



The SUPPORT Arts and Crafts  
International Centre of Thailand  
(Public Organization)



# Types of Handicrafts Artificial Flowers



**Artificial flowers** are creatively made of various materials, e.g., fabric or paper. Through elaborate imitations of natural beauty of flowers in the visual elements comprising shape, appearance and colour, artificial flowers will look fantastically real like beautiful natural flowers. The spectacular

beauties of the artificial flowers are also created through a perfect blend of imagination and art. The art of artificial flowers is created for the purpose of aesthetic value and floral arrangements for various occasions.



## Artificial Flower Making - Identity Reflecting Local Wisdom with Artistic Skills

Artificial flowers are handicrafts created to preserve the natural beauty especially for the flower species which are very rare or close to extinction. This requires elaborate creation through skills and practice to make realistic beauty in terms of shapes and colours. Most importantly, prior to making artificial flowers, it is necessarily required to have a comprehensive understanding of nature, identity and characteristics of each flower including all details of the real flowers.

Another importance of the creation of artificial flowers is to find suitable materials to make them closest to the natural flowers. For example, selecting fabrics with different filaments, selecting and mixing colours to make the most natural look superficially indistinguishable from the real flowers and paying attention to important details such as flower buds, flower blooms, pollens and pollen grains of each flower. The artists have explored, adapted and put utmost efforts to use the available materials to make artificial flowers. For example, they can make flower buds by using cotton, insert leaves in molds to which heat is applied to press leaves into curling shape, use floral tapes to wrap floral wires to make them become natural green stems of the flowers, etc.

Identities of artificial flowers are divided into 2 following categories

Artificial flowers with imitations of the beautiful spontaneity of nature are those artificial flowers created to have shapes, appearances, colours to be closest to the real flowers. The flower making processes are so intricate and delicate that the makers have to practise and comprehensively understand the nature of flowers in order to make exquisite artificial flowers.

Creative or imaginative artificial flowers are those created by blending in artworks. The creation is for stunning aesthetic of which shapes and colours may not look similar to the real flowers.







## Development of the Art of Artificial Flower Making

Most of the art of artificial flower making was found in ancient civilization sites. Artificial flowers were often used to adorn artistic works such as mural paintings, architectures with stuccoes or even for the religious ceremonies.

There is not yet strong evidence that from which country the art of flower making was first invented. However, for Thailand it was often seen that flowers were made to give to the members of the royal family in the palace since ancient times. In addition, banana leaves or flowers such as lotus petals were used to make a floating basket (or “Krathong” in Thai) for the Loy Krathong Festival or candle flowers were decorated on the candles to be offered to the temples on the occasion of Buddhist Lent Day.

The oldest evidences of artificial flower making in Thailand are the stucco artworks of flower patterns decorated on the architectural sites. The assumption is made that these stucco artworks had been influenced by the carved images in stone castle of Khom culture which most of them were found in the late Ayutthaya period, early Sukhothai period and U-Thong period.





Until the Rattanakosin period, flowers were adapted or preserved in the form of dried flowers or flower sachet (mixture of different flowers enclosed in a piece of gauze). It is evident that the art in the Rattanakosin period especially in the reign of King Rama I was inherited from the Ayutthaya period. Later in the reign of King Rama II and King Rama III, various arts disciplines were created with more elaborate and unique styles.

The adaptation of Thai society to modernization to become a civilized country began from the reign of King Rama IV which led to significant changes in reforming various arts and crafts such as household and decorative items including artificial flowers. A learning center of artificial flower making for the noble ladies called Women's College was established at the royal residences for princess consorts, members of the royal family and the King's concubines situated within the vicinity of the Grand Palace.

In the reign of King Rama V, Her Majesty Queen Prasripatcharindra promoted to revive flower making by organizing trainings on dried flower making for the royal courtiers and teachers of Rajini School. During this period, Thailand was greatly influenced by Japan and students were sent to study handicrafts in the area of artificial flower making in Japan. Upon graduation, they became teachers for handicrafts in various disciplines.

In the reign of King Rama VI, it was the time Thailand was open to increasingly adapt western culture in Thai society and integrate into Thai cultural heritage. In addition, arts and crafts were promoted to play a key role to build Thai national identity.

The art of artificial flower making was developed as a consequence of handicraft promotion in the reign of King Rama VI through organizing courses on fresh and dried flowers at Thai Craft Schools for Women of both public and private sectors. Apparently, artificial flower making courses have been constantly organized until the present day.





