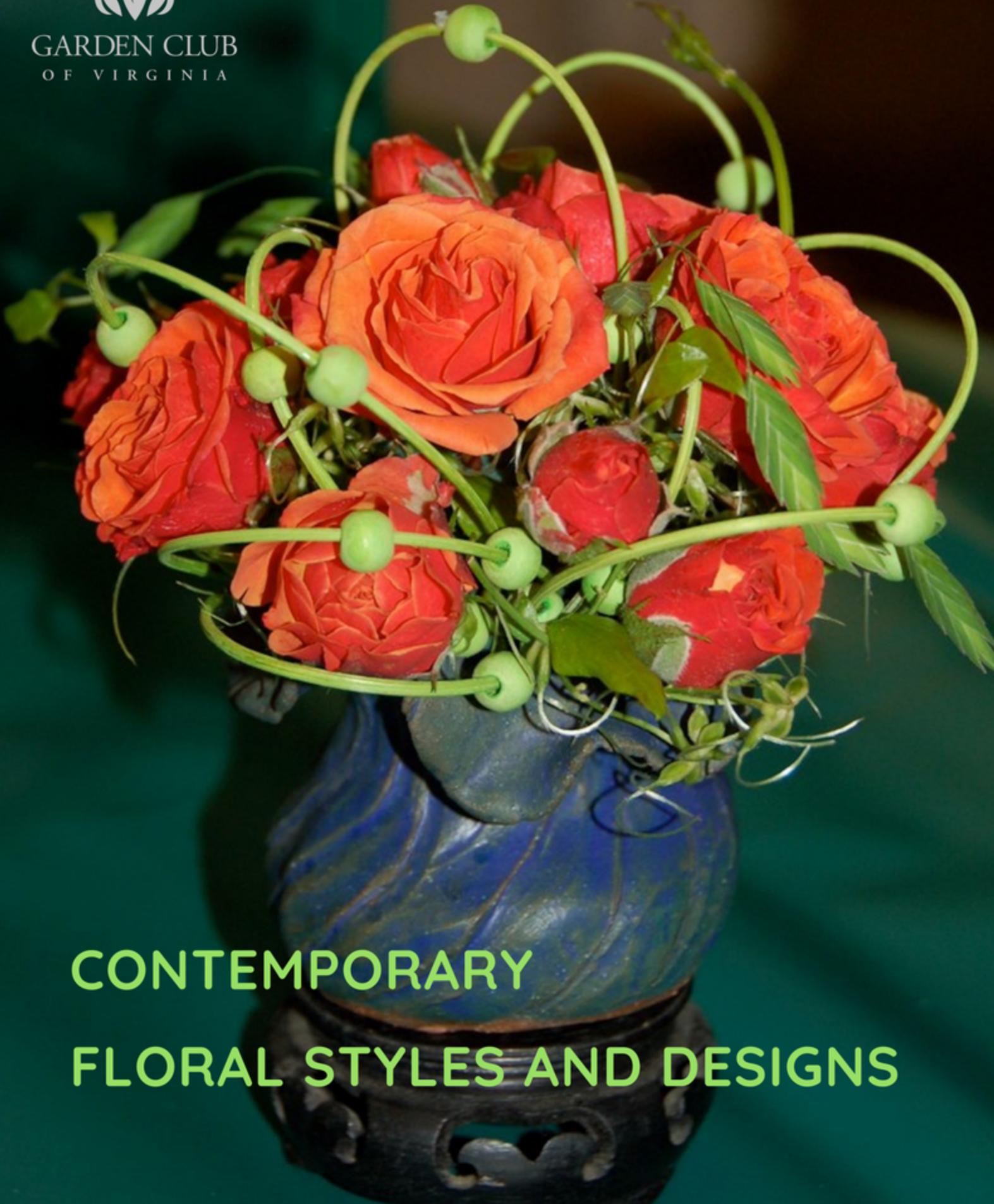




GARDEN CLUB  
OF VIRGINIA



**CONTEMPORARY  
FLORAL STYLES AND DESIGNS**

# Contemporary Floral Styles and Designs

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# Contemporary Styles

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## Late Twentieth Century to Present

In the middle of the 20th century, flower arranging became increasingly recognized as an art form. Modern arrangers found themselves still inspired by 19th century naturalism, but they wanted to be freed from the past restrictions of specific period designs. As abstract art developed, many arrangers began to be inspired by this art form and to create abstract floral designs. Other arrangers wanted to break away from traditional rules and patterns, but did not feel drawn to abstract forms and so created other new design styles. Today's contemporary designs are an outgrowth of these two influences. As a result, Contemporary designs may possess varying degrees of abstraction, ranging from no abstraction at all in which the components are untreated and are organized into a naturalistic manner to a dominance of abstraction as you see in a purely abstract design.

## About Creative Designs

Developed in the mid 20th century, creative floral design refers to designs in which creativity, imagination, and originality are basic. Traditional rules and patterns do not apply. The arranger creates new concepts and forms by borrowing from different styles and/or periods. Arrangements are not a copy of a design previously created, but rather an expression of the individual designer. The relationship between form and space plays a major role in creative arrangements. Today's creative designs are continually changing inspired by the current design world and the imagination of today's floral arrangers.

### Characteristics of Creative Designs:

- Creative designs have few rules and no set patterns.
- Plant material may be used only for its inherent design qualities.
- Bold in form, size and use of color.
- Strong contrast in colors, plant materials.
- Restrained use of plant material and components.
- May have more than one focal point and more than one point of emergence, but clarity of design paramount.
- May have some abstraction.
- Little transitional material.
- Asymmetrical balance is emphasized.
- Rhythm may be irregular and unpredictable.
- Tension between elements creates impact.
- Any part of the design may be dominant.
- Space is incorporated within the design and becomes an important part of the overall impact. Both elements, solids and space, are considered solids and are equally important to the arrangement. That is why you often hear the phrase, "Creative designs are an arrangement of space, not an arrangement in space." The goal is to create rhythm and movement through the use of solid and space.

**Containers:** The container may play an important role in the design or there may be no container used at all. If a container is used, it is usually non-traditional and may have several openings. It should be bold and dramatic. Sometimes two or more containers may be used together in a creative manner. Pottery, ceramic, wood, metal are appropriate.

**Plant Material:** Bold materials are essential. Often exotic flowers and leaves, such as protea, antherium, birds of paradise, calla lily, fatsia, croton, caladium, palm, ti leaves, aspidistra, grasses, bear grass, etc. Dramatic branches like wisteria vine, willow vine, kiwi vine, and monkey puzzle vine. Branches may be fresh, dried and/or manipulated. Other creative materials such as driftwood, bamboo, weathered wood, seed pods, vegetables, and man-made objects like wire, cable, plastic, and rope.

**Design Shape:** Creative designs, like all designs, are based on the geometric forms of the cube, cone, cylinder, and sphere. However, in creative design, these basic forms may be distorted and combined and are more difficult to discern than in traditional design.

While creative designs break from traditional rules of flower arranging, the basic principles and elements of design are the benchmark for evaluating these non-traditional designs. The arrangers should demonstrate a creative and imaginative use of plant material and design principles as well as effectively using color, form, line, texture, and space.

