

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

Design No. 3: Red Pillar Candle



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

THE EVERGREEN EDGE SERIES

Planning holiday lines during the summer is a smart business strategy for florists, farmer-florists, and floral designers. 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 season begins.

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, step-by-step construction guidance, and retail pricing considerations to support efficient holiday production and sales.

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. 3: A LONG AND LOW HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE USING A RED PILLAR CANDLE

This publication demonstrates a holiday centerpiece using a pillar candle, fresh flowers, Florida grown evergreens, and decorative accents. This long-lasting arrangement will please many customers due to its traditional style. We used a battery-operated candle although a wax candle could also be used. It is suitable for rectangular or oval dining tables, head tables, and fireplace mantels.

The design approach emphasizes:

- ▶ A variety of fresh evergreens in multiple leaf patterns
- ▶ A long, low profile that does not hinder guest interaction
- ▶ Strong retail pricing flexibility
- ▶ An eye-catching red pillar candle

Consider adding this design to your holiday floral marketing mix. Many customers want long, low centerpieces for their holiday tables. This same design can be displayed along the edge of a head table. If your business offers the service of home decoration, you can use one, two, or three of these on a long banquet table to create a sense of cadence for dinner parties and events.

DESIGN INSTRUCTIONS



Materials

- 1 plastic utility container
- $\frac{2}{3}$ brick floral foam
- 1 roll waterproof tape
- 1 roll #40 red velvet ribbon
- 1 red pillar candle, battery-operated, 6 inches tall, 3 inches wide
- 1 pillar candle holder, 3 inches wide
- 1 bundle wired wood picks
- 2 clusters red ornament balls, 1 inch
- 2 clusters artificial red berries
- 4 pinecones, medium-sized
- 3 stems Carolina sapphire (*Hesperocyparis glabra* 'Carolina Sapphire')
- 5 stems short needle pine (*Pinus clausa*)
- 5 stems Gunni eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus parvifolia* 'Gunni')
- 3 stems cedar arborvitae (*Thuja orientalis*)
- 5 stems bells of Ireland (*Moluccella laevis*)
- 5 stems standard red carnations (*Dianthus caryophyllus*)
- 3 stems spray chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)

Mount the candle holding a wired wood pick directly in the center of the hydrated floral foam. Next, ensure the container rim is dry as waterproof tape will not adhere to wet or dirty surfaces. We used one-fourth-inch-wide waterproof tape but recommend half-inch-wide tape. Use the tape to hold down the flanges of the candle holder. Add an extra length of tape to hold down the tabs of the first tape applications. Add fresh flower food solution to the container.



Build the design using line materials to extend the pattern and mass materials to provide visual weight. Add the lighter materials toward the latter part of the design process. Check the design from all angles to ensure proper form and symmetry. Add fresh flower food solution to the container and mist the design with a finishing spray. You can store this design in refrigeration for up to one month.

Professional Tip: If the candle does not fit firmly into the candle holder pick, keep it boxed and deliver it with the centerpiece as a separate item to install. Many artificial candles are made from wax that can chip or split, causing a loss of aesthetic appeal and waste.



Mount any trims on wired wood picks and, along with the pinecones, distribute them evenly within the centerpiece.



Finish the arrangement by arranging the bells of Ireland first, followed by carnations, then spray chrysanthemums.

PRODUCTION AND RETAIL NOTES

- ▶ This design appeals to customers who seek a **traditional** look with fresh eucalyptus.
- ▶ The greenery-only base can be **mass-produced** and refrigerated for a month.
- ▶ Once the flowers are added, it can be refrigerated up to **one week** prior to delivery.
- ▶ This arrangement can be one of a few **select designs** to feature for the holiday season.
- ▶ Coordinate **customized colors** for the candle and flowers, tailoring this design for events.

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) = \$70

Be sure to compare to your COGS for accuracy.

