

Evergreen Edge: An Extension Guide for Christmas Holiday
Arrangement Planning, Marketing, and Production

Design No. 5: Willow and Winter White Holiday Centerpiece



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THE EVERGREEN EDGE SERIES

Planning Christmas product marketing during the summer is a smart strategy. Because business activity often slows during the summer months, florists and retailers can use this time to design, test, and prepare holiday products before the busy fall and winter sales seasons begin.

This publication is one in a series to help floral professionals plan, market, and sell profitable floral designs for the holiday season. Each publication includes product images, design components, and step-by-step instructions on how to create and profitably price the floral designs.

For additional holiday design ideas and inspiration, search "Evergreen Edge" at extension.msstate.edu/publications. Feel free to copy the images from this publication to use in your marketing efforts, including websites, social media, and print materials.

DESIGN NO. 5: A HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE USING WILLOW MECHANICS, WHITE FLOWERS, AND GOLD ACCENTS

This publication demonstrates a holiday centerpiece that relies on curly willow stems, also known as corkscrew willow (*Salix matsudana*) as the mechanic. The arrangement features a clear glass bowl, paired with premium white florals, evergreen foliage, and metallic accents suitable for winter and holiday markets.

The design approach emphasizes:

- ▶ Natural mechanics for sustainable design
- ▶ High visual appeal with a full, mass pattern and texture
- ▶ Strong retail pricing flexibility
- ▶ Repeatability for production floristry

Consider adding this design to your holiday floral marketing mix. It is appropriate for corporate gift-giving, luxury event celebrations, and as a high-end table centerpiece. Remember, people express love and gratitude openly at Christmas. Why not allow your customers to "Say it with flowers!"?

DESIGN INSTRUCTIONS



Materials

- 1 bubble bowl, glass, 6" opening (8" wide)
- ¼ bunch salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), gold
- 2 clusters ornament ball cluster, gold
- To fill flower food solution
- 5 stems hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), white
- 5 stems Green Trick (*Dianthus barbatus*)
- 2–3 stems spray roses (*Rosa* sp.), white
- 5 stems stock (*Matthiola incana*), white
- 4–6 stems curly willow, fresh, not dried (*Salix matsudana*)
- 3 stems magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
- 2 stems short needle pine (*Pinus clausa*)
- 3 stems Gunni Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus parvifolia* 'Gunny')



Mechanics

Carefully insert the willow stems into the bowl, taking care to create a self-supporting internal lattice. Allow stems to arc above the container's rim. This shape will support flowers with longer stems, adding to the overall mass of the design. Be sure to use plenty of willow stems otherwise they will lead to an ineffective mechanic that does not hold flowers in place. Add fresh flower food solution to the container. These prepared containers can be refrigerated for two weeks prior to arranging.



Completed Design

Add hydrangeas and magnolia stems first to provide an additional network, to ensure all additional stem placements are secure, and to create a visual base for the smaller flowers. Continue to turn the bowl to create a symmetrical, rounded, dome-shaped pattern. To slow bacterial growth in the vase solution, do not allow the foliage to fall below the water line.

Add stock, Green Trick, spray roses, then the pine and eucalyptus branches. Mist the arrangement with a finishing spray, then add gold salal leaves and ornament balls atop the flowers as the final placements.

Many customers perceive roses to be high in value; therefore, position them well in the design so they can be immediately seen. Check the design from all angles to ensure proper form and symmetry. Mist the design with a finishing spray.

Professional Tip: Do not pick up a bubble bowl from the rim. The glass is thin and can easily snap apart. Always pick up the container from the bottom, using two hands.

PRODUCTION AND RETAIL NOTES

- ▶ This design appeals to customers who seek a **contemporary** look.
- ▶ It can be **mass-produced** and refrigerated up to one week prior to delivery.
- ▶ Boxing each design individually will protect the container and contents.
- ▶ Container and willow combo showcases **craftsmanship** and justifies premium pricing.
- ▶ Additional, vertical willow stems can be added, increasing height and value.
- ▶ Ornament colors can be **customized** for corporate or event clients.

RETAIL MARKUP FORMULAS

Florists use a variety of methods to assign retail prices based on overhead, materials, and labor costs. In this example, we present three formulas to consider in the retail pricing of this design.

Total cost of goods sold (COGS) = \$75

Be sure to compare to your COGS for accuracy.

Option A. 3:1 Markup

- ▶ Formula: Retail = $R \times 3$
- ▶ Calculation: $\$75 \times 3 = \225
- ▶ Use with:
 - High production volume
 - Competitive holiday pricing
 - Short selling window

Option B. 4:1 Markup

- ▶ Formula: Retail = $R \times 4$
- ▶ Calculation: $\$75 \times 4 = \300
- ▶ Use when:
 - Skilled labor and design expertise are emphasized
 - Moderate customization and consulting are needed
 - Comparing to many independent retail florist settings

Option C. 5:1 Markup

- ▶ Formula: Retail = $R \times 5$
- ▶ Calculation: $\$75 \times 5 = \375
- ▶ Use when:
 - There is limited availability/materials are out of season
 - Logistical challenges limit delivery access
 - Expectations require careful management
 - A luxury market is emphasized

MARKETING

Give this design a catchy name! Here are a few suggestions.

- ▶ Willow & Winter White Centerpiece
- ▶ Natural Elegance Holiday Centerpiece
- ▶ Willow-Structured Winter Centerpiece
- ▶ Evergreen & Willow Holiday Bowl
- ▶ Winter White with Natural Willow Mechanics

SUMMARY

This holiday centerpiece demonstrates how **natural mechanics, premium florals, and thoughtful design** can replace foam-based methods while maintaining strong profitability. The approach aligns with emerging consumer interest in sustainability while preserving the craftsmanship and economic realities of professional floristry.

This design is appropriate for:

- ▶ Retail holiday collections
- ▶ Corporate gifts
- ▶ Event centerpieces
- ▶ Extension demonstrations and professional training

E-COMMERCE PRODUCT LISTING (SEO-OPTIMIZED)

Use some or all of this text to describe this design on your website.

- ▶ Elevate your holiday décor with this premium **winter floral centerpiece**, designed using natural **curly willow (corkscrew willow)** for a foam-free, eco-friendly structure. Arranged in a stylish clear glass bowl, the piece features **luxury white flowers, seasonal evergreens, and gold metallic accents**, making it ideal for Christmas tables, winter celebrations, and elegant holiday gifting.
- ▶ Crafted with sustainable design techniques, this arrangement provides:
 - Long-lasting freshness through water-based, foam-free mechanics
 - High visual impact using lush, massed florals and textured evergreens
 - Modern holiday styling with white blooms and gold accents
 - A unique, handcrafted design exclusive to our shop

Perfect for:

Holiday centerpieces • Christmas parties •
Corporate gifts • Seasonal home decor • Winter
weddings and events

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The Mississippi State University Extension Service presents Professional Florist, a nationally recognized, non-credit certificate program that supports skill development, business competency, and professional growth within the floral industry.

Professional Florist provides applied training in retail floristry, emphasizing core design principles, flower and foliage care, basic mechanics, pricing fundamentals, and customer-focused production practices. The program offers four certificate options: Professional Floral Designer, Wedding Floral Design, Manager, and Entrepreneur. It is well suited for new florists, career changers, and Extension audiences seeking practical, market-ready skills aligned with commercial floral operations. Learn more at <https://msuext.ms/professionalflorist>.

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