## **Abstract**

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Creating abstract designs is an innovative and creative process in which unusual or reformed plant material is arranged in a non-naturalistic way to create new and exciting shape. To abstract is to reduce something to its simplest form, to render it unrealistic, to extract its essence and create a new image. Designing “with” space as well as “in” space makes a complete break with traditional floral design. Any plant material that interests the designer may be used. Plant material is utilized as pure line, form, and texture to create new images.

**Characteristics:** Abstract designs are bold in color and form. An abstract arrangement distills a concept to its essence, thereby releasing the design from nature and reality to become pure art. Everything used must be essential to the design. Plant material is no longer seen for what it is, but rather for what it represents—color, line, texture, form. Fresh and dried plant material may be used in a non-realistic manner, i.e., upside down, sideways, suspended, moving, or clustered to create a new form. Clipping, stripping, bending, tying, folding, placement, etc. may abstract fresh plant material. Fresh plant material may never be treated with substances to change color or texture. Containers, if used, are usually non-traditional and appear to be part of the design. Components may be man-made or natural items not often associated with flower arranging. Each item should be selected for its contribution to the design. When mechanics are used, they need not be entirely hidden if they appear to be a part of the design, are neat, and do not detract from other components or the design as a whole. There should be no one focal point; interest is equally distributed throughout the design

Abstract can be divided into two categories:

Objective designs are interpretive. They may have specific meaning, represent a theme or emotion, or interpret a class title.

Non-Objective designs are purely decorative and inspired by the materials used.

**Containers:** Abstract designs are cleaner and stronger without the use of a container. Plant material may arise directly from the base and/or background.

## **Assemblage**

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A three-dimensional creative, abstract design combining disparate, “found” objects and plant material into a unified whole. Influenced by artists Picasso and Braque’s early prototypical assemblages, which incorporated a variety of objects from everyday life, flower arrangers adopted the style and made them unique with the addition of plant material.

**Characteristics:** The design is made up of several unattached parts, or several parts fastened together to form a single unit. Components are juxtaposed in non-realistic, non-naturalistic, and non-representational way. Use previously unrelated “found “ non-art objects and plant material for artistic effect. “Found” objects are non-art items not produced for decorative purposes and not previously used together. The arranger creatively relates the items through their unique elements of line, form color and texture.

Material: Found objects may be man-made such as metal, plastic, rope, wire, electrical or mechanical parts or they may be natural objects, such as shells, stones, and wood. The objects may be painted but should remain recognizable and not contrived.

Containers: None

Types: Free standing, sculptural, niche displayed, or mounted to a panel. A combination of these may be used.

## **Botanical (Creative or Naturalistic)**

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### **Botanical: Creative**

A creative design style in which plant material is chosen for its superior horticultural quality. Plant material must dominate the arrangement and create excitement by its color, form, texture, or placement. The design represents nature by showing all the phases of the plant material's life, for example buds, partially opened blooms, full blooms in varying sizes, etc. but it does not put the flowers in their natural environment. Remember this is a creative design with boldness, simplicity and other creative features.

Characteristics: Plant material must be pristine.

Other components or plant material may be used, but should be used to emphasize the botanical features of the plant material. These components may be man-made or natural line material. Their purpose is to highlight, but never dominate.

Containers: Use creative containers which harmonize with the flowers and other materials of the design.

Plant Material: Home grown plant material only. No abstracting of plant material. Rooted plants may be used.

### **Botanical: Naturalistic**

Characteristics: The entire life cycle of a single flower (often a bulb flower) must be represented. The design should include the stem, foliage, buds, blooms and roots in varying stages of development; which emphasize the beauty of the flower. There is no manipulation of the plant material. The arrangement should portray the plant as it appears in nature. Other flowers may be used as long as they are subordinate to the main flower.

The flower's natural environment may be suggested with the use of pebbles, mosses, stones, twigs etc. Must be home-grown plant material, not from a florist.

Containers: Use simple low containers so not to distract from the beauty of the plant specimens.

## **Cascade/Waterfall**

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A design style derived from the floral cascades of the Art Nouveau period.

Characteristics: Characterized by a downward, loose-trailing flow of materials, often heavy with foliage representing a cascading waterfall. Plant material flows from the center of the design out and over the container edges. Layers of alternating flowers and foliage create depth and texture. Try to build up an arrangement comprised of many levels, which is cohesive in spite of the variety of plant material and textures. There may be use of veiling, sheltering, decorative binding or other techniques.

Containers: Tall container generally needed. Container can be contemporary glass, pottery, metal, etc. If arrangement is displayed on a pedestal a plant saucer or low bowl may be sufficient. Make sure there is adequate room for the materials to cascade downward.

Plant Material: Long, pliable flowers and foliage. Bear grass, sprengeri fern, plumosa fern, conifers, vines, ivies, twigs, orchid sprays, string smilax, clematis, Small fragments of mirror, feathers, yarn, or metallic thread can be incorporated to give the appearance of reflected sunlight off the cascading water.

## Casual Contemporary

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### **Cultural Environment:**

Two primary trends - simplification and environmental sustainability - have brought the Casual Contemporary style into prominence. The desire to highlight the beauty of each individual flower - clearly, simply, uncluttered - in harmony with the global conscientiousness to reuse and reduce waste have resulted in a natural, rhythmic, informal style of floral design.

### **Characteristics:**

- Asymmetrical balance
- V-shape with an open, obtuse (greater than 90 degrees) angle
- Negative space - some piercing of the negative space, particularly with “gestural elements,” is allowed
- Full, sumptuous, luscious, buxom
- Distinction - Quality of “Gesture”
- Textural
- Encouraged mechanics to anchor stems are grapevine sphere, chicken wire flattened orb, Holly Chapple “pillow,” Basalt Wool

### **Containers:**

Comote, Urn - a container with sufficient height to allow rhythmic flow of floral materials over the rim

### **Colors:**

May be bold, contrasting, complementary, soft, neutral, or monochromatic depending upon the desired effect.

### **Design Shape:**

Asymmetrical V-shaped, with one side of the V characteristically longer than the other and V positioned in an obtuse angle (larger than 90 degrees)

### **Floral Materials:**

Versatile, according to the theme, expression, location, or color palette selected by the creator. Floral materials will be selected accordingly. The amount of negative space incorporated will likewise be employed to reflect the arranger’s intent.

### **Notes:**

- Establish V-shaped asymmetrical line (usually one side longer than the other) with branches or other linear floral materials; the V may be bold with a well-defined V, flowers placed close in to the center leaving a definite negative space, or subtle, with the overall effect more of a soft asymmetrical crescent with sides of unequal lengths.
- Add other smaller foliage or supporting linear elements - crisscrossing stems in a balanced pattern helps fill the form and supports added blooms
- Place detail flowers placed in the center, sometimes clustered or grouped in threes or fives,

- Ensure that the individual beauty of each flower is distinct and clearly visible.
- Fruits and vegetables, secured onto floral picks, may be added as well as cones, nuts, and other textural elements
- Include “Gesture” elements (described by Christin Geall in *Cultivated* as gracefully curving stems that act as an upturned eyebrow or beckoning gesture would to encourage the viewer to come closer and engage) - flowers, vines, and curvilinear foliage placed at opposing angles and often in profile, which add rhythmic motion, soften the container rim, and invite the viewer. These are usually placed last to prevent bruising of delicate flowers and to avoid covering them with larger floral materials. Vary length so not all are in the same plane.
- Re-check line
- Finish back with greens and some floral materials, even if viewed only from three sides, to add balance, depth, and interest.
- If using a “pillow” in a clear vase where the stems are visible, consider submerging a swirl of a vine or grasses to soften the stem lines

