

Garden Herbs Receive Formal Wedding Invitation

by Linda Mickelson

Many and varied are the ways in which we still blend tradition into our wedding ceremonies of today:

- The father traditionally walks the bride down the aisle.
- The bride's family sits on the left side of the church; the groom's sits on the right.
- The groomsmen enter first, followed by the bridesmaids and then the bride herself.
- The bride and groom exchange vows and wedding rings.
- The bridal couple cuts the first piece of wedding cake together.
- The bride tosses her bouquet, and the girl catching it (according to wedding lore) will be the next to marry.

Traditions help to bind us together as families, as friends, and as a community. Many of us enjoy taking part in these simple, yet meaningful, wedding practices because they keep the warm glow of familiarity, love, and fellowship alive within all of us.

The use of flowers AND HERBS in the celebration of a marriage has also been a colorful and fragrant tradition throughout the years:

- In ancient Greece, brides carried bouquets of fresh marjoram (for joy and happiness), wore crowns of fragrant myrtle (love and passion), and had their paths commonly strewn with the fragrant green leaves of sweet marjoram.
- In classical Rome, brides wore rosemary (remembrance and fidelity) and roses in their hair.
- In 17th century England, branches of rosemary were overlaid with a thin layer of gold, tied with flowing silk ribbons and carried before the bride as she walked to the church.

- In Latvia and Lithuania, the bride wore a crown of rue (meaning vision and virtue) and, after the ceremony, carried a pot of rue from her mother's garden to her new home.

You, too, can bring the wonderful, rich traditions of herbs to an upcoming wedding shower or wedding.

First, let's take a look at the sentimental meanings behind these wedding herbs.

- **Basil** - love, good wishes
- **Burnet** - a merry heart, cheerfulness
- **Chamomile** - patience
- **Chervil** - sincerity
- **Lavender** - devotion
- **Marjoram** - joy and happiness
- **Mint** - warmth of feeling
- **Myrtle** - love and patience
- **Parsley** - festivity, merriment
- **Rosemary** - remembrance and fidelity
- **Rue** - vision and virtue
- **Sage** - long life, good health, and domestic virtue
- **Scented Geraniums** - happiness
- **Thyme** - strength and courage

- **Tarragon** - lasting involvement

Now let's use these sentiments to put together a lovely and meaningful wedding!

1. Enclose a fresh herb sprig with your invitations and announcements.
2. Place a fragrant bouquet of herbs and flowers next to the guest book and tie a sprig of rosemary to the pen.
3. Place herbal wreaths on the doors of your church or home (if having a home garden wedding).
4. Fresh herbs can be used as candle rings at church, as well as centerpieces at the reception. Rosemary topiaries can be placed near the altar.
5. Dried herbs can be used to fill ring pillows.
6. Fresh or dried flower petals and herbs can be carried in a basket for the flower girl to drop as the bride walks down the aisle on a traditional white runner.
7. Use sprigs of fresh, green rosemary in the wedding bouquet, the groom's boutonniere, the parents' flowers and the bridesmaids' bouquets.
8. A bunch of herbs can be tied to the cake knife.
9. Herbs and flower petals can be tossed in place of rice for fragrance and sentiment. Little bags of these herbs and flowers can be given to the guests at church for just this purpose.
10. The bride can take a pot of rosemary to her new home.
11. As a gift to the bride and groom (this can also be used as a gift to friends and/or bride at a wedding shower) give beautifully thought-out herb baskets. A basket planted with culinary herbs, tea herbs, fragrance herbs, or healing herbs can be decorated with a beautiful white bow or a bow that matches the color scheme of the wedding. By labeling the herbs with small markers, the bridal couple will know why those specific herbs were chosen as a gift (i.e., sage=health, lavender=devotion, marjoram=joy and happiness).

Use your imagination to come up with even more ideas for that very special herbal wedding.

Happy Planning! May you create happy smiles and warm memories with lovely, fragrant herbs from your garden!