

Bouquets on Bonnets

By Sherry Winkinhofer, Northwest Missouri Model A Ford Club

The hats and bonnets worn in the Model A era came in a myriad of shapes, colors, and designs. These colorful hats could be decorated with ribbons, beads, pins, feathers, and more! A favorite decorative element often used were flowers or other floral and nature-based designs. Hats with flower trimmings were available in all major catalogs as well as stores and millinery shops. Articles about making your own flower trim from various materials such as felt or ribbon were printed in newspapers and women's magazines, allowing you to be creative or economical or both!

Blossoms and leaves, stems and vines, all were used in multiple combinations and sizes, and of a multitude of materials! I've found flowers for use on hats made from silk, velvet, cotton, rayon, felt, leather, and more! Flowers made out of feathers, or pompoms, flowers that were appliqued on or embroidered. A nosegay tucked on the side or small blossoms hand-painted across the brim, all are a beautiful era touch. Flowers were often used in combination with ribbons or other decorative elements, but sometimes they stood on their own such as with one large blossom on the side of a Summer hat.

There were unlimited ways to use flowers as decorations on these hats. Here are a few examples to spark your imagination when putting together a Model A outfit!

Wide brim bonnets are a natural with flowers. One large blossom set off the right side makes a striking decoration, but smaller blooms give a more delicate but still pleasing look. Colors can be neutral or contrasting for a more vibrant look!



National Bellas Hess Co
Spring and Summer
1931



National Bellas Hess Co
Spring and Summer 1931
Velvet flowers



The Robert Simpson
Catalog Fall and Winter
1928-29
Velvet orchid



Sears Roebuck and Co Fall and
Winter 1928-29
sheer organdy and rayon plush



Sears Roebuck and Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Organdy and rayon taffeta

Flowers framing the brim were another stylish way of utilizing flowers. From small to large, these hats display a few different styles of hats focusing the flowers around the face. It was common to use ribbons or embroidery to add to the effect.



National Bellas Hess Co
Spring and Summer 1931
Shaded flowers



Sears, Roebuck and Co
Spring and Summer 1928
Handmade fabric flowers



National Bellas Hess Co Inc
Spring and Summer 1931
Appliqued plush flowers



The Robert Simpson Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Plush blossoms with
tinsel stitching



National Bellas Hess Co
Spring and Summer 1931
Velvet flowers

Little nosegays of blossoms on the side are found often. As you can see, they can contrast or harmonize. Here's a selection of cloche style hats displaying this look.

Cloche hats also looked great with just a single flower tucked on the side. As you can see, the size of the flower was an individual choice! The flowers could be in a harmonizing color such as these, or a contrasting color to really stand out.



Sears Roebuck and Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Rayon flower cluster



Sears, Roebuck and Co
Spring and Summer 1928
Novelty flower



Sears Roebuck and Co Fall and Winter 1928-29
Organdy flower



Sears Roebuck and Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Stylish gardenia



Sears, Roebuck and Co
Spring and Summer 1928
Novelty flower

Floral designs stitched or applied directly on the hat were an elegant use of flowers in a slightly different way.

This hat is trimmed with ribbon, but the focus is the hand painted flowers!



Sears, Roebuck and Co
Spring and Summer 1928
Taffeta flowers applique with floss embroidery



Robert Simpson Co
Fall and Winter 1928-1929
Embroidered with floss and chenille



Sears Roebuck and Co Fall and Winter 1928-29
Embroidered floral design



Chicago Mail Order Co Fall and Winter 1929-30
Hand painted flowers

A little cluster of flowers on the front of the hat was an elegant look.

Applied flowers were used in a variety of ways for era hats. Rayon plush flowers were a popular options for hat adornments, but a piece of applique fabric was also used.



Sears Roebuck and Co Fall and Winter 1928-29
"Frenchy" flower cluster



Sears, Roebuck and Co
Spring and Summer 1928
Applied flowers



The Robert Simpson Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Applique plush flowers



The Robert Simpson Co
Fall and Winter 1928-29
Applied plush blossoms



Sears Roebuck and Co Fall and Winter 1928-29
Rayon plush applique with embroidered accents

Of course, there were other options to buying a pre-made hat. Magazines were full of articles about making your hats and/or the embellishments for stylish bonnets.

These Easter hats are made from felt with felt flowers for decorations.

Woman's World for April, 1928 41

The apple colored felt can be made with matching eye lenses or silk the hairline and always suitable sports costume of silk.

