

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 Mass Design, part one class notes, page 1

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

I. Definition and characteristics

- A. A mass design is one that emphasizes a quantity of plant materials.
- B. Material appears to radiate from a central point as a whole unit rather than individual flowers or branches.
- C. Design is full bodied with a closed silhouette.
- D. Quantities of plant material are grouped by kinds and color to create:
 1. a pattern
 2. rhythm
 3. a focal areas
- E. External outline is based on various geometric forms
 1. cone
 2. cylinder
 3. sphere
 4. variations such as curved triangle, oval, etc.
- F. May be constructed to be viewed from front or from all directions.
- G. All angles of view should be attractive.
- H. Must have depth
- I. Area encompassing plant material should be larger than container and base.

Take into account where the design will be placed. Design should be no more than 1/3 of the space allowed or no less than 1/4 of the space.

II. Container

- A. Must compliment design
- B. Compatible with room decor in:
 1. color
 2. texture
 3. style
- C. Placement determines size
- D. If using a white container, incorporate some white or very light colored flowers to prevent container from dominating design.
- E. Container must be heavy enough to hold material and give feeling of adequate support by not dominate design.
- F. Must hold water is fresh plant material is used.

III. Conditioning Plant Material

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO FOR A LASTING ARRANGEMENT

- A. Must start conditioning at least 12 hours before design is to be placed.
- B. Cut in late afternoon - last hours of daylight, or early morning
- C. Take a bucket of warm or tepid water to the garden and emerge stems immediately after cutting
- D. Use a sharp knife or shears to cut stems - do not crush stem ends
- E. Cut flowers or stems on a slant to allow the greatest uptake of water.
- F. Cut longer stems than actually needed and more than is actually required.

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Principles of Design

Balance
Rhythm
Dominance
Contrast
Proportion
Scale

Elements of Design

Line
Color
Light
Texture
Pattern
Form
Size
Space

[Go to Pg 2 Unit 2](#)

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

Containers for this class should be large enough to visually support a mass design. A good size would be about 6" in diameter or across, round or square, but can be larger or smaller depending on scale of plant material chosen. Baskets may be used but should be lined to prevent water leakage.

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 Mass Design, part one class notes, page 2

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

III. Conditioning Plant Material

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO FOR A LASTING ARRANGEMENT

- A. Must start conditioning at least 12 hours before design is to be placed.
- B. Cut in late afternoon - last hours of daylight, or early morning
- C. Take a bucket of warm or tepid water to the garden and emerge stems immediately after cutting
- D. Use a sharp knife or shears to cut stems - do not crush stem ends
- E. Cut flowers or stems on a slant to allow the greatest uptake of water.
- F. Cut longer stems than actually needed and more than is actually required.
- G. Remove any foliage that would be underwater to avoid deterioration.
- H. Do not wait more than 2 minutes before placing stems in water.
- I. Cut end of woody stems vertically 1" with a sharp knife or shears
- J. Sear stems that have milky sap with a lighted match or candle.
- K. Place bucket in a cool, dark place, out of drafts, for several hours to overnight.

IV. Mechanics

- A. Floral foam
 - 1. cut to size, to extend 1 1/2" to 2" above the rim of container.
 - 2. soak in warm water, do not force under water
 - 3. place in plastic bag for use in container that is not waterproof.
 - 4. secure firmly, if necessary, with waterproof tape.
- B. Needlepoint holder (or pin cup, frog, pin holder)
 - 1. place securely, with floral clay, so it will not tilt
 - 2. in silver container, secure with melted paraffin

V. Placement of Plant Material

- A. Symmetrical Design
 - 1. viewed from all sides - 1st line in center
 - 2. viewed from one side - 1st line slightly back

Equidistant from side to side.
- B. Asymmetrical Design
 - Slightly back and either right or left of center depending on placement of design.