### Plant Material:

#### Branches:

##### Flowering

Apple, Cherry, Dogwood (only if grown in garden), Forsythia, Lilac, Pear

##### Leafy Branches

Beech, Cotinus (smoke tree), Loropetalum, Plum, Poet’s Laurel

##### Woody Branches

Curly Willow, River Birch, Harry Lauder Walking Stick, Kiwi

Eucalyptus - feather, gunnii, parvifolia, seeded, silver dollar

Leaf Single or Cluster Foliage: Begonia, Dusty Miller, Fatsia, Fern, Hellebore, Pachysandra, Pittosporum, Stachys (Lamb’s Ears)

#### Flowers:

##### Detail flowers: Natural

##### Round:

Allium, Carnation, Daffodil, Dahlia, Gerbera, Hydrangea, Iris, Lily, Peony, Rose, Sunflower, Queen Anne’s Lace, Yarrow

##### Cluster:

Amaryllis, Asclepias, Bouvardia, Deutzia, Pieris, Pixie Carnation, Spray Rose, Thistle, Tweedia, Wax Flower

##### Spike:

Astilbe, Baptisia, Hyacinth, Larkspur, Penstemon, Snapdragon, Solidago, Stock, Veronica, Viburnum

##### “Gesture” flowers:

Anemone, Astrantia, Chive, Clematis Seed Pod, Cosmos, Crespedia, Freesia, Geum, Hellebore, Lavender, Lisianthus, Nerine Lily, Passiflora, Platycodon, Peony, Ranunculus, Scabiosa, Sea Oats, Sweet Pea, Tulip, Tweedia, Veronica

##### Detail flowers: Tropical

##### Round:

Lotus Flowers, Lotus Pods, Protea (King, Pincushion, Queen)

##### Spike:

Birds of Paradise, Ginger, Heliconia, Leucadendron, Orchids

##### “Gesture” flowers:

Anthurium, Gloriosa Lily

##### Vines:

Clematis, Kiwi, Jasmine, Passiflora

#### Berries, Fruits & Vegetables

Blackberry, Blueberry, Grape, Lady Apple, Persimmon, Raspberry  
Eucalyptus (pods), Eucalyptus (seeded), Hypericum

Pokeweed, Privet (Ligustrum)

Artichoke, Brussel Sprouts, Eggplant, Pomegranate, Radish, Turnip

Other:

Feathers

Herbs

Sea Oats (if garden grown), Grasses, Wheat

Woodland Foraged Materials

### **How does Casual Contemporary differ from other GCV design styles?**

- Rococo - line: The Rococo dominant line is a light, playful C-curve, ending in a delicate scroll that curves downward, as opposed to upward. The V-shaped obtuse angle is not present in Rococo.
- Hogarth S-Curve - line: The Hogarth "Line of Beauty" is an elegant and graceful S-shape, with the bottom line curving inward.
- Creative Line Mass - focal point, restraint, line: Creative Line Mass designs emphasize a distinct and bold line created through repetition, color, or form, may have more than one focal point from which floral material emerges and emphasize restraint in the use of materials. The line in Creative Contemporary design serves as a visual boundary but is soft and not created through repetition, color, or form. Balanced with one primary focal point from which materials emerge. The amount of material included is greater, more voluptuous, conveying a lush feeling.
- Creative Mass - enclosed space: Creative Mass designs specify enclosed space which is considered as being part of the mass. Enclosed space is not a required element in Casual Contemporary. In Creative Mass materials are grouped by like color, form, or type, and then massed along lines or spaces created by lines. Casual Contemporary groups materials or clusters which are placed informally within the design but not massed along lines or spaces created by lines.

## **Construction**

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A creative design in which a strong architectural quality is the dominant feature.

Characteristics: Use of geometric form or forms combines to create a single unit, which must be "grounded" with strong stability. It must have a foundation like an architectural structure and not seem to be floating in space. Internal or volumetric space is vital to the design. It must appear to be a single unit but is a creation with a minimum number of bold plant and man-made materials. Additional plant material must be added to enhance the construction regardless of what the form is made of.

Containers: The construction is the container.

Plant Material: Man-made materials such as lumber or plexiglass or strong-lined plant material such as bamboo, tree branches, mullein, palm spathes, etc.

## **Creative Line**

[CLICK HERE for Creative Line Photos](#)

[CLICK HERE for Western Line Photos](#)

A creative, open design style that emphasizes line and visual movement.

Characteristics: Creative line arrangements are boldly dramatic. They have no set pattern and may have more than one focal point, and possibly more than one point of emergence. The emphasis is on line, contrast of form and texture. Plant material is kept to a minimum, with the emphasis on its beauty and form. Don't overdo these arrangements! Let the beauty of the flowers and the line material prevail.

The line may be horizontal, vertical, oblique (movement halfway between horizontal and vertical) ,zigzag or Western (based on an open obtuse angle, which means greater than 90 degrees, it has a strong vertical line which meets an opposing downward thrusting line to create this angle). The focal point is the base from which these lines originate. It is important not to fill in the negative spaces created by this angle.

Unless the schedule specifies the direction, the choice is up to the arranger, and the only criterion is that the design be predominantly line.

Containers: Modern, creative

Plant Material: Minimal material, beauty of blossoms or foliage emphasized by skillful placement. Line material may be natural, man-made or found objects.

## **Creative Line Mass**

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Follow the rules for a Creative line arrangement; however, more plant material is used, which results in slightly de-emphasizing the line.

## **Creative Mass**

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A creative design characterized by massed bold forms grouped in type arranged to give a sculptural appearance emphasizing contrast in form and texture.

Characteristics: Creative mass designs give the designer a chance to use more material than the Creative line or Creative line mass require. The use of enclosed space is considered part of the mass, a significant change from Traditional Mass design. Asymmetrical balance is typical with color and textural groupings of components providing counter-balancing weight and rhythm. Striking contrast, simplicity, restraint, and a lack of transitional material are other characteristics of the Creative Mass design. Small amounts of several plant materials or larger amounts of fewer types are used. Plant material is grouped by like color, form, or type, and then massed along lines or spaces created by lines.

Containers: Plain ceramic or pottery, geometric containers or irregular assemblages of glass, wood and metal. Bold containers.

Plant Material: Manipulated leaves, dried leaves of contorted forms, bold blossoms, fruits, vegetables. Material can be bundled, layered, terraced, looped, pinned, stapled, or otherwise manipulated.

## **Echo**

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Much like a synergistic, but may have only two containers. The containers may be the same shape, but a different size or color, usually the smaller one would be placed in front of the larger and off-set, echo like, no connecting material is used. (See Synergistic.)

## **Floor Design**

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Floor Designs are typically very tall and staged directly on the floor. They are given unlimited height unless prohibited in the schedule. They are often attached to a base for stability. Underlays may be used as long as they do not elevate the design. The design originates from the floor. The show committee may choose to define each exhibitor's allotted space on the floor with tape. Proportion is the most important element of design. Because of

their size they require bolder individual components or groupings of smaller components to satisfy the greater dimension offered to the designer.