Tulip

Zinnia

Hyacinth

Elizabeth

After the Simplicity and Severity of Winter Millinery, a Natural Craving Comes to All of Us to Express the Season's Spirit in Our Apparel

EASTER HATS

from the Studio of a Chic Designer

These Felt Hats Are So Inexpensive and So Easy to Make That One May Have a Number of Them and Not Be in Any Way Extravagant

Making a Felt Hat

There Is None of the Tediousness of the Usual Millinery Construction

There are no foundation fringes or backband. The hat is cut along lines outlined on the felt. The pieces of soft pliable material are made all stitched together on the sewing machine. And the trimmings of felt in the involved colors outlined to cut in petal shapes or conventional patterns, and apply with long stitches of yarn, with tiny strokes on the wrong side or with glue. All so quickly done, yet giving a nice, intricate effect of vibrant colors and softly blending tones in mutually artistic designs.

Rose—Crown in four sections. Leave the joining open the width of seam at points of sections at A. This assures neatness at rim when all sections are sewed together. The brim is in two pieces, sewed to crown with small hand stitches at B and C.

Brim pieces meet at the sides and are caught together with stitches at D.

Trimming may be applied before or after the pieces are sewed together. Apply leaves, buds and small flowers first. Suggestions for embroidered veins of leaves may be seen in model Morning Glory.

Lily—Crown is so cleverly planned that top resembles a rim in back when pulled down into shape. Like the model Hyacinth, the side slashes in top of crown are sewed first and then the center front slash and the back joining, which follows a diagonal line at A. The deep fold in back at B is tacked on inside. Brim is two layers of contrasting felt, sewed together with rows of stitching at C. Trimming is sewed in place at C with stitches that do not go straight to right side.

Certainly there are no fringes here! Trimming of greater charm and never any so easy to make as these

HYACINTH

Hyacinth—Construction of crown is shown at A. The slashings that shape the sides are stitched first. The front slash and the back seam of crown are then stitched all at one time. The brim is all in one piece, coming almost together in center front. The points should not be tacked back against the crown till the trimming is sewed to the brim. First the tips of points should be tacked from wrong side. The clusters of flowers are sewed together as B before they are sewed to the brim of the hat.

ZINNIA

Zinnia—Stitching of the six-section crown are made on right side with a piping of contrasting felt sewed in seam at A. Brim is two layers of contrasting felt. B. Three rows of machine stitching are used for edge. Ends of brim top in center back and are covered by crown. At each side is a flower in natural coloring. Pieces of felt are placed over the other as at C. After they are arranged, they are tacked down only enough to hold in place. Stitches should be taken from the wrong side.

Woman's World Magazine April 1928 Felt hats and Flowers

Instructions for flowers handmade from silk fabric to enhance a hat.

The Hiawatha Bead Company put out instruction booklets on beading your own flowers to use as trimming for hats and clothing.

HOME SEWING

by RUTH WYETH SPEARS

SILK FLOWERS FOR THE SUMMER HAT

Many of the new straw hats of the larger type are picturesquely trimmed with handmade flowers. The big posies used on the model I have sketched here may be roses, or you may call them by some other name and they will be just as smart. The hat is natural colored straw and is bound with old blue taffeta. The flowers are blue and rose taffeta with green leaves.

To make one of these flowers, cut a circle of silk 14 inches in diameter. Outline a circle 4 inches in diameter in the centre of this piece as shown at A, and another 6 inches in diameter as shown at B. Following these lines, make rows of tuck shirring 1/4 of an inch deep as shown at C. Then run a shir thread in the edge as at D. Draw up these threads to make the flower as it appears on the hat.

To make the leaves, cut pieces of the green silk as shown at E. Fold and shir them as shown in this sketch. When the shir thread is drawn up the leaf will appear as at F. The leaves may be made in various sizes. Those on the hat in the sketch are about 3 1/2 inches long and 2 inches wide finished.

(Copyright, 1928, by Ruth Wyeth Spears)

Edmonton Journal July 6, 1928, silk flowers

"THE WILD FLOWER"

Model No. 346

"Hiawatha" Materials

1 spool Bead Wire No. 5 Silver or Gold
1 bunch each colors Green, Blue, Yellow, Orchid, Beads No. 1525 or 2570
1 skein Silky Tinsel No. 42—Gold or silver

Petal of Flower—Cut a piece of wire 6 inches long and string on 6 orchid, 24 blue and 6 orchid beads. Take ends of wires and twist together so that you make a loop of beads to make center of petal as shown in Fig. 2. To the top of this loop between the 24 Blue beads twist another piece of wire cut 6 inches long as shown in Fig. 2 which should leave two ends of wire each 3 inches long. On both of these wires string on first 14 blue beads, 6 orchid beads and twice ends of these wires around wire ends of first loop to make second row of beads in petal. Repeat this for third row of beads and string on these ends of wires 18 blue beads, 6 orchid beads. Cut a fourth piece of wire 6 1/2 inches long and fasten the same as previous wires, stringing on ends of these wires 22 blue beads and 6 orchid beads.

