

Training Guidelines for Floral Demonstrator's Assistants



1. Introduction

- The Demonstrator's Assistant plays a **vital, behind-the-scenes role** in ensuring the success of floral demonstrations.
- A warm welcome, helpful manner, and quiet professionalism help set the tone for the entire event. Demonstrators invest significant time and effort into their work, each bringing a unique style and approach. Flexibility is therefore essential—the assistant is the one who adapts.
- With thoughtful, thorough preparation, technical support, and a positive outlook, the assistant helps create a **polished, seamless experience** that both informs and inspires audiences.

2. Key Qualities of a Great Assistant

A successful assistant demonstrates these essential attributes:

- **Adaptability:** Adjusts quickly to changes, including design alterations or technical challenges.
- **Proactivity:** Anticipates needs and acts without waiting for direction.
- **Calm & Composed:** Remains steady under pressure, reinforcing the demonstrator's focus.
- **Solution-Oriented:** Approaches challenges with creativity, practicality and resourcefulness.
- **Team Player:** Works harmoniously with the demonstrator, hosts, and fellow assistants.
- **Floral Knowledge:** Confidently handles floral materials and understands basic design principles.
- **Discretion & Respect:** Maintains confidentiality, honours the demonstrator's process, and respects boundaries.

3. Pre-Demonstration Duties

Before the event, the assistant should ensure the following:

- **Venue & Equipment:** Confirm layout, stage setup, and all required equipment (tables, turntables, microphones, lighting, and sound systems).
- **Backdrop & Drapes:** Ensure that drapes or backgrounds compliment the demonstrator's style and design colours.
- **Committee Liaison:** Liaise with the organising committee to confirm arrangements and ensure expectations are clearly understood by all.
- **Plant Material Preparation:**
 - Use **clean, sharp tools** to cut stems at a 45° angle.
 - Remove foliage below the waterline and use **clean water with preservative**.
 - Handle flowers gently to preserve freshness and beauty.
- **Packing & Labelling:** Pack thoughtfully—boxes, buckets, containers, and pre-assembled elements should be clearly labelled for efficient access during the demonstration.

4. Extra Preparations for Visiting Demonstrators

When working with out-of-province or international demonstrators, **assistants should provide additional support, including:**

- Lined flower boxes, buckets, and containers.
- Essential mechanics and tools (tape, wire, scissors, secateurs, ties, labels, rubbish bags).
- A **well-stocked tool kit** with spare secateurs.
- Local guidance regarding venue layout, water sources and facilities.

5. Appearance & Presentation

Assistants should maintain a professional and unobtrusive appearance:

- Dress neatly in **neutral, non-distracting colours** (preferably black or soft pastels, depending on the background).
- Avoid loud patterns, logos, or distracting accessories.
- Ensure hair is tidy and wear **quiet, comfortable footwear**.
- Maintain a **low profile**—move discreetly and avoid drawing attention away from the demonstrator.

6. On the Day of the Demonstration

Arrival & Setup – assistants should:

- Arrive **at least one hour before the scheduled start time**.
- Set up tables and ensure optimal visibility for the audience.
- Position and label materials in order they will be used.
- Check water supplies and confirm that sound systems and lighting are fully functional.

7. During the Demonstration

Assistants should:

- Provide quiet, efficient support, handing **materials to the demonstrator on cue**.
- Agree in advance on discreet signals for bringing on or removing items.
- Keep unused materials, trolleys and equipment out of sight, ensuring **walkways remain clear**.
- Always approach from **up-stage** to avoid blocking the audience's view.
- Assist discreetly with holding stems, trimming materials, or discarding offcuts.
- Stay **alert, responsive, and unobtrusive** – visible only when needed.

Do's

- Ensure table placement and seating maximize audience visibility.
- Keep spare tools readily available (secateurs, scissors).
- Label everything clearly.
- Remain professional, supportive, and enthusiastic throughout the event.

Dont's

- Don't interfere with other club activities.
- Don't walk in front of the demonstrator or block sightlines.
- Don't chat, giggle, or distract attention during the demonstration.
- Don't sweep or make noise during the show.

8. Large Stage Presentations

For larger events, additional planning and coordination are essential:

- Match the number of assistants to the scale of the presentation - **too many assistants cause confusion.**
- Four assistants are often ideal, working in **pairs from opposite sides** of the stage.
- Coordinate closely with the stage manager where present; if not, **plan movements in advance with the demonstrator.**
- Keep stage crossings to a minimum and ensure movements are purposeful, quiet and well timed.