Option A. 3:1 Markup

- ▶ Formula: Retail = $R \times 3$
- ▶ Calculation: $\$70 \times 3 = \mathbf{\$210}$
- ▶ Use with:
 - High production volume
 - Competitive holiday pricing
 - Short selling window

Option B. 4:1 Markup

- ▶ Formula: Retail = $R \times 4$
- ▶ Calculation: $\$70 \times 4 = \mathbf{\$280}$
- ▶ 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: $\$70 \times 5 = \mathbf{\$350}$
- ▶ Use when:
 - There is limited availability/materials are out of season
 - Logistical challenges limit delivery access
 - Where expectations require careful management
 - A luxury market is emphasized

MARKETING

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

- ▶ Evergreen Ember Centerpiece
- ▶ Holiday Hearth Glow
- ▶ Rustic Yuletide Candle Garden
- ▶ Crimson Evergreen Celebration
- ▶ Winter Pine Candle Tablepiece

E-COMMERCE PRODUCT LISTING (SEO-OPTIMIZED)

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

- ▶ Bring warmth and festive elegance to your holiday table with the **Evergreen Ember Holiday Candle Centerpiece**. This handcrafted Christmas centerpiece features fresh evergreen foliage, pine branches, eucalyptus, and seasonal accents arranged around a glowing red pillar candle. Pinecones, berries, and textured blooms create a rustic yet refined design perfect for winter entertaining.
- ▶ Designed for Christmas tables, mantels, and holiday gatherings, this arrangement combines natural greenery with classic red accents for a timeless seasonal look. The lush evergreens add fragrance and freshness, while the candle provides a warm focal point that enhances cozy winter décor.
- ▶ Handcrafted with an eye toward holiday tradition, this arrangement provides:
 - A fresh evergreen centerpiece with a red pillar candle
 - Seasonal accents including pinecones, berries, and winter florals
 - Long, low design ideal for dining tables and mantels
 - Handcrafted holiday arrangement using natural foliage textures
 - Perfect for Christmas décor, holiday parties, and seasonal gifts

SUMMARY

This holiday centerpiece demonstrates how a battery-operated candle can be used in the center of fresh evergreen foliage. Battery-operated candles are often preferred for public spaces, offices, and venues where open flames are restricted or prohibited.

This design features Florida-grown pine branches and miniature eucalyptus with pinecones and seasonal blooms. The safety advantages of a battery-operated candle, combined with long-lasting, fresh evergreens, make this design a practical and marketable holiday offering throughout the month of December. It is ideal for holiday dinner tables, fireplace mantels, and winter seasonal décor throughout the home.

LEARN WITH EXTENSION: MSU EXTENSION PROFESSIONAL FLORIST PROGRAM

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/professionalfloirist>.

The authors wish to thank
FernTrust Inc.
2184 US Hwy 17 N, Seville, FL
www.ferntrust.com



The information given here is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products, trade names, or suppliers are made with the understanding that no endorsement is implied and that no discrimination against other products or suppliers is intended.

Publication 4200 (POD-06-26)

By **James M. DelPrince**, PhD, Associate Professor and Horticulture Specialist, Coastal Research and Extension Center; **Julie Campbell**, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Georgia; **Cole Etheredge**, PhD, Associate Professor, Plant and Soil Sciences; **Tricia Knight**, PhD, Research Professor, Coastal Research and Extension Center, and Director, Coastal Horticulture Research; **Wanda Norton**, Extension Program Assistant, Coastal Research and Extension Center; **Alyssa Palmer**, Instructor I, Plant and Soil Sciences; **Irina Sheshukova**, Instructor/Extension Floral Design Specialist, Kansas State University Extension; and **Karen Stauderman**, Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent III, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Volusia County.

Copyright 2026 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution. Discrimination is prohibited in university employment, programs, or activities based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status to the extent protected by applicable law. Questions about equal opportunity programs or compliance should be directed to the Office of Civil Rights Compliance, 231 Famous Maroon Band Street, P.O. 6044, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director