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"THE BUNCHBERRY"

Model No. 348

"Hiawatha" Materials

1 spool Bead Wire No. 5—Silver or Gold
1 bunch Bead Gems 2648, 3117, 3236 or 3129
1 bunch Green Beads No. 1525 or 2570
1 skein Silky Tinsel No. 42—Gold or Silver
2 bunches Stamens No. 6694

Flower—Cut one end of each stamen. String on stamen one bead, as in Figure 1. Make about 450 like this. Take a piece of Silky Tinsel measuring about 30 inches, and fold it in 4 equal parts. To this, wind on one group of stamens with beads, each containing about 10 beads near the top of Silky Tinsel length. Continue winding on groups of 10 beads 1/2 of an inch apart until you have about 25 groups. Make another bunch exactly the same, only taking 24 inches of Silky Tinsel (fold in 4 parts) winding on about 20 groups of beads.

Leaves—Cut a piece of wire 7 inches long, string on 25 Green Beads and twist ends of wire together to make a bead loop for center of leaf. See Fig. 2. To top of loop fasten another wire cut 7 inches long as shown in Fig. 2, and string on each end of wire 15 beads. Twist to ends of wire of first loop to complete leaf as shown in Fig. 3. Make 12 leaves like this, and twist leaves together to make a spray of leaves as shown in picture.

To Branch Flowers and Leaves.—Wind together at ends of stems the two flowers and spray of leaves with Silky Tinsel and bend leaves to make graceful.

Catalogs such as Sears and Montgomery Wards sold separate flowers and floral collections that could be used freshen up old hats or add to new hats and garments. It seems odd that most of time these catalogs showed them in black and white, but just a few color ads are to be found to help demonstrate the vivid colors that were available.

10-872 Velvet camelia flower for corsage bouquet. Attractive and popular. Old rose, pink, white, red. Price delivered... **29¢**

10-873 Velvet rose. Pink, rose, red, tea-rose. Price delivered..... **50¢**

10-874 Bouquet of small flowers. Mauve, old rose, four-tone. Pricedel. **33¢**

10-875 Velvet violets. Two-tone purple, rose, sand - with brown. Del'd.... **33¢**

10-876 Metal ribbon flower. Gold or silver color. Very pretty on dresses. Price del'd **45¢**

Robert Simpson catalog Fall and Winter 1928-29

Paris Says - Flowers Are Smart

Velvet
20 B 1137—Bright red; Copen; brown; old rose; light green; peach. About 5 by 12 in... **89¢**

Violets
20 B 813—COLORS: Purple; reddish helio; beige; Copen blue; red. About 7 inches by 8 inches. State color. We Pay Postage..... **59¢**
Large bouquet of rayon blossoms with green leaves.

About 6 by 8 in.
Velvet and Organdy
20 B 778—Tan; peach; maize; orchid; Nile green; bright red. State color. We Pay Postage. Velvet and organdy blossoms, buds with green leaves. **50¢**

Gardenia
20 B 1107—White; old rose; yellow; orchid; geranium red; tan. About 4 by 5½ inches. **32¢**
20 B 815—About 3 by 5½ inches. Same colors as above..... **19¢**

Glazed Gardenias
20 B 316—COLORS: Black and white; brown and tan; red and black; navy and white. 3 in. by 6 in. State color. **20¢** Postpaid..... **20¢**

Violet Bouquet Rayon Blossoms
20 B 814—Purple; reddish helio; beige; Copen blue; red. About 5 by 7 in.... **32¢**

Velvet Blossoms
20 B 780—Red; pink; green; orchid; tan; maize. State color. Postpaid. **20¢** 7 in. overall..... **20¢**

Montgomery Wards Spring and Summer 1931

Millinery flowers were not just made from fabric. Some of the textiles used might surprise you. For example, the below flowers sold as trim for a hat are made out of leather!

Below are some “New-Old-Stock” (NOS) flower trimmings from an era Millinery supply. A nice variety is displayed here which highlights the bright colors that would have been available.



Gorrings catalog 1928—leather blossoms



Picture from collection of Patti Jones

As you can see, there was a huge variety of ways to include flowers as decoration on era hats. Feel free to dress up a hat blank, retrim an older hat, or even tackle creating a hat from scratch with the many instructions that can be found in era literature. The garden awaits as inspiration, and the use of flowers on your bonnet will make it that much more era-appropriate!

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