9. Professional Conduct

Assistants must:

- Respect the demonstrator's timing, style, and creative process.
- Remain focused on their role and **avoid distractions** related to other club activities.
- Maintain a **quiet, calm presence**—no unnecessary chatter, fidgeting, or conversations.
- Be supportive, confident, and enthusiastic at all times.
- Prioritize sustainability by reducing waste and using eco-friendly materials wherever possible.

Remember: this is a **service role**. The spotlight belongs to the demonstrator.

10. Personal Growth

Serving as an assistant provides opportunities for:

- Developing a deep understanding of **event structure and audience engagement.**
- Exposure to a wide range of **floral design styles.**
- Increased **confidence** in public and professional settings.
- Valuable **networking** with creative peers.
- Growth in **leadership, presentation, and organisational skills.**

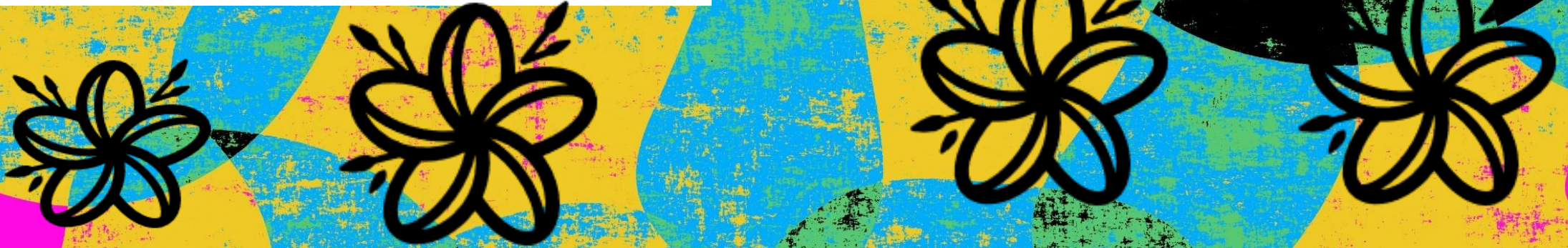
11. Closing Thought

“An exceptional assistant does not just support—they elevate the entire experience.”

With dedication, professionalism, and a positive spirit, assistants help transform floral demonstrations into unforgettable moments—while also growing in your own creative journey.

This document was initiated by Dirk Greeff-Cronje in collaboration with the SAFU Demonstrators' Panel

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PROTOCOL FOR TRAINING DEMONSTRATOR'S ASSISTANTS

1.1 Pre-requisites

- Must be a member of a provincial floral art club with some floral experience.
- Must show genuine interest in floral art and a willingness to learn.

1.2 Application

- Candidates register with the Demonstrator's Panel Head in their province.

1.3 Fees

- No payment is required to SAFU.
- Provinces may charge a nominal fee for training materials or administration.

1.4 Time frame

- Training may commence at any time during the year.
- Duration is flexible and can be adapted to suit provincial needs and candidate availability.

1.5 Structure of Training

- One or two formal training sessions (or more if required).
- Practical experience gained by assisting at small club demonstrations. Informal assessment can take place at these club demonstrations.

1.6 Assessment

- Candidates must assist at a larger demonstration for final evaluation, where possible. (Alternatively, a club demonstration featuring at least 3 designs).
- Assessment is conducted by
 - The Demonstrator.
 - A Demonstrator/Judge in the audience.
- A standardized assessment sheet will be used.

1.7 Completion & Certification

- If both assessors are satisfied, the assessment sheet is submitted to the Exam Coordinator for moderation.
- Successful candidates receive a SAFU Certificate.

ASSESSMENT SHEET FOR DEMONSTRATOR ASSISTANTS

NAME OF CANDIDATE: _____

NAME OF DEMONSTRATOR: _____

NAME OF ASSESSOR: _____

DATE OF DEMONSTRATION: _____

Please assess the Demonstrator's Assistant on each of the following criteria by ticking the appropriate box: Excellent (E), Satisfactory (S), or Needs Attention (NA). Provide comments where necessary.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	E	S	NA	COMMENT
Key qualities	Does the candidate have the qualities to be a good demonstrator's assistant?				
Pre-demonstration duties	*Communicated with demonstrator to establish understanding/requirements *Assisted with planning and preparation *Handled material correctly				
Day of demonstration	*Punctual arrival *Setup efficiency *Correct positioning of materials *Readiness of equipment				
During demonstration	*Support on cue *Presented materials calmly and discreetly. *Didn't block audience *Moved with quiet purpose; didn't hover or fidget *Remained alert and anticipated needs of demonstrator				
Post demonstration	*Assisting with clean-up *Packing equipment *Venue tidiness				
Appearance	*Suitable dress, shoes *Neat appearance				

GENERAL COMMENT:

RECOMMENDATION: Candidate has performed well / candidate requires further experience (tick applicable)

SIGNED: _____