

Good Housekeeping

Easy, breezy  
summer style

# Do it Yourself

Summer 2000

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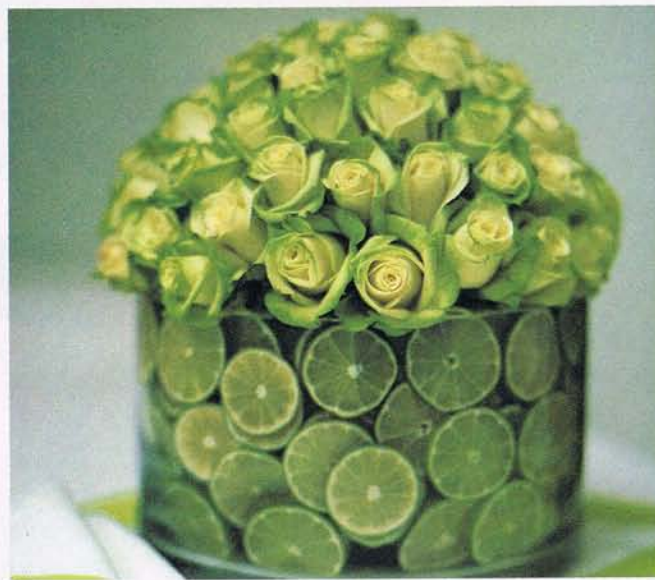
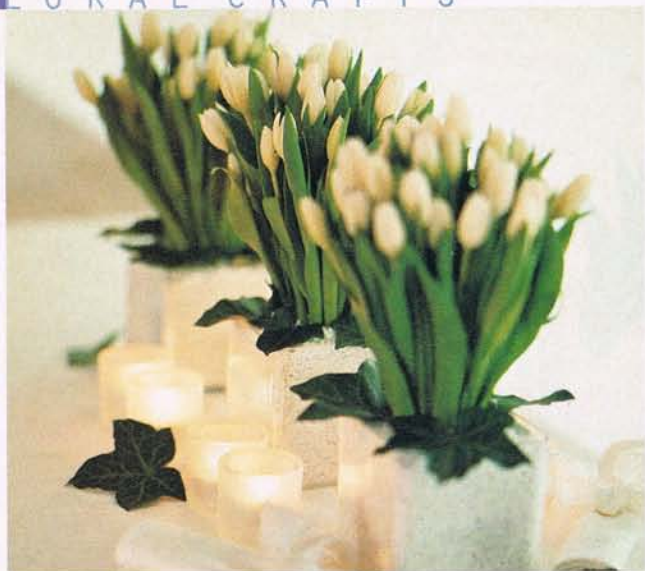
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# Table dressing

As soon as flowers start to bloom in the garden, you'll want to bring some of nature's abundance indoors to decorate your tabletops. Fresh flowers make a colorful, welcoming statement on a demilune table in the foyer; they also add a special touch to your dinner table when you entertain. When tulips are in bloom, as early as late spring, take advantage of their numbers and pack them tightly in vases so their blossoms can be seen in full force. Lily of the valley is another early riser, and combining that delicate flower with cyclamen makes a perfect addition to an ivy napkin ring. Later in the season, think of roses, and again plan to use as many as you can. Roses are so charming and beautiful that it's almost impossible to have too many in an arrangement. And, if the roses are all of one color, the visual effect can be remarkably serene. This is also the time to employ freesia and stock. An arrangement using a yellow, cream, and green theme is incredibly sunny and looks glorious in a low composition on a long dinner table. If your garden has few flowers, scale down these ideas to incorporate what you have. Small containers filled with blooms can be just as effective as larger arrangements—as long as the flowers and their vases are in proportion.

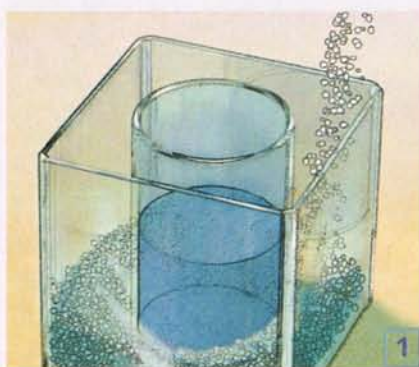


# Tart tulips

The sculpted shapes of white tulip bouquets add distinction to an early summer dinner table—especially when you create a sleek monochromatic scheme by arranging them in a white bowl or in a clear glass one filled with something white, such as vermiculite. Because the leaves run nearly the length of the stem, they offer a refreshing contrast to the white sprays above and anchors below. You could also create this look with shorter arrangements in smaller vessels containing lily of the valley. If you're using a flower, other than a tulip, whose stem is not naturally encased in a leaf, encircle a bunch of single-bloom stems with hosta leaves. Single, double, and parrot tulips are commonly available—the double and parrot varieties have fuller blooms that, when open, will create a frothier show at the top.

## materials

- 3 glass cylinders, 3" round
- 3 glass containers, 5" square
- Vermiculite
- Florist's scissors
- 5–6 dozen tulips
- Raffia or natural twine
- Ivy leaves with stems
- Narrow bucket (optional)
- Newspaper (optional)



1 Center a round glass cylinder inside each square glass vase. Pour vermiculite into the space between the inner and outer containers, filling this space almost to the top. Pour water into the round containers so that each one is half full.

2 Use scissors to trim each of the tulip stems to a 12" length. Divide the tulips into three bunches. Arrange a bunch of tulips in your hand, removing some of the leaves from the flowers in the center, if necessary, to make a compact bouquet. Check to see that the flowers stand tall in the cylindrical container. Add or remove tulips to create a snug fit.

Three vases of tulips, lined up along  
the center of an outdoor table,  
look both refreshingly exuberant  
and demurely sophisticated

3 Lift out the tulips and wrap raffia or natural twine around the stems, about 3" from the cut ends. Cut the raffia or twine and tie a knot to hold the tulips securely in place. Repeat this process with the remaining bunches. Place one bunch in each round vase, again making sure that the tulips fit tightly and do not wobble. If the bunch is too large or small, remove or add a tulip or two and retie the raffia.

4 Top off each square vase with additional vermiculite so that the top edge of the inside container is hidden. Push several stems of ivy into the round container at the base of the tulips to soften the edge and to create the impression that the tulips are "grounded."

## helpful hints

To make sure that the stems of the tulips are strong, trim off 1" after they come from the garden or florist and place them in a tall, narrow bucket—one that comes up to the flower heads—filled with water. Or, wrap the tulips in a cone of newspaper and insert them into a shorter bucket. This will ensure that the flower heads are supported while the stems are drinking in a fresh supply of water. Tulips bend toward the light and continue to grow after being cut, so place them in a spot where they will receive diffuse light or turn them occasionally so they receive light from all sides.

