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Weddings

Giving wedding flowers a second chance

Correction: An earlier version of this article misattributed a quote from floral designer Sarah von Pollaro to another person. This version has been corrected.

By Janet Bennett Kelly August 26, 2011

Couples typically spend about \$2,000 on wedding flowers, according to a [recent survey](#) by TheKnot.com and WeddingChannel.com, but once the day is over, most of the pretty, pricey blossoms will be decorating the inside of trash cans. But local florists are finding ways to let those bouquets and centerpieces bloom a little longer.

After their events are over, some of them give left-behind blooms to charitable causes.

Katie Martin of [Elegance & Simplicity](#) in Bethesda takes centerpieces to three area nursing homes: "The patients at these facilities do not get a ton of visitors and they enjoy the flowers immensely. Their reaction is always positive, and I know many of the patients by name at the nursing home near my house."

Sarah von Pollaro, floral designer and owner of D.C.-based [Urban Petals](#), delivers leftover centerpieces to nonprofit organizations including [Martha's Table](#) and [Bright Beginnings](#). She says her experience working with sick children at the [Hole in the Wall Gang Camp](#) inspired her to give back. "I believe that all people should have flowers in their life and especially people who might not be able afford to buy them on a regular basis," she says.

Even while the party is in progress, von Pollaro makes sure to get the most life out of her carefully arranged flowers. Instead of letting the bride and bridesmaid bouquets languish after the ceremony, she uses them as centerpieces for the head table. "It's a way of getting double duty out of the

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flowers and saving about \$150 on an arrangement,” she says. (Her bouquet still intact, the bride can toss it after the reception.)

Martin, who specializes in eco-conscious weddings, has yet

(Katherine Frey/The Washington Post) another way to extend the life of wedding flowers. She suggests choosing arrangements of hydrangeas, coxcomb, roses and lavender, which dry well and can be kept on display long after the last dance. She also recommends that brides strip some flowers out of their bouquets and press them in a book. “They can be glued in scrapbooks, placed with an invitation and framed or used as potpourri,” she said.

A keepsake and a fragrant reminder, both enduring memories of the big day.