## **Framed Spatial**

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This is a minimalist design organized as a single unit suspended within a frame. A non-traditional, light airy design with an unconventional use of plant material combined into a single, unified design, which is then staged within a volume of space defined by a frame.

Characteristics: No movement is permitted, but is implied. The unit is secured by using monofilament or thread so it appears to be floating within the frame.

The design may not touch the frame, but may exceed the depth of the frame.

The feeling of this creative arrangement is light and airy. The suspended design must be creative.

## **Free Form**

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As the name implies, this design is a closed silhouette in which outline is free and flowing, like an amoeba, not a geometric shape.

Characteristics: It is a closed design, with no intersecting or straight lines.

Containers: Natural objects such as weathered wood or pieces of fungus.

Self-made containers that reinforce the line and may have several openings.

Oriental style containers. Simple bowls or rustic pottery that don't detract from the design.

Plant Material: Mostly flowers, vines, and branches.

Plant material is manipulated by bending or twisting. Negative space is very important, and balance is asymmetrical. Plant material is usually placed on or within the enclosed form. There may be more than one point of interest.

Restraint is used in the amount of plant material so as not to confuse the design.

## **Hanging Design**

A design that is suspended and viewed at eye level or a little above.

There are two types of hanging designs: one that has no movement and is suspended from a flat surface such as a door, wall, easel, etc. The other may have one or more moveable parts and is suspended from above, on a hook, from a light fixture, or within a frame. In both types of hanging designs, there may be two or more designs that are combined to create a unified composition. Also see Kinetic designs.

## **Illuminary**

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A creative design, which incorporates light as an integral part of the design.

Characteristics: Not just a design with a light focused on it. Lights of various types are incorporated into the design itself. Lights can be placed above, underneath, behind, or within the design, but not in front as a spotlight. Emphasis is on color, pattern and balance. Mechanics must be concealed. Light sources may include

LED lights, rope lights, lighted tubing, colored lights, strings of lights and should be battery-driven if possible. The lights contribute an additional quality to the design, extending areas of interest, adding balance of color, and creating a greater depth. Be mindful that the primary colors of light are different from those of the pigment system, and you should be aware of the resulting colors when you combine lights and plant colors.

## Miniature Arrangements

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Any style arrangement which does not exceed five inches in any direction.

**Characteristics:** Miniatures can be of any style or any design (“period,” oriental, mass line, etc.) Employ all the rules of artistic design. Scale and proportion are the most important. The largest bloom should not exceed one-third the size of container and the arrangement should be approximately one to one-and-a half times the height or width of the container. A small amount of plant material is desirable. Avoid crowding. Conditioning is essential.

**Containers:** The container should be small, so that it does not dominate the design. Use miniature vases or create from household items: matchboxes, saltcellars, snuffboxes, perfume bottles, toothpick holders, buttons and natural materials (shells, driftwood, stones, etc.).

**Plant Material:** Some successful plant material includes lily of the valley, baby’s breath, miniature roses, boxwood, small wildflowers, violets and herbs. Larger flowers such as lilac or yarrow may be separated into smaller parts. Some “dwarf” or miniature flowers may be too large for design. GCV rules permit altering plant material unless the schedule states otherwise. You can cut a flower down with scissors to ensure proper scale.

**Colors:** One color should dominate the design. Use of too much contrast can overpower a miniature or small design. This, of course, does not apply to some “period” designs.

**Accessories:** Accessories can enhance the theme but must be in the same scale and too many accessories will detract.

### Special Tips and Helpful Hints for Miniature and Small Arrangements

- Research the schedule. Then find a container and create your “zinger,” the novel idea that gives the design distinction.
- Scale: The most common fault is an out-of-scale design. Usually, for a five-inch miniature arrangement, the container is no more than two inches and the material no more than three inches high.
- Flower choice: Blossom size must not be more than one-half to three-fourths inch.
- Display: Know your space, background color, and staging. Backgrounds of soft gray and celadon are most popular. Use no more than two-thirds of the space allowed. A display base can enhance the arrangement and is not considered an accessory.
- Conditioning is essential to harden plant material. Soak material up to heads in warm water for several hours. Arrange, mist, cover with damp facial tissue in covered cooler overnight.
- Bases and Accessories: Choose carefully. Never use an irreplaceable item. You may need to stabilize with glue, clay or stick-‘um.
- Transporting: It is so much easier on the nerves to do the arrangement at home. Use a Styrofoam container, a muffin tin or an egg carton with doughnut-shape cotton support to keep arrangement from moving en route. Carry in your cooler with ice.
- Mechanics: Water with a medicine dropper. Mist with a perfume atomizer. Use fingernail scissors, tweezers, toothbrush bristles and toothpicks for tools. Use tweezers for placing flowers and manicure scissors for pruning. Use cut potato, oasis, sand, steel wool or grapes to support material. There are miniature kenzans. Use a sturdy box or cake stand to elevate arrangement as you work.
- Practice, practice, practice. Develop your eye to see possibilities in tiny flora, containers and accessories.

## **Mille Fleurs**

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This is French meaning “a thousand flowers.”

Characteristics: Many different kinds of flowers and colors are employed. They should be arranged in a light, airy fashion in a contemporary vase.

A three-dimensional effect is desired and achieved by the careful placement of flowers and use of color.

Design Shape: rounded or fan-shaped

## **Mobile - Kinetic**

A kinetic, free hanging design suspended from above with real movement created by air currents. This is achieved by creating perfect balance among the groupings of the freely moving parts. It must have equal interest throughout. Forms, textures, and colors are balanced as well. Mechanics and conditioning of plant material are most important.

## **Modern European**

New millennium European arrangements are distinguished by shape: tight and round with an emphasis on texture. Colors may be monochromatic or contrasting.

As of 2002, more daring styles have been emerging, offering many creative possibilities. The key characteristic is the use of flowers in a bizarre, unexpected way, i.e., upside down.

## **Modern French**

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Characteristics: Modern French designs begin with an overarching theme or concept, which may be inspired, for example, by a season, a region, nature, textures, or a color. All of the elements of the design, container, flowers, accessories, must be related to the theme and form a coherent whole. While the arrangements are dense and flower-filled, lush foliage and vines are used above and around the bouquet to achieve lightness and movement. Foliage should be in colors that best compliment the blossom choices.

Containers: must be an integral part of the arrangement, often handmade using different floral techniques to coordinate with the theme, cylindrical shape.

Plant Material: mix unusual materials, mix textures, mix expected with unexpected elements. Use a variety of plant material including fruits, vegetables, branches, pods, and berries.

Colors: sophisticated, interesting, monochromatic or analogous colors, pastels or brights.

Design Shape: bouquet in the round, hand-tied bouquets

## **Modern Mass**

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Modern Mass: A composition in which materials are tightly massed, with little or no space between components, featuring vibrant color blocks, bold contrast, and compelling textures. Floral materials are selected for their creative form, with restrained variety and little or no transitional material.

Characteristics: This style is structural, usually employing asymmetrical balance to create drama. Five to seven groupings of floral materials are recommended, with each grouping typically used only once, being of varied size

and shape, and different in color from each other. Smaller components may be bunched to create a larger mass or grouping. Flower stems are not visible.

Containers: Modern containers with strong, simple lines, presenting a marked contrast to the floral material groupings.