## Process of Making Artificial Flowers

### Materials / Tools

**Fabric:** Its appropriate selection is vitally important for making each kind of artificial flowers. There are numerous types of fabric, e.g., organza, muslin, rayon, velvet, satin, poplin, etc.

**Paint:** It is used for painting flower petals and leaves. There are 2 different types of paint, i.e. the paint using hot water as a solvent which can dissolve more easily in hot water and the paint using either hot or cold water as a solvent which can dissolve in either hot or cold water.

**Paper tape for floral stems:** It is used for wrapping wire to make flower stems look neat. There are 2 types of paper tape, i.e. crepe paper and mulberry paper.

**Latex adhesive:** It is used for assembling flowers, leaves and stems.

**Wire:** It is used for supporting petals and leaves for flower assembly. There are several different types of wire which are available from No. 18-30 depending on the size of each flower.

**Cotton ball:** It is used for making flower buds or the inner parts of roses. Sometimes it can be used instead of a brush by dipping it into desired colour and painting on petals.

**Thin wire:** It is used for wrapping flower stems to create a striking look as desired or attach at the back of leaves in order to make them look so

realistic. Furthermore, it can be used to replace the tissue paper because of its toughness, durability and cheaper price.

**Stamen pollen:** It is a part of composition of each flower. It is made from a variety of materials such as Sisal, tapioca flour, glue, velvet straight line, etc.

**Pollen grains:** They are sprinkled on pollens in order to make the flowers look more realistic.

**Sewing thread:** It is used for attaching petals or a bunch of flowers.

**Floral tape:** It is used for floral stem wrapping.

**Fragrance:** It is used for spraying on pollens in order to simulate scent of natural flowers.

**Iron head, soldering iron handle and soldering iron stand:** They are used for smoothing out petals and leaves.

**Soft pillow and hard pillow:** They are used for smoothing out petals and leaves.

**Round brushes and flat brushes from small to large in size**

**Color mixing cup**

**Forceps**

**Glass sheet or formica sheet:** It is used for painting petals and leaves.

**Quilling Tool**

**Tailoring scissors and paper craft scissors**

**Wire cutter**

**Petal and leaf cutter with mould**

**Millinery petal/leaf making tool with mould**



### How to Make Artificial Flowers

**Handcut petals and leaves:** Use tracing paper to trace over petals and leaves as required and then use scissors to cut the tracing paper to make proper patterns of petals and leaves. Afterwards, put the patterns on the fabric and cut along them.

**Colour mixing:** This depends on flower colours that will be created - light, medium and dark colours.

**Painting:** There are many different painting techniques for painting petals and leaves such as dipping a brush in paint and then painting on petals and leaves, dipping a cotton ball in paint and then painting on petals and leaves or using forceps to pick petals and leaves and dipping into colour palette to ensure an even distribution of colours.

**Making pollen grains** – Mix rice flour with water and add a few drops of yellow colour into it. Afterwards, stir them together and let them dry in the sun. When they are completely dry, scrape them off into grains.

**Splicing wire:** Bring a coloured petal and place it on the glass, then wrap a wire as desired size with white crepe paper. Next use a brush to paint it in the same colour as the petal. Cut the wire about half an inch longer than the petal and apply glue on it. Then place it on the petal and use fingernail to press the wire to firmly attach to the fabric.





Pressing petals and leaves: Use iron head as desired and press it on petals, leaves and sepals by following the characteristic of the leaf vein.

Assembling flowers: Bring stamen pollens to tie with a wire stem by using thread to hold it. Then attach petals by starting from the inner layer of petals. Use thread to hold it and do the same until the outer petals. Afterwards, wrap the wire stem with floral tape and check all details to make it look beautiful. There are many types of assembling flowers, i.e. bud, blossom and bloom forms.

Assembling a bunch of flowers and arranging details: Bring flowers in bud, blossom and bloom forms and tie them together. Then add small and large leaves as desired and assemble a bunch of flowers as much realistic as possible by trimming away the excess petal fabric. Afterwards, wrap the stem with floral tape to complete the floral arrangement.





Queen Sirikit Cattleya

## Named After Her Majesty with Reflection of Artistic Skills

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit has a concern about Thailand's natural resources and environment and therefore Her Majesty has been recognized as "Mother of Biodiversity Protection". With her innate ability and beauty, various domestic and international organizations asked for the royal permission to use and celebrate the royal name for flowers that won numerous excellence awards in honour of Her Majesty the Queen.

