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Paula from Ben Simons, models one of this year's most popular dress, showing that flowers aren't the only pretty things that pop up in spring.

Sandals step into spring with comfortable stride

By Betsie Ammons

This spring, sandals are once again the big thing in shoes, according to Lincoln shoe store managers, and they said sandals are becoming more casual and comfortable.

Comfort is achieved by lower heels and wedged or rippled soles, said Francis Christopher, manager of Famous Footwear, 3534 S. 38th St. He said the trend is toward casualness because women want shoes to wear with blue jeans.

Christopher McLean, buyer at Backstage Ltd., in the Gunny's Complex, concurred with this statement.

"People are still trying to find shoes to go with both jeans and dresses," McLean said.

However, he said no shoe styles will fit with both casual and dressy clothes.

Dee Miller, manager of Wells and Frost, 36 Gateway, said she thinks shoes are becoming more "airy."

Both Christopher and Pete Canakes, manager of Norman's Shoe Center, 2600 N. 48 St., said huraches are popular this year. Huraches are woven leather sandals with wooden soles.

Canakes stressed the importance of buying leather rather than canvas shoes.

Leather breathes more in the summer, he said.

If canvas is bought, he said, be sure to see that the shoe has airholes to allow your feet to breathe.

McLean said ankle wraps are also popular at Backstage, and added that they come with thin or clunky heels.

Several managers also said macrame, rope and flat sandals also are selling well.

The colors of sandals range from natural and earth tones (tan, brown and beige) to bright colors with stripes and multi-colored shoes.

For dress shoes, the managers agree that sandals still are the best buy. Sam Arrigo, manager of Baker's Shoe Store, 108 Gateway, said the trends in dress shoes are going to slenderize two- to three-inch heels, and white is a popular color.

McLean said dress shoes are more feminine this year than in previous years.

Men's shoes are becoming more tailored and dressier, according to McLean. The heels are lower and the toes are more tapered to fit pant lengths, he added.

Both McLean and Carakes said ridged soles are big for men's casual shoes. McLean also said the casual shoe styles are "very diverse."

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