

# Wedding Ideas With A Farm Woman's Touch

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**Lancaster Farming Staff**  
**ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.)** — Since Rudy and Reba Wolgemuth are immersed in the agriculture lifestyle, they wanted their wedding to reflect it. At the same time, they wanted their wedding to be memorable without costing a fortune.

The couple managed to make it just that and Reba is willing to share her creative ideas with other brides-to-be who are appalled to hear that the average wedding costs \$16,000.

Cutting costs, Reba found, does not mean a bride needs to settle for a drab affair.

For starters, Reba said, "Forget bridal shops."

Money can be saved by purchasing a wedding gown at a consignment shop. Many of these gowns are new from bridal stores' unsold stock. Some have been worn, but a gown that is only worn one day and then dry cleaned appears new. Reba said that the savings are substantial. She stitched on a lace applique to give the gown a new look. She also formed the bridal headpieces with star statice and baby's breath.

"I wanted guests to feel honored and special," Reba said. For her, that meant a wedding that offered a personal glimpse into the lives of the bride and groom, and a wedding with lots of flowers — without pricey flowershop costs.

The best way to accomplish this, she decided, was to do most of the flower arrangement and to use silk and dried flowers. She had picked up some flower-arrangement know-how from a vo-tech course, but much of her ability seems to reveal a natural eye for design.

She chose to coordinate her wedding colors with those of the farmhouse, which she and Rudy renovated. That way the flower arrangements could do double duty.

The cascade of white roses that Reba carried down the aisle, now adorns the exposed beams on the

bathroom wall. The unity candle surrounded by mauve and blue flowers sets on the bathroom vanity. The milk can that overflows with flowers, first set in the church foyer during the wedding and is now a focal point in the dressing area. The dining room centerpiece had been one of the table decorations at the reception, the others were given as gifts to those who helped with the reception.

Country twist bows tied around bunches of eucalyptus, baby's breath, and greens were first used at the end of each church pew. Reba turned the bows sideways to change the vertical arrangements into horizontal ones, which are now placed above the farmhouse's inside doorways.

The bases for the table centerpieces are one-inch slabs of wood sawed off a fallen tree at Reba's homeplace. The wood was sealed with tree seal and a hot glue gun was used to attach the candles and flowers around the base.

Reba stresses the need to start early in preparing for the wedding. She, herself, had only a three-month engagement in which to plan, arrange, and finish a myriad of details. The March blizzard almost caused a disaster when it struck on the day Reba planned to cut floral bases from an overturned tree. With difficulty, she managed to brush the snow aside to reach the tree and finish her project.

As guests were seated to await the ceremony, they watched slides of the couple from babyhood to present to the strains of organ music. While music from "Lord of the Harvest," played, slides were shown on the sanctuary wall of farm shots from Rudy's work out west. Pictures of the couple doing things with friends flickered to the strains of the music "Friends."

While the music and pictures were synchronized, one thing that was not planned but in retrospect proved to be ironical happened while the soloist was singing "...with shaky knees we stand before you...." It was at that point that



The bridal bouquet was designed to do double duty as a bathroom focal point in the Wolgemuths' farmhouse.

Reba fainted.

She attributes her lightheadedness to packing too many last minute duties into the final hours. Some duties could not be averted. Since cows don't stop giving milk when it's time for a wedding, Reba milked the cows on the morning of her wedding day then rushed to the church to decorate and put some finishing touches on the food.

Other than a few shaky moments during Reba's lightheadedness, the wedding went on in style.

Scented candles were used to give a fragrant aroma throughout the church for the evening wedding.

The walls during the reception were decorated with a large heart-shaped grapevine wreath covered with greens and miniature lights. Wheat swags and wedding bells hung from swags of greenery.

A large stuffed satin heart was made from a plywood base. Glue glitter was scrawled across the satin with the words, "Congratulations Rudy and Reba."

The wedding cake had the traditional bride and groom top, but the middle and bottom cake layers were decorated to reflect the occupations of the couple. Because Reba likes to garden, she made sugar molds of corn, pumpkin, tomatoes and other produce for the garden. A Gleaner combine, representative of Rudy's custom combining business, was surrounded by fields of cornstalks and grains.

Reception food included beans and pickles that Reba had preserved from her garden, meatloaf butchered from their own beef, fruit salad made by family members, mashed potatoes that a local restaurant prepared for pick-up,

and homemade bread that a friend made. The strawberries in the Jell-O salad had also been preserved from Reba's garden. The dinner was served by church friends of the couple.

"I think most people are eager to help a bride and groom by helping with the meal in order to make the day special," Reba said.

Reba suggests that wedding photography be taken before the ceremony so that everyone is fresh. Children, she said, usually behave better if pictures are taken ahead of time.

Photo costs can be reduced by choosing smaller-size prints instead of 8x10 or larger ones.

But one cost that is difficult to avoid is tuxedo rental. Reba said that if you marry out of the wedding season, rentals are cheaper.

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## Bridal Gowns By A Farm Woman



"I can do anything with a pattern," said Ruth Akers who concentrates on sewing bridal gowns.

**LOU ANN GOOD**  
**Lancaster Farming Staff**  
**SOLANCO (Lancaster Co.)** — "I love weddings," Ruth Akers said.

Perhaps that is why Ruth spends much of her time surrounded by filmy fabric and yards of lace as she stitches bridal gowns and veils.

Ruth has been sewing for others since she was 18 years old, but it's only been during the last seven years that she has been concentrating on bridal gowns.

Ruth got her start in the bridal business when she sewed her own wedding dress. Later, she did the bridal gowns for two of her daughters' weddings and a daughter-in-law's.

She finds that her tension relaxes when she sets at the sewing machine.

Despite pressing deadlines with her seamstress business, Ruth has a much more demanding business on the farm.

"I can sew and let the cleaning go, but I have never missed a milking," said Ruth, who helps her husband Curtis on their Solanco Acres Dairy of Distinction.

With 60 milking cows, Ruth helps morning and evening. She also pampers her pet sheep of mixed breed heritage.

Now, married more than 30 years, Ruth said she met her husband when she was a milk tester

from Bedford County and tested milk at Curtis's farm.

"It was love at first sight," Ruth conceded. The couple married and farmed on shares the first year and then purchased the farm on which they now lived. The farm is 159 acres.

In previous years, Ruth helped with the field work but now that one son is farming full time, Ruth no longer does field work.

"My yard is big enough and I have a garden that I keep saying I'm going to cut back, but my girls like the leftovers (produce) so I keep planting a big one," said Ruth who has four children and six grandkids.

Although she doesn't tire of sewing, Ruth admitted that sewing seven bridal gowns in all the same color and style does get boring. This spring, she had six bridal parties who chose pink fabric.

"I'm ready for a different col-

or," she said.

According to Ruth, velvets and velveteens are the most difficult fabrics to sew.

"I can do anything with a pattern — interchange pattern pieces and make other alterations — but I don't sew without a pattern.

"I think I have a born talent," Ruth said of her ability to sew slipcovers, draperies and other items.

"There's not too much I can't do. Maybe that sounds like I'm bragging, but I don't mean to, it's just that I figure that I'm never too old to learn to sew something different."

Ruth charges by the job rather than the hour — a detriment if the pattern turns out to be more tricky than she estimated or if there is a problem with the fabric.

"I'd say most of my regular cus-

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*Homestead Notes*