Principles of Design
Balance
Rhythm
Dominance
Contrast
Proportion
Scale

Elements of Design
Line
Color
Light
Texture
Pattern
Form
Size
Space

[Go to Pg 3 Unit 2](#)

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 Mass Design, part one

class notes, page 3

VI. Basic Material Types	Suggested plant materials: TALL gladiolus cattails and cattail leaves equisetum Pussy Willow slender grasses yucca leaves tree branches such as pear, cedar, cypress, oak, maple, pine, poplar, river birch MEDIUM aspidistra Belles of Ireland Iris leaves liatris mullein rosemary sanseveria (Mother-In-Law Tongue) snapdragons statice tansy yarrow SHORT Leaves such as acuba, fern, hosta, loquat, magnolia. Shrubs such as boxwood, euonymous.	Remember that these are suggested materials. Choose what is readily available outdoors or plant material that can be easily purchased. Try to use what is in your garden. FLOWERS AND FORMS FOR CENTER OF INTEREST alstroemeria asters carnations Gerbera daisies hydrangeas iris lilies mums roses FILLER Gypsophila (Baby's breath) ivy leaves, boxwood liriope pachysandra sedum
A. Linear 1. branches or spikes 2. set up lines 3. establish dimensions 4. helps move eye (rhythm)		
B. Round Forms 1. hold the eye 2. create focal area or center of interest		
C. Transitional 1. bridges contract between linear and round 2. closes gaps 3. slows eye movement 4. gives fullness and airiness to design 5. generally has bushy growth habit		

Bring containers, soaked floral foam, clippers and waterproof tape, plant materials as above.

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

[Go to Pg 4 Unit 2](#)

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 Mass Design, part one class notes, page 4

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

[Go to Pg 5 Unit 2](#)

Traditional Designs

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

Try using proven color harmonies in your designs.

[Click here](#) to see the color wheel and the variations of color harmonies.

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

VII. Building the Design

- A. Establish height by placing the tallest line upright (1 apex) over point where stems emerge from container. All additional lines are cut shorter than the main line.
- B. Establish breadth. 2nd and 3rd lines are placed horizontally directly opposite each other on either side of holding device.
- C. Establish boundaries by placing additional lines within the area formed and slightly to the back and front.
- D. Balance
 1. Must be actually and visually stable
 - a. top to bottom
 - b. side to side
 - c. front to back
 2. Achieved by
 - a. radiating lines from focal area
 - b. compact effect at focal area
 - c. larger, darker or brighter flowers in focal area at lower part of design
 - d. smaller and lighted flowers toward top and outer edges.
- E. Rhythm
 1. created through a planned pattern of movement
 2. colors, forms and sizes are integrated, not spotty
 3. color placed in linear pattern with gradual transition will help eye movement
 4. repetition of color, form or texture
 5. place some flowers in profile and use different stages of bloom
 6. taper material gradually from top to bottom
- F. Lines - extend some lines slightly downward over rim of container. Place others to lead eye up, back and through design.
- G. Leave some space - air at airiness. Concave spaces are needed for light and shadow to keep arrangement from looking too flat. Full but not compact.
- H. Outer boundary follows contour of chosen geometric shape
- I. Contrast provided through combination of several varieties of plant materials. Variety should be in size, form and texture, as well as color.
- J. Obtain dominance through use of more of one type of form, texture, pattern or color.
- K. Size should fit area where it is to be placed.
- L. Focal Area/Center of Interest
 1. adds stability and unity
 2. a grouping of flowers or foliage near front of rim of container
 3. avoid a bull's eye effect that interrupts rhythm
 4. easily achieved through use of flowers that are larger and/or brighter than others in design.
- M. Depth is important. Some lines should extend in front of the rim of the container. Plant material should lead the eye back and through the design. Depth or lack of it can affect balance.