## Naturalistic (Landscape or Vegetative)

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Based on nature and capture the essence of a natural landscape scene. The design does not seem contrived or artificial, but represents a slice of nature. The plant material should be of high quality but does not have to be a horticultural show quality specimen. The proper scale is vital for these designs to be successful.

Containers: Minimal containers which complement the flowers and other materials. As little of the container should be seen as is possible. Avoid over-basing the design with too wide or thick a base or with too many levels.

Accessories: Should be in keeping with the naturalistic design. If you wish to add birds or animals, use those which look realistic with a matte finish and keep them in scale.

### **Naturalistic: Landscape**

Characteristics: A landscape design represents a large view such as a wilderness panorama or a formal garden, which has been reorganized in a planned manner by the designer. Rather than depicting a natural scene exactly as it appears, the designer organizes the elements into planned groupings with graduated heights as seen in nature, but with a superimposed decorative scheme. If interpreting a large landscape, the groupings may represent what is seen by using branches to depict trees, and spray form flowers to represent bushes.

Plant Material: Flowers from the same season must be used to provide a more authentic look.

Accessories: Stones, mosses, soil, and gravel may be used as part of the foundation.

Container: Use a large, low container.

### **Naturalistic: Vegetative**

Characteristics: This design is one in which plant materials are positioned as they would grow in nature. The flowers used should be those that are found naturally growing together within a particular environment. Imagine taking a spade to the garden and simply transplanting it to a container.

The materials in the vegetative design are arranged in natural groupings and left in a more or less unaltered condition. They should be shown with blemishes intact. Plant materials are arranged spatially as they grow in nature, with lots of variation in heights and texture.

Plant material: Materials should be selected according to seasonal compatibility. Other materials such as rocks, moss bark and twigs may be used as they would be found in nature.

Container: Use a large, low container.

## Panel

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

Panel is a creative design, which includes a panel or panels, plant material, and other components. The panels must be integrated within the design. The panels can either be self-supporting or be supported by the other components in the design. A background does not constitute a panel.

## Parallel

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Characteristics: Parallel designs have three or more units of strong, parallel lines with open (negative) spaces between each unit. Units may be of the same or varying lengths with clear, dominate, directional thrust. They may be horizontal, vertical, or oblique. Unit composition may be one of four possible compositions:

- Units having several different plant materials, none repeating in the other units.
- All units having the same types of repeating plant material.
- Each unit having a single plant material.
- One plant material, repeated in each unit, combined with other plant material.

Units must appear as one composition, emerging from a single container or what appears to be a single container. Units appear to be independent of each other but related by color, texture, pattern, form or another element of design. Plant material or other components may be placed at the base of the design to connect the units, achieve visual weight and balance, and unify the design.

Plant material: Achillea heads, small hydrangea flowers, heuchera, ivy, mahonia leaves, conifer, hebe, poppy seed heads, berries, chili peppers. Allium, Bells of Ireland, and bamboo sticks, are excellent verticals. Carnations and roses are favorite flowers for massing in groundwork and using in vertical placements. Lichen, and assorted mosses may be used to create areas of 'rest' and to cover the floral foam. Vegetables, fruit and items such as spheres, stones or pebbles add interest.

## **Pavé Design**

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This arrangement requires placing individual materials closely together to create a flat, jewel-like pattern in which no mechanics are seen. This tight clustering style emphasizes contrast, color, and texture. The Pavé design and the technique developed from the jewelry industry, which uses the term to describe setting gems closely together.

Characteristics: Tight clustering of plant material. Contrasting type, color, and texture for added interest. Can be helpful to lay out pattern before you begin to arrange.

Containers: Low, flat, inconspicuous containers.

Plant Material: Blossoms, leaves, fruit, pods, mosses, stones.

## **Phoenix**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

This design is based on the mythological bird, which lived for 500 years or more, set itself on fire, and rose from the ashes to live again. Rebirth and a round symmetrical form are the basis of this design. The plant material at the base is traditional and compact, a radial design with very little space between the material. A burst of material emerges from its center. Form, Scale, and Proportion are important elements and principles of this design.

Characteristics: This design has a base of flowers, which is compact and round. Rising from the center are tall, flowering branches or other linear material, representing rebirth, renewal. The stems should radiate out at the top.

Containers: Low containers are suggested.

## **Pillar**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

A creative design featuring the dominance of the cylindrical form. Plant material may be densely packed within the tube and soaring upward, but still echoing the cylinder shape. Plant material must be kept within the visual boundaries of the form. The design may have more than one unit.

Containers: Tubes may consist of metal, cardboard, plastic, glass, or fabric.

## **Pot-et-Fleur**

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This design consists of two or more rooted plants and cut plant material in a single container. It should not be organized as a landscape or terrarium. Rooted plants may be all flowers, all foliage or a combination of the two. Plants may be kept in their pots, placed in plastic bags or placed in a planting medium. Cut fresh flowers may be inserted in small bottles, floral tubes, or floral foam, and hidden among the plants. Other plant material such as fruit, nuts, or branches may be added for embellishment. Moss may be used to cover the top.

Containers: Baskets or pottery bowls often used.

## **Reflective**

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A creative design that reflects light back to the viewer. Reflective components must appear throughout the design. Some materials may include: Plexiglas, foil, metallic paper, or pieces of mirror. Simply placing a mirror underneath or behind the design does not fulfill the reflective design requirements.

## **Small**

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A small arrangement may not exceed eight inches in any direction. Scale and proportion, as in miniature arrangements, are of utmost importance, and good conditioning is essential. Please see description under miniature arrangements.

## **Stabile - Kinetic**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

A kinetic, creative design with a fixed base, but motion is implied. The direction may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal and must be dynamic or flowing. The sense of movement is achieved by the selection of components and a very restrained use of plant material. The design may rise from a container, stand alone on a pedestal or table-top, be suspended from a base, or stabilized in another creative manner. All components including the base and mechanics should contribute to this dynamic feeling of implied motion.

Plant Material: Ferns, grasses, or vines are some examples of plant material that could be used to imply motion.

## **Stretch**

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A creative design, which consists of two units, one larger than the other, and has a strong component connecting the two (the “stretch” component). This connective component between the two units should be dynamic and imply tension as if the two units were involved in a “tug of war”. The units should appear as if they had been one, with some of the same plant material in each, but have been pulled apart. The placement of the two units is key so as to enhance the tension and create depth.

## **Synergistic**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

This creative design consists of three or more units, which have a greater impact when viewed together than they would on their own. All the units share the same colors, textures and forms, creating balance, rhythm, and harmony, but each unit should not appear as a completed design in itself. A connective (either man-made or plant material) may be used to connect the units.

## **Table Design**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

A table exhibit is one in which the components - dishes, linens, plant material, etc. are artistically arranged to present a coordinated concept. The practical service of food need not be implied. Objects are used for decorative effect, but flatware and food items should not be used. There are two types of table designs, functional and exhibition, and both require decorative components. A functional exhibit's components are set logically as if food would be served. For exhibition, components are arranged artistically with non-functional placement. The principles of design should be adhered to in the artful placement of the components. Avoid overcrowding. Vary heights to add interest.

## **Underwater**

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An underwater design must have some or all of its components, including plant material, visible underwater. Underwater designs may submerge only a part or parts of the arrangement. The amount of plant material submerged is dictated by the design principle of proportion.

