

## ***Planning your rehearsal at Heronswood***

### ***What is a wedding rehearsal?***

Your wedding rehearsal is simply a run-through of the ceremony ahead of the big day. It's a shortened version of the real ceremony, and you should practice everything a few times within a half hour to hour time frame. Most couples opt to hold their wedding rehearsal the day before the wedding. At Heronswood this all depends on our current schedule. Rehearsals do need to be scheduled with the venue, and at Heronswood are generally set-up between 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm.

After the run through at the venue, generally couples will have an offsite dinner location, a nice meal for the wedding party and families to get to know each other before the celebration.

### ***Who usually attends a wedding rehearsal?***

Obviously it goes without saying that you and your partner will be there. Apart from that, you don't need to invite your whole guest list. Wedding rehearsals are usually kept small. At Heronswood, we request that only the wedding party and family involved in the ceremony attend. Typically, the wedding officiant and wedding coordinator would be on site for the rehearsal as well.

### ***Who leads a wedding rehearsal?***

Classically the officiant or wedding coordinator will lead the rehearsal. However, at Heronswood your venue coordinator can help assist if needed. We can give guidance on how ceremonies are typically run, and of course you can change them up as you see fit.

### ***Where to start?***

Start with where everyone will be standing, generally your wedding party and family will likely stay in one place throughout most of the ceremony. Next, you will want to practice the processional or grand entrance. Make sure you know which order everyone will be walking in, and how much space to leave between you. Once your wedding party and family are seated or standing in the right place, jump into practicing your ceremony order. Run through the entire ceremony in brief, including ring exchange, and end with the presentation of you as a couple. You do not need to say your vows in full or practice speeches, but it will be good to do a run through briefly.

### ***Traditional order of the processional –***

1. Grandparents Groom then Bride

Officiant comes in signaling the start of the ceremony.

2. Groom or marrier
3. Best man/ woman
4. Parents of the groom/ marrier
5. Mother of the Bride/celebrant
6. Wedding Party
7. Maid/ celebrant of Honor
8. Flower Person & Ring Bearer
9. Bride/ celebrant & Father of the bride/ celebrant

Many couples choose to forego the traditional wedding ceremony order and include their own regional, religious or cultural variations. But you should put time into figuring out the order prior to the rehearsal day. Just remember there is no “right” way to do a ceremony, make it unique and true to you.

***A couple pro tips:***

It is important to have the wedding party evenly spaced out and standing at a slight angle, in relation to your wedding guests. Bouquets should be held in front of you, with both hands. Wedding party members not holding any bouquets should have their hands clasp either in front or behind them. It is important to have everyone doing the same thing, it will look much better in your photos. If you are being escorted by a parent, you should practice the hand-off. For example, if you are a bride and your parent is handing you off, they should give you a kiss and congratulate you. The escort then typically shakes the grooms hand, the bride hands her bouquet to the maid of honor and steps forward next to the groom.

If you plan to have any type of props, for example unity candle or a sand ceremony. This should be practiced as well during the rehearsal. Just briefly, so that during the actual ceremony it is a smooth transition.

If any part of the wedding party needs to move around during the ceremony, make sure they know to not stand with their backs to the guests.