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 Mass Design, part one class notes, page 5

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

Traditional Designs

[Go to Pg 6 Unit 2](#)
Foliage Designs

A. Traditional American

1. Combination of Oriental and European influences
 - a. Guided by the Principles of Design
 - b. Expect to see a starting point in the design which is the focal area or center of interest

B. Occidental

1. European "Period" styles - predominantly mass
2. Early American & Colonial Williamsburg - resembled European
3. Emphasis on mass and color

C. Oriental

1. Normally asymmetrical
2. Line is emphasized
3. Based on natural growth habits

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 part two Foliage Design class notes, page 6

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

- I. Practical qualities
 - A.. Long life, durability
 - B. Generally inexpensive
 - C. Desirable when flowers are scarce
 - D. Greatest amount of plant material available is foliage
- II. Developing the design
 - A. Plan to show off the beauty of the foliage and branches
 - B. Key is the contrast of form, color and texture
 - C. Follow the same principals and elements of design you used for flowers
 - D. Can be tailored to suit traditional or modern decor depending on selection of materials and container.
- III. Form, Color and Texture
 - A. Shapes are spiky, round, irregular, pendulant, etc.
Leaf detail - venation, variegation, etc. are important design features and give additional dimension for contrast. Branches twist, curve, etc. Some foliage cascades, some grows upright, some radiates. It can be bold, delicate, curving, graceful, needled, etc.
 - B. Colors are varied
The success of foliage design depends upon the selection of hues, shades and tints. The principles of color harmony should prevail. Take advantage of the subtle differences and use them to create highlights and shadows.
All foliage designs should have some light and dark values to add interest. Dark leaves can be recessed and lighter ones brought to the front to create planes and to pull the eye back into the design, creating an illusion of depth. As a rule, darker or brighter leaves are placed toward the base of the design to stabilize it. Light colored leaves in the upper part help prevent top heaviness. Lighter leaves also can go to the outer edges of the design.
Gradations from dark to pale move the eye through the design and toward the center, establishing rhythm.
 - C. Foliage can be found in almost any texture - smooth to rough. Select foliage to harmonize with the texture of the container.

[Go to Pg 7 Unit 2](#)

Foliage Design
Containers

Physical Properties of Color

HUE the specific name of a color

VALUE the lightness or darkness of a color

a) A **tint** is a light value, resulting from adding white to a hue.

b) A **shade** is a dark value, resulting from adding black to a hue.

INTENSITY the brightness or dullness of a color

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Basic Design "At Home With Flowers"

UNIT 2 part two Foliage Design class notes, page 7

What to bring to class
[click here](#)

IV. Containers

- A.. Choose simple and grayed containers rather than vivid in color. Green, brown, and gray are usually suitable.
- B. The heaviness of the branch/s will help determine both the size and visual weight of the container you should use.
- C. Usually the container is not the dominant component in the design, however, a sculptural type container that is fitting to the surroundings and decor of the home can be successfully used as the dominant component in the design.

V. Conditioning

- A. Clean ands groom all foliage
- B. Strip all foliage from the stem that is to be immersed in water. No leaves should be below the water line of the design.
- C. Foliage should be put in deep water several hours before arranging. Some leaves like to be immersed completely to absorb maximum water.
- D. Heavy stems may need to be split or cut vertically a few inches to assist in water absorption

VI. Selection of Materials

- A. Select contour of branches appropriate to container and placement.
- B. It may be necessary to prune the branch to eliminate a cluttered effect and to show off the branch and leaves to their best advantage. Prune branches to reveal their gracefulness. They can be bent by wiring or with gentle hand pressure.
- C. Think of the patterns of natural growth - compact at center and sparse and open at outer edges. In nature balance originates from the main line and forms the central axis. Branches lead off and create a path leading the eye out and back to the center, so it should be with the design. Bold leaves or upright sprays become the central axis, fixing the balance. Lines build. forms should follow the pattern of the limbs. A rounded form is usually needed in the lower area to direct the eye to the center of the design and provide a terminal point for the radiating lines.
- D. Foliage designs look more graceful if they are not too compact. Spaces help to separate forms and emphasize shape.

[Return to Froghaven](#)

[Return to Sope Creek Garden Club](#)

Physical Properties of Color

HUE the specific name of a color

VALUE the lightness or darkness of a color

a) A **tint** is a light value, resulting from adding white to a hue.

b) A **shade** is a dark value, resulting from adding black to a hue.

INTENSITY the brightness or dullness of a color

[Return to Basic Design Home Page](#)

What to bring to class
[click here](#)