Plant material should be assembled in the container before adding water. Upon completion, all materials in and out of water should appear as a unified design. If transporting to a show, water should be added when arrangement is in place. It is important that all components are pristine. Add water close to the level of the rim unless the design is enhanced with another height. The water line becomes part of the design and is distracting if poorly placed. Your mechanics should not be visible. Often a small weight such as a fishing sinker, marble or rock attached to fishing line is used to anchor plant material underwater. Water and glass have a wonderful and unique way of distorting a design and can give an additional, and sometimes unexpected, dimension.

Containers: Usually clear glass and any shape, but a circular container provides the best effect.

Plant material: This is the major challenge for the arranger. Tropical flowers such as anthuriums, birds of paradise, and heliconia work well. Also lilies, roses, evergreens and citrus are good choices.

## **Western Line**

[See Creative Line](#)

# In the Asian Manner

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## Japanese Design - Ikebana

Ikebana is the Japanese art of flower arrangement, which is steeped in tradition and symbolism. It is a discipline with a long history and considerable body of literature. It is an art form in which nature and humanity are brought together. The word itself means “living flowers.” Ikebana, while working with ephemeral materials, flowers, leaves, etc., accepts the transience of all things and in attempting to express their essence, acknowledges man’s place in nature. The spiritual aspect of Ikebana is considered very important by its practitioners. Where western flower arrangers rely on massed flowers for their impact, presenting a completed work to be admired, Ikebana uses line and space. The arrangement reaches toward the viewer and by making the viewer the focal point, it draws us in and invites us to share in the creative act.

In the basic Ikebana arrangement, and its variations, three main lines or placements are used. To the Japanese these lines are not just a framework but have special significance and names. Not all Japanese schools of arranging use the same names for the main lines, but they all have the same significance. If connecting lines were drawn between these three, they would form an asymmetrical triangle. Additional much shorter supporting material is also used to support the dominating lines and add grace and form to the arrangement. These main lines are listed below:

Line 1, usually a branch, should be between  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 times the width and the depth of the container. Called the Shin (or subject line).

Line 2 can be the same material as line 1, should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of line 1. Called the Soe or (secondary line).

Line 3, which could be a branch or a flower, should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of line 2. Called the Hikae (and Tai or object line).

Additional shorter material is called the Jushi (or subsidiary lines).

These main stems are said to represent “heaven, man, and earth”, symbolizing that man is found between the sphere of heaven and the soil of earth and by arranging is supposed to harmonize the two.

Characteristics: Considered an art and a discipline leading to self-awareness.

Asymmetrical balance is used.

Space is a very important part of Ikebana. It’s a dynamic element in the composition, not just emptiness.

Material follows the growth line of the plant, reaching upward toward the sun. Arrangements are three-dimensional, reaching toward the viewer.

Simplicity in line is important.

Employs the use of minimalism. Excess leaves, shoots, etc. are removed to achieve a more powerful effect.

Cut flowers and accessory materials are placed as in nature, with buds, blooms and foliage as they are found in their natural growth, though groomed and pruned to perfection.

Lines are vibrant and rhythmic giving the illusion of captured growth.

Containers: Are considered a key element of the design.

All Japanese compositions are three-dimensional and have fine qualities of balance and spacing. Emphasis is placed on line and form rather than color. The following naturalistic or informal styles are only a few that we might see in our GCV flower shows and do not begin to address the fascinating subject of Japanese flower arranging.

## **Moribana**

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**Moribana** is the simplest and most naturalistic style of Japanese flower arranging. As such, more flowers and colors may be used than in earlier Ikebana styles.

Characteristics: Supporting lines may be more abundant, and placed lower, than the three main lines to achieve a more natural look. However nothing must destroy the simplicity of the lines or the voids between them. The tips of the three main lines should form a three dimensional triangular shape, and additional plant material should be placed within the confines of the triangle. Restraint is an important factor, as is emphasizing the purity of the form of the plant materials. Water is an integral part of the design. In warm weather the pin holder goes to the back of the arrangement so that we get the cooling sight of the water. This is reversed in cool weather. The pin holder goes to the front, or back, right, or left of the container, with the empty part balancing the design. Two thirds of the container should be left free of plant material. Rhythm and proportion are achieved through taking advantage of the natural forms of the chosen plant material, and balance by the placement of those materials. Refer to general description of Ikebana above for length and placement of linear plant material.

Plant materials: In adaptations of formal Ikebana, such as this, plant material choices are not limited to Oriental plant species. Generally one type of plant material is used for the Heaven and Man groups -and it may be branches, evergreens or flowering stems. The earth group is usually chosen from another plant group. Plant choices should be seasonal.

Containers: Containers should be low and flat, made of simple materials such as pottery or wood. They are often subdued or neutral in color. If a more distinctive color is chosen, it should harmonize with the colors of the arrangement. Bases may be used, to achieve balance or proportion in the design. They too should be simple wood or ceramic platforms.

## **Nageire**

Nageire means “thrown in,” as it emphasizes arranging flowers in their natural state. .) The design emphasizes the natural shape and bend of the plant material, and they should be studied and selected “as is” rather than modified.

Characteristics: Branches are fixed without the use of a pin holder (kenzan), but they follow the same general rules of all Ikebana in terms of placement. (Please refer to general description of Ikebana above for length and placement of linear plant material). Because it is more naturalistic, flexibility should be used, and the beauty of a natural line should outweigh the exact rules governing placement. The design may be upright or slanted. Material is traditionally arranged so that one-half of the container mouth is left open. It is important that the main branches be well fixed, so that they have a unified appearance as they emerge from the vase, and will look as if they are coming from a single point.

Containers: A cylinder, a tall curved vase, bamboo, or any tall, heavy container can be used. They usually have a small opening. Glass or lightweight containers are unsuitable. Forked sticks traditionally support the plant material, as it is rarely long enough to reach the bottom of the tall containers. A notch is cut out of a branch as

thick as a finger, which is then placed at an angle inside the vase but below the rim. The plant material for the arrangement can be interlocked into the notch for support. The arranger can also balance the plant material by cutting it at an angle and wedging it against the side of the container. It is important that there is harmony between the vase and the plant materials.

Plant materials: In adaptations of formal Ikebana, such as this, plant material choices are not limited to Oriental plant species. Generally one type of plant material is used for the Heaven and Man groups-and it may be branches, evergreens or flowering stems. The earth group is usually chosen from another plant group. Plant choices should be seasonal. In Nagiere, the natural shape and curve of the chosen material is particularly important.

## **Free Style**

This is a modern Japanese style of arrangements where the natural world, i.e. heaven, earth and man, are only suggested. They may be naturalistic, but nature is expressed, rather than recreated. If the schedule calls for it, they may be completely abstract, focusing only on design and pure form.

Characteristics: Designs are less contained, less ordered than traditional Ikebana with an open, dynamic, linear quality. The natural lines of the plant material are emphasized, and create the shape of the design, which often radiates from a given point. It may have more than one area of interest. Simplicity is emphasized with a limited amount of plant material. Designs are not two-dimensional, must have depth like all Ikebana styles.

Containers: May be very non-traditional, but must be an integral part of the design.

Plant material: The choice of material is unrestrained-and may include paper, plastic, metal or dried plant material. Some fresh plant material is required. Careful analysis of plant form, color, and texture should be considered in order to decide how to best use it. Various techniques such as wiring and stripping, or cutting of leaves to alter their shape, are often used.