There are many flowers which have been associated with the royal name of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. The development of each flower and breed improvement are conducted by foreigners in their countries as follows

**Queen Sirikit Cattleya** originated in England. It received the Award of Merit from **the Royal Horticulture Society**, London and then the royal permission to be named "Queen Sirikit Cattleya" in honour of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand. It was registered in 1958 (B.E. 2501) and the royal permission was granted to use this beautiful flower as the symbol of Thai Women Day which falls on August 1 every year.



Dona Queen Sirikit

**Dona Queen Sirikit** is an ornamental shrub flowering all year round with a prominent feature of 5 large petals that are pale pink with reddish rims. This is the flower of the Philippines which was granted the royal name of Queen Sirikit in 1963 (B.E. 2506) during the visit of His Majesty King Bhumibol and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.



Queen Sirikit Rose

**Queen Sirikit Rose** is a big flower which has a pretty and gorgeous yellow with light fragrance. It won the first prize in the Rose Society of Northern Ireland Championship, Belfast. The royal permission was granted to name this rose after Her Majesty Queen Sirikit in August 1971 (B.E. 2514).





Water Lily Queen Sirikit.

Apart from the exotic flowering plants which were named after Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, a new breed of hybrid water lily with stunning and unique purple-hued petals was made in Thailand during 2008-2011 (B.E. 2551-2554) which was named as **Water Lily Queen Sirikit**.

In addition, there are other Thai flowering plants named after Her Majesty Queen Sirikit, namely Mok Rajini and Maha Phrom Rajini. Besides, when Her Majesty proceeded to visit people in the remote rural areas and found a variety of wildflowers in the natural fields or mountains, those wildflowers were given names, i.e. Thipkesorn, Saras-Chanthorn, Nimmanoradee, Soisuwanna, Dusita and Manee Deva. Moreover, Her Majesty asked the botanists to grow such wildflowers within the vicinity of the royal villas.

Hence, the Department of Artificial Flowers, Bang Sai Arts and Crafts Centre had brought various flowers bearing the royal name of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit to elaborately create handmade flowers by starting with examining thoroughly the structure of real flowers, dying and forming artificial flowers to make them look and feel as closest to the real flowers. Elaboration and attention to details are necessarily required from the process of painting, molding, flower assembling and stem wrapping. After these flowers had been beautifully created, they were presented to receive Her Majesty's formal consent prior to making handmade artificial flowers for further trading.



## How to Make Artificial Queen Flowers

Materials/Tools for Making Artificial Queen  
Flowers (i.e. Water Lily Queen Sirikit and Queen  
Sirikit Rose)

1. Wire
2. Tissue paper
3. Cotton
4. Green mulberry paper
5. Crepe paper
6. Petal
7. Pollen
8. Glue
9. Scissors
10. Coloured fabric, Satin fabric, Velvet fabric  
and Flannel fabric
11. Iron head / Soldering iron
12. Thread







## Process of Making Water Lily Queen Sirikit

Apply glue to a stem wire and use tissue paper to wrap around it then use wooden rolling pin to smooth out any wrinkles. Apply glue once again onto the stem and cover it with green crepe paper.

Dip the end of the stem in glue and stick it to a piece of foam which is used to be the receptacle (the base of petals) then wrap around the entire foam with green paper. Use a marking pen to paint stigmas of the flower. Afterwards, use a soldering iron for curling the stamens as desired and bring them to tie around the base of the petals of water lily by gradually starting at low level to high level for approximately 4 levels.

Attach one dyed petal at a time to the base with a thread and then continue doing this until the desired layer is achieved.

Glue onto a water lily leaf and stick it on the stem, then apply glue around the stem and wrap around it with green paper strips.

Exquisitely arrange all details and assemble flowers.





## Process of Making Queen Sirikit Rose

Wrap a stem wire with green crepe paper.

Dip the end of stem in glue before sticking it into a piece of foam which is used to be the base of pollen. Afterwards, apply glue around the base and then wrap around it with cotton in order to form the bud.

Cut fabric into petal shapes and dip them in smooth starch. Then use a soldering iron for curling petals.

Attach the pressed rose petals on the stem and then assemble them until the desired size of finished rose is achieved.

Glue artificial leaves around the stem with approximately 1-inch spacing. Apply glue onto the stem and wrap around it with green paper strips.

Exquisitely arrange all details and assemble flowers.



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Artificial flower handicraft is considered one of the occupations in Thailand in which most of the people have shown interest to earn their living, whether as a main source of income or as a hobby. They can make artificial flowers during their free time. This occupation can well reflect the local and national arts and cultures. In addition, it can contribute to family financial stability and ultimately help promote this handicraft to be widely recognized and preserved as Thailand's cultural heritage in the future.





*Source and Documents for Reference*

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