination. Observing nature and copying it can be a good start for beginners. Follow these tips for help.

- i. Fix pin holder to the container and pour water into the container until it covers the pin holder. Alternatively, soak the foam/oasis in water till it is saturated and then place it in the vase.
- ii. Decide the shape of flower arrangement. It can be a triangle, right angle, oval, S shaped etc.
- iii. Choose five flowers of different sizes in one colour. You can also experiment with contrasting flowers or with flowers which compliment each other.
- iv. Pluck flowers early in the morning, before they mature. All cutting and nipping should be done under water.
- v. Cut the stems of flowers at different lengths. The tallest branch should be cut to the length which is at least 1 ½ times the width of the vase.



Notes

- i. First arrange the tallest flowers and then other flowers in order of their height.
- ii. Place the second branch cut little shorter, away from the first one and so on.
- iii. You should always push the branch firmly inside a pin holder or an oasis so that it stays in place and does not fall down.
- iv. Add the flowers at different heights, ensuring enough space in between.
- v. Face the flowers towards yourself so that you can enjoy their beauty.
- vi. Put bigger flowers towards the bottom, medium sized in the center and buds at the top of the arrangement, so that it does not look top heavy.
- vii. Fill the gaps with appropriate leaves of different sizes.
- viii. Hide the pin holder/oasis with leaves, stones etc.
- ix. Place the arrangement against a contrasting background from where all the flowers can be viewed.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.1

- I. You are arranging flowers in a vase. Correct the following statements: -
 1. To ensure freshness, flowers should be plucked in the evening.
 2. Even number of flowers should be chosen.
 3. Pin holders are used to keep pins.
 4. All flowers should be of the same height.
 5. Buds should be placed at the bottom, medium sized flower in the middle and largest sized flower at the top of the arrangement.
- II. Fill in the blanks: -
 1. In a flower arrangement, green leaves help to _____, _____ and _____ nature.
 2. Tallest stem in a flower arrangement should be _____ times taller than the vase.
 3. Flower arrangement should be placed against a _____ coloured background.

31.3 PRINCIPLES OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

While arranging flowers, you have to follow some basic principles.

- i. The size of the flower arrangement should be proportionate to the room or other articles in the room like the table on which it is kept, other decorative



articles in the room etc. The plant material should be proportionate to the size of the container. You have already learnt that a large flower would look odd in a small vase and vice versa. The flower material should be 1 ½ times higher than the height of the flower vase.

- ii) The whole arrangement should be balanced. It should neither be top heavy nor lopsided.



Fig. 31.2 : Top-heavy, lop sided flower arrangement

- iii) Your eyes should be able to travel easily round the whole design and should not stop moving. For this, the basic shape, colour, texture should be repeated at intervals. For example, if curved plant material is used then combine it with a curved container. This can also be achieved if you arrange flowers at different heights.
- iv) Flowers of different sizes should be placed gradually from fully bloomed to buds.
- v) Keep the stem ends close together. This would give the arrangement a natural look.



Fig. 31.3 : Flower arrangement

- vi) The plant material should look more important than the vase. All parts of flowers should not attract equal attention. Larger, bright flowers always attract the eye, so too many different coloured flowers should not be put in the same arrangement. Instead, some small and dull colour flowers can be put along with brightly coloured flowers.
- vii) To emphasize the shape of twigs, flowers should either be placed higher or lower than the curves of twigs. Allow space around each flower.
- viii) The flowers, leaves and vases should harmonize and complement each other.

**Activity 31.1**

Make flower arrangements for a

- i) Dining table
- ii) Corner table in a living/drawing room
- iii) Bedroom

After arranging these flowers, evaluate your arrangement by asking yourself the following questions –

- (i) Does the arrangement look balanced or does it appear too heavy on the top or too heavy on one side?
- (ii) Is it firm or wobbly?
- (iii) Do the container and flowers suit each other?
- (iv) Is it overcrowded or is there enough space between flowers?
- (v) Are my eyes equally attracted to all parts?
- (vi) Do my eyes travel smoothly from one part to another?
- (vii) Can I see the face of all the flowers or are they facing the wall or back?

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.2**

Assess a flower arrangement for the following –

1. All flowers are placed at the same height.
2. Large flowers are placed on the top.
3. All flowers and leaves are placed towards the left

31.4 FLOOR DECORATIONS

In earlier days, people used to decorate floors by making different designs with the help of various colours and flower petals. They also used powders like rice or maida. This traditional method of decoration is still prevalent and is known as 'Alpana' or 'Rangoli'. You must have seen at your home also, women make drawings of animals and other shapes, on festive occasions. Rangolis are generally made on the doorsteps, courtyard or verandah of the house. You can also design a rangoli pattern and draw it on the floor with the help of a chalk. Then you can fill it up with petals, dry powdered colour, etc. Outlines can also be drawn by using flour or rice paste.

There are certain points you should keep in mind while making rangoli / alpana.

- (i) Select design according to the theme of the festival/occasion.
- (ii) Draw the design in double lines so that colour/material can be filled in-between. Ensure uniformity and balance.

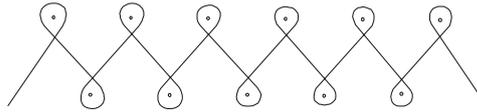




Notes

- (iii) Use contrasting colours next to each other.
- (iv) While filling, use a scale to neaten the outlines.
- (v) Fill evenly, press flat to smoothen the material.
- (vi) Fill the background, so that the design looks part of the floor.