[More Information on Japanese Ikebana](#)

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# Glossary

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## GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA GLOSSARY

**ABSTRACT:** Expression of ideas in an unrealistic manner. Emphasis on the non-naturalistic.

**ACCESSORY:** A subordinate component in a design other than plant material; container, base, background or mechanics. Schedule governs use; if not prohibited in the schedule, can be used.

**ADVANCING COLORS:** Warm hues such as orange, yellow or red.

**ANALOGOUS COLOR HARMONY:** Closely related colors that are next to one another on the color wheel. Usually match well and create serene and comfortable designs; found in nature. Use fewer than three adjacent hues, no more than one third of the color wheel, and no more than one primary color.

**ANCHORING:** See Technique.

**ANNUAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle in one growing season.

**ARMATURE:** Framework or grid work constructed for mechanical and/or decorative purpose.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Synonymous with design and composition.

**ASIAN MANNER:** Art of flower arrangement using traditional or modern Asian designs, which are steeped in tradition and symbolism.

**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Visual stability achieved by an equilibrium of visual weight on either side of the imaginary central axis, though the components used on each side are different. See Balance.

**AXIS:** An imaginary straight line that divides an arrangement into equal parts.

**BACKBOARD:** A surface against which an arrangement is seen. Unless specified otherwise by the schedule, it is to be considered a neutral background like a wall, and the arrangement is not to be judged using it as a frame of reference.

**BACKGROUND:** The surface against which an arrangement is viewed. Includes back and sides, when present, as well as the surface beneath arrangement.

**BALANCE:** A design principle; visual stability achieved by placing equal visual or actual weight on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis. Balance is achieved through the proportion, scale and placement of the elements as well as their visual force. See Asymmetrical Balance and Symmetrical Balance.

**BANDING:** See Technique.

**BASE:** An optional object on which the container rests. This component is considered part of the container.

**BASING:** See Technique.

**BIENNIAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle within two years. The bloom occurs only or primarily the second year.

**BLOOM:** A blossom; an open flower.

**BRACT:** Modified leaf at the base of a flower or flower head. May be small and scale-like, or large, brightly colored, and petal-like; or resemble normal foliage. Is not considered to be a bloom.

**BRAIDING:** See Technique/Weaving.

**BUD:** For the purpose of exhibition, an unopened or partly opened bloom.

**BULB:** A modified underground stem, which is typically very short, flattened, and surmounted by a group of usually fleshy, non-green scale-like leaves. In horticultural classification corms, tubers or thickened rhizomes may be considered bulbs, as they resemble them and have similar cultural requirements.

**CACHE POT:** A decorative container often used as a receptacle for a standard pot. Permitted unless the schedule prohibits.

**CARD OF INTENT:** A 3X5 inch card on which the arranger states their inspiration and expression of the class schedule. See Statement of Intent. Allowed unless prohibited in the Schedule. See Statement of Intent.

**CHALLENGE CLASS:** A class in flower shows where the Flower Show Committee supplies identical components to each arranger; arrangers create a design from the Schedule using some or all of the components.

**CHROMA:** The perceived intensity of a color determined by the degree of freedom from white, gray, or black.

**CLUSTERING:** See Technique.

**COLLAGE:** A flat surface on which plant materials and, optionally, other components, are attached to create a low relief.

**COLLARING:** See Technique.

**COLLECTION:** An exhibit of specimens, three or more, of cut flowers. Judged for perfection and variety.

**COLOR:** A design element; visual response of the eye to light waves. There is a corresponding relationship between the principles of design and color. Warm colors (yellow, red, orange) seem to move forward. Cool colors (blue, green, violet) recede and seem farther away. An area of cool color will seem smaller than an equal area of warm color. See Hue, Chroma, Value, Tint, Tone, Color Harmony.

**COLOR HARMONY:** Techniques for combining colors. See Complementary, Analogous.

**COLOR WHEEL (CIRCLE):** A circle of colors arranged to show the relationship between colors; primary (those that cannot be created by mixing), secondary (those created by mixing primary colors), and complementary (those opposite each other on the color wheel).

**COMPLEMENTARY COLOR HARMONY:** Colors opposite each other on the color wheel. Creates a vibrant look.

**COMPOSITION:** Synonymous with Arrangement or Design.

**COMPONENTS:** Materials from which a design is composed; plant material, container, background and mechanics; determined by the Schedule. Optional components include accessories, featured objects and bases.

**CONDITIONING:** Preparation of cut plant material to ensure lasting freshness. A consideration in the judging process of the exhibit.

**CONFORMANCE:** Adherence to requirements of the Flower Show Schedule.

**CONSERVATION:** The practice of preserving and protecting native plants.

**CONTAINER:** Any receptacle that can hold water and provide support for plant material. Contributes to the design. A container may be made of multiple receptacles, which touch each other and appear as one. Container may be set on a base. See Base.

**CONTEMPORARY DESIGN:** A design using imagination and creativity for new approaches in both the selection and organization of components while using the principles and elements of design. Not using traditional or geometric styles.

**CONTRAST:** A design principle; use of opposite or unlike elements to emphasize differences and evoke interest.

**CONTRASTING COLOR HARMONY:** A combination of hues, values and intensities, which are farthest apart on the color wheel.

**CONTRIVED FORM:** A form created from fresh, dried and/or treated plant material.

**CORM:** A bulb-like swollen under-ground stem stored with reserve food and bearing buds or growing shoots on its surface, for example crocus, gladiolus, cyclamen, colchicum.

**CREATIVITY:** Inventiveness and originality in choice of components and their organization within the principles of design.

**CRESCENT DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in an arc or semi-circle; the arc length should be between a half and a whole circle.

**CULTIVAR:** A horticultural exhibit of a plant or group of plants selected for desirable characteristics that can be maintained by propagation. The cultivar name consists of the scientific Latin botanical name followed by a cultivar name in a vernacular language in single quotation marks. For example, Paeonia 'Bowl of Cream'.

**CUTTING:** Propagation by stem cutting of a shrub or tree to make a plant with identical characteristics.

**DECORATIVE WOOD:** Dried wood of interesting form; polished, treated or weathered.

**DESIGN:** An arrangement organized using the elements and principles of design resulting in beauty, harmony, distinction and expression. Synonymous with Arrangement and Composition.

**DIRECT COMPLEMENT:** Hues directly opposite each other on the color wheel.

**DISABILITY POLICY:** The Garden Club of Virginia Disability Policy: In any class, where joint entries are not permitted, the Show Chairman can allow an exhibitor with a disability (temporary or permanent) to have the physical assistance of one person. This person should not be an experienced designer.

**DISBUDDING:** The thinning out of flower buds to improve the size and quality of bloom.

**DISTINCTION:** Noticeable superiority in every respect.

**DISQUALIFY:** To remove an entry from consideration because of non-conformance to schedule requirements. Duty of the Passing Committee.

**DOMINANCE:** A design principle; control of a design by one or more of the elements. It implies the presence of primary and subordinate elements within the design.

**DRIED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material from which all moisture has been removed.

**ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:** The visual qualities of the parts or components used in an arrangement—space, line, form, size, texture, pattern, color. See the Principles and Elements Of Design section in the online [GCV Flower Shows Handbook](#).

**ENDANGERED PLANTS:** Native plants whose status in the wild is listed in a conservation priority ranking system as in danger of becoming extinct. See Threatened Plants.

**FAMILY:** The name of a group of plants with similarities in their structures.

**FEATURE:** To give prominence to.

**FEATURED OBJECT:** An object used as a dominant component in a design. Schedule to govern use. For example; “An arrangement featuring a book...”

**FOAM BOARD:** See Backboard.

**FOCAL AREA or FOCAL POINT:** An area in an arrangement to which the eye is drawn.

**FOLIAGE:** The leaves of a plant.

**FORM:** An element of design; three-dimensional form of the whole arrangement. Forms of the individual components; open, closed, linear, solid, etc.

**FRAME OF REFERENCE:** The area available to an arranger in which to stage a design, as delineated in the Schedule.

**FRAMING:** See Technique.

**FROND:** The leaf of ferns cycads, and certain palms.

**FREE-STANDING DESIGN:** A design to be viewed from all sides.

**GENUS, GENERA (pl):** A sub-group of plants with similar characteristics within a Family.

**GRADATION:** A gradual change in size, form, color or texture; used to provide visual movement.

**GROOMING:** Procedures to ensure that a specimen presents the best possible appearance. Cleaning of flowers, foliage, and pots and removal of damaged leaves or blooms, spray residue, dust, shed pollen, etc. Leaves may not be polished with any product that alters the natural character of the foliage.

**HARMONY:** The pleasing organization of all components of a design. Or use of similar components or color throughout an arrangement.

**HEDGING:** See Technique.

**HOGARTH CURVE DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in a curve which suggests a smooth, flowing S curve. The curve can be horizontal, vertical, or slanted.

**HORIZONTAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis parallel to the horizon.

**HUE:** The name of an individual color.

**INFLORESCENCE:** The characteristic arrangement of buds and flowers on the stem or branch; a mode of development of individual florets.

**INTERPRETIVE DESIGN:** A design of any style that expresses or explains an idea. For example; a description in a Flower Show Schedule.

**INTENSITY:** The luster or brilliance of a color that can be measured. Dullness is its opposite.

**KENZAN:** The Japanese name for a flower pin holder or “frog”.

**KINETIC:** Dynamic, energizing.

**KUBARI:** A straight, bent or forked branch or twig used to support material in an arrangement. An Ikebana term.

**LAYERING:** See Technique.

**LIGHT:** A design element; light is necessary for vision. Light sources can be artificial or natural in the staging area and hall of a Show and can be within a design.

**LINE:** A design element; a visual path that leads the eye through the design and establishes the structural framework of the design. It carries the rhythm through the design. The line can be vertical, horizontal, zigzag, curved as in a crescent or Hogarth curve, or any path that leads the eye through the design.

**LUMINOSITY:** Relative brightness; mix hues with white to make them more luminous.

**MANIPULATED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material which has been altered from its natural condition including, but not limited to, bending, cutting, folding, and braiding.

**MECHANICS:** Components that control an arrangement and thereby ensure its stability (pin holder, oasis, clay, wire, tape, etc.). Mechanics should not be exposed except as an integral part of the design.

**MOBILE:** A group of freely moving, suspended forms, having visual balance with actual movement produced by air currents.

**MODERN:** Current trends in the Arts and in flower arrangement.

**MONOCHROMATIC:** Consisting of one hue, its tints, tones, and shades. (White is not a hue.)

**NATIVE PLANT:** Any plant native to the region in which it is growing.

**NICHE:** A defined space enclosed on three sides as stated in the Schedule.

**NOVICE:** In the Artistic classes, one who has not won an individual Blue ribbon in a GCV Flower Show. In the Horticulture classes, one who has never won an individual horticulture blue ribbon in *any* show approved by the GCV flower show's sanctioning flower society. A horticulture exhibitor may be considered a novice in each of the GCV flower shows sanctioned by the American Rose Society, the American Daffodil Society or the North American Lily Society.

**ORGANIC:** See Sustainable Practices.

**OVERLAY/DRAPE:** If there are no restrictions in the Schedule about altering the staging area, an overlay or drape may be used.

**ORIGINALITY:** Use of independent thought and imagination for a fresh approach of aspect, design or style in an arrangement.

**PARALLEL:** Shapes such as lines, curves, or even concentric circles that are equidistant from each other.

**PATTERN:** A design element; visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, colors, textures, and spaces in the design.

**PAVÉ:** See Technique.

**PEDESTAL:** A plinth, stand, or column, freestanding or attached, used as staging for a flower arrangement.

**PERIOD ARRANGEMENT:** A design with characteristics typical of an historic period. Plant material need not be authentic but must interpret the class.

**PEDICEL:** The stem of a single flower on an inflorescence. See Inflorescence.

**PERENNIAL:** A plant that lives for more than two years. In flower shows, generally includes herbaceous plants hardy to the area in which they are being exhibited.

**PESTICIDE FREE:** See Sustainable Practices.

**PETIOLE:** Leaf stalk.

**PLAITING:** See Technique/Weaving.

**PLANT IDENTIFICATION CARD:** A 3X5 inch card on which an exhibitor lists the botanical and common names of an exhibit such as a collection.

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**PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:** Basic artistic standards used to organize the design elements—balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and scale. See the Principles and Elements Of Design section in the online [GCV Flower Shows Handbook](#).

**PROPAGATION:** Reproduction of plants with spores, seeds, or using vegetative methods such as cuttings.

**PROPORTION:** A design principle; relationship of one area of an arrangement to another area of the arrangement or to the whole.

**RACEME:** Same as spike, but with short-stalked flowers, for example delphinium.

**RECEDING COLORS:** Cool, low saturated, dark value colors (blue, green, and violet) which visually recede.

**RHIZOME:** A thick, horizontal stem (under or above the ground) which forms roots, stores food, and sends up leaves and flowering stalks.

**RHYTHM:** A design principle; dominant visual path through a design. It is achieved by the use of gradation and repetition in a linear direction.

**ROLLING:** See Technique.

**ROOT:** The underground part of a plant that acts as an organ of absorption, aeration, and food storage or as a means of anchorage and support, and differs from a stem especially in lacking nodes, buds, and leaves. Usually underground.

**SCALE:** A design principle; the relationship of the size of the individual parts of a design (components) to each other. For example, scale is the size of a flower in relation to the size of the space allowed.

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**SEEDLING:** A young plant raised from seed.

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**SHELTERING:** See Technique.

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**SPACE:** A design element; includes the area in which the design is placed, and the open areas in and around an arrangement.

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**VARIETY:** A sub-group of a species. Used for naturally occurring variants. See Cultivar for species selected by man. The terms cultivar and variety are sometimes used interchangeably, however, for Show purposes, cultivar is the accepted use.

**VEGETABLES:** The parts of a plant that are used for food. Includes, but not limited to, seeds, tubers, bulbs, stems, and fruit.

**VEILING:** See Technique.

**VOIDS:** Spaces created in a design.

**WEAVING:** See Technique.

**VALUE:** The lightness of a color (tint), a mixture of pure hue and white, or the darkness of a color (shade), a mixture of pure hue and black.

**VERTICAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis perpendicular to the horizon.

## **Bibliography**

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Aaronson, Marian, *Flowers in the Modern Manner*. (London, UK; Grower