

Creating Designs for Flower Shows

Making designs to enter a flower show is a little different than creating designs for your own use. Entering a flower show is like becoming an artist rather than being a decorator. Just like an artist you are putting your interpretation on a time, a place, a feeling, an occasion etc. Instead of working in oils or clay, you are working with plant materials. That is what makes flower show exhibiting so exciting, you can stretch your creativity with designs that would never work on your dining room table!

Novice mistakes

- ❖ Not following the rules
- ❖ Too literal in interpreting the class
- ❖ Getting too involved in the competition
- ❖ Not following the rules that you don't know about



Not Following the Rules

- a. Read the Schedule. Before you think about entering a flower show you should read all the schedule of the show. It will tell you the general theme of the show and most of the rules you should be following. You should read all the general rules, the rules specifically for design and the requirements for each individual class. With a little practice you will come to know what to expect. You may find it a bit difficult and frustrating at first trying to follow all the rules, but every time you have to adapt, you stretch your creativity.
- b. Do exactly what the class requires. You may have the best design, but if you use dried plant material and it says all fresh you may be doomed from the beginning!
- c. Fill out your exhibitor tag. Try to have your tags filled out ahead of time. If it doesn't have an exhibitor tag it won't get judged. Address labels make it easier and don't forget to put the names of your roses. If the roses come from your own garden, be sure to write "AG" (arranger grown) on the exhibitor tag.
- d. Name your roses. In a rose show one of the requirements, I find most difficult, is naming every rose. I do not know the names of the roses in my garden, and I always have to use precious arranging time tracking down people to help identify. Anything you can do ahead of the show will be a big time saver.

Too Literal in Interpreting the Class

- a. Don't get too carried away with title. If for example the title of a class is "Rodeo", it doesn't mean you need to have fence posts, a bull and some chaps in the design! It can be a lot more subtle than that. It can be as simple as some twisted willow to represent a rope and a rustic container, so the overall feel is "down home" rather than elegant. If you are good with mechanics maybe some rope could be worked through your design or perhaps try a spur as an accessory.
- b. Roses are dominant. This is a rose show, and the roses should be the most dominant feature so don't get carried away with accessories, containers etc. This is also important in the table classes. Novices over emphasize their china, glassware and tablecloths. Remember the roses come first, the design second and everything else is to complement the design.

Getting Too Involved in the Competition

- a. You and the judges won't always see eye to eye. At a flower show you are no longer designing for yourself, but for the judges. When I first started arranging, I made many things that I liked but the judges didn't. As I learned more about art and design, I came to see why the judges did what they did. But it doesn't matter how long you do this, there will always be times you don't agree with the judges' decisions. Don't take it personally, just shrug, move on and wait for the next time and a new group of judges
- b. It is the judge's job to be nitpicky. Listening to what judges have to say can really help you improve your designs. However, as a novice it can sometimes be very disconcerting, frustrating and downright annoying to hear what they have to say. Sometimes there are so many good designs, judges have to decide 1st, 2nd, and 3rd by a single point, so there are times they must pick apart the smallest details. Don't get discouraged.

All those rules that aren't in the schedule and you are supposed to know!

Have you ever read a cookbook, and it tells you things like – fold in, or cook until done or beat till the ribbon stage is reached. These directions assume you know about cooking. Well, the rose schedule is just like that as well. It is assumed you know the meaning of traditional, oriental, abstract or modern, not only in a general way but as they are used in American Rose Society (ARS) flower arrangements. So here we go.....

Traditional Designs

1. Based on geometric shapes such as oval, triangle, circle or parts of these shapes
2. Lines converge in strong center of interest
3. Transitions are smooth, usually in gradations of size/color
4. Stems are usually used as they grow in nature
5. Containers are conventional and do not predominate

Traditional Line Design

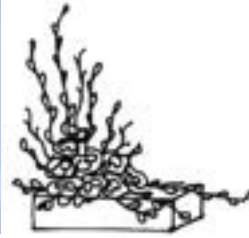
1. The line of the design is dominant with length and strength in the line. Does not have a lot of depth except in the main area of interest
2. The line may be vertical, horizontal, crescent, Hogarth curve, triangular or diagonal



Traditional Line Mass

1. Still has a strong line

2. Has more material than a line design but don't go crazy!



Traditional Mass Arrangements

1. Does not have a single dominant line
2. Lot of plant material or the impression of it
3. Create interest/movement with gradations/variety of color/size/texture
4. Has a feel of symmetry but does not have to be exactly symmetrical



East Asian Designs

1. Restraint in material
2. Simple construction
3. Plant material used as it is in nature including natural defects
4. Traditional designs arranged in "threes". If you want to know more, take a tour on the internet. Ikebana is a huge subject and not my area of expertise.

Moribana Style

1. Designs are vertical, slanting or cascading
2. One half to two thirds of the container should show water
3. Foliage must not hang or droop into the water or rest on the lip of the container
4. The needlepoint is totally submerged and placed off center. It does not need to be completely covered but stones or plant material may be used to cover if it enhances the design



Nageire Style

1. Designs are vertical, slanting or cascading
2. Plant materials can rest on the lip of the container
3. Only about half of the container opening is filled



Freestyle East Asian

1. I would not recommend this class for novices
2. The container is an important element of design. Modern oriental style containers are used.
3. Major focus is on creativity and expressiveness through a unique artistic approach. However, it is still necessary to follow the general aesthetics of Ikebana



Modern or Abstract Designs

1. Emphasis is on color, form, texture and space
2. May have more than one area of interest
3. May have unconventional placement of components
4. May use strong bold colors and forms
5. Containers may be unusual, minimal or complex and/or have multiple opening



Miniature Designs

1. Miniature classes must use miniature, or miniflora roses
2. They follow the same ideas as the regular classes but are done in a smaller scale
3. Miniature designs are all about proportion. Everything from the container to flowers, to leaves to any accessories you may use must be in proportion with each other
4. Miniatures are often exhibited at close to eye level. When you are making your design look at it at eye level. The angle it is viewed from affects the proportions and you know how important that is in miniatures!
5. Don't forget to measure in every direction, 12 inches or less in every direction, including the diagonal.



Table Designs

1. Don't use anything that you would be very upset to lose. Accidents happen!
2. This is a rose show, not a dinnerware convention, so the roses and the design must be prominent
3. All the components of the table must work together as a pleasing, artistic whole
4. Functional table setting means it could be used in the usual way
5. Exhibition table means it is an artistic display using dishes, napkins etc. that will not be used for eating
6. Miniature table designs use miniature or miniflora roses and follow some instructions as the regular classes, but done in smaller scale



I hope all this doesn't seem too intimidating. I know there seems like a lot to think about. On the other hand, if you love flowers and plants and you have a yearning to be a bit artistic, just dive in and have fun. You will be incredibly proud of yourself when you bring home that first ribbon.

Please note – many of the illustrations in this handout do not feature roses. Remember, for the Rose Show, roses must be the dominant flower. Use any other kinds of flowers sparingly.