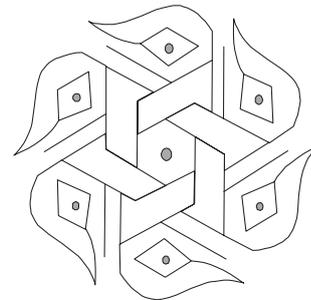
Some of the designs have been drawn here.



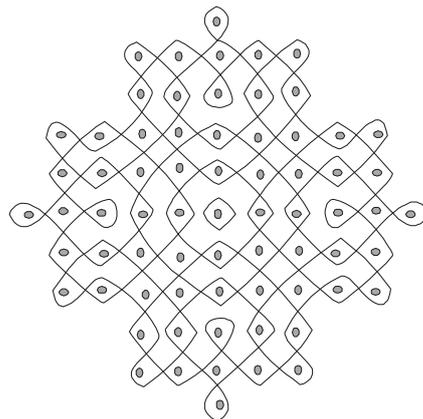
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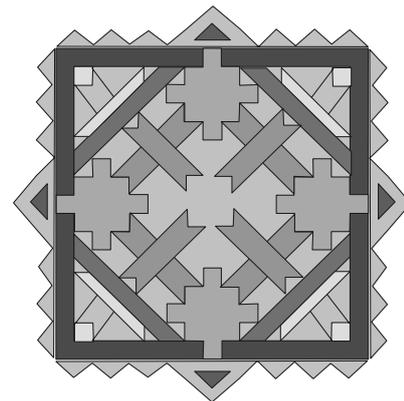
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Rangoli



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Rangoli

Fig. 31.4 : Designs for Rangoli

You can use sawdust for filling rangoli designs. To colour these, take about 30 gm (2 Tb spoon) dyeing colour in 1/2 glass water. Sieve sawdust and remove all wooden particles. Put the sawdust in a plastic tub. Add colour and mix well. Dry this on a newspaper in shade. Store in plastic bags.

**Activity 31.2**

- i) Colour sawdust in four different colours .
- ii) Draw different rangoli designs for festive occasions like Diwali ,New year, Holi , etc.
- iii) Make rangoli on floors using flowers, sawdust, grass etc.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 31.3**

Using the following words, write tips for making a good rangoli –

- i) Theme ii) double iii) contrast iv) even v) flat.

31.5 ARRANGING ACCESSORIES

You might have collected beautiful paintings, wall hangings, table lamps, cushions, and curios. Though each one may be very artistic, if they are not arranged thoughtfully, your house might end up looking cluttered and untidy. While arranging accessories you need to keep the following points in mind.

- (i) Hang paintings according to their size and space available i.e., big paintings on a big wall and vice versa. Alternatively a group of small paintings can also be hung together. These can be hung in such a way that the all fit in an imaginary square or a rectangle.
- (ii) Paintings can be enhanced by putting spot lights which fall directly on the paintings.
- (iii) Hang all paintings straight and even, not lopsided.
- (iv) Colour of lamps should harmonize with the décor. These can be placed in corners or hung over a painting to enhance it.
- (v) Cushions can be placed randomly to add colour to the room.
- (vi) Care should be taken that too many curios are not collected together.
- (vii) Similar material curios (like all made of brass, cut glass, white metal, wood, etc) can be grouped and kept together.

**Notes**

**Activity 31.3**

Practice the following in your house –

- i) Hang three to five pictures in your living room wall
- ii) Arrange decorative items in a showcase of a drawing room
- iii) Place indoor plants

**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Rahul's friend gave him five yellow roses on his birthday. What other materials would he need to arrange these? Guide him to arrange these for the side table in his bedroom.
2. What points would you keep in mind while arranging accessories?
3. Ritika is expecting her friends. She wants to decorate her room. Give her five suggestions to beautify her room.
4. What points would you keep in mind while selecting and using a pin holder.
5. Enumerate the principles you would adopt while arranging flowers.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

1. It is important to keep your house not only clean but also beautiful and well arranged so that it is more comfortable also.
2. While decorating the house harmony, symmetry, and uniformity in furniture, lighting and arrangement of accessories should be kept in mind.
3. When arranging flowers consideration has to be given to colour and type of flowers as well as of the vase.
4. 'Alpana' or 'Rangoli' is a beautiful, traditional way of floor decoration. It can be done with either flowers or colours made of rice, flour etc.
5. Pictures, cushions and other artefacts should be arranged according to the size and as pleasing to the eye.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 31.1 I.** 1. Flowers should be plucked in the morning.



Notes

2. Flowers should be odd in numbers.
3. Pin holders are used to hold the flower stems in position.
4. Flowers should be cut at different heights.
5. Buds should be placed at the top, medium sized flower in the middle and largest sized flower at the bottom of the arrangement.

- II.**
1. add beauty, provide background and make it resemble
 2. 1½
 3. contrast

- 31.2**
1. There will be no rhythm as the eyes will not move from one place to another and eyes will get stuck at one place.
 2. It will look unbalanced and will look top heavy.
 3. It will look unbalanced and lopsided. It will appear heavy on the left and empty on the right side.

- 31.3**
- (i) Should be according to the theme of the festival or occasion
 - (ii) Draw design in double lines
 - (iii) Use contrasting colours.
 - (iv) Fill evenly
 - (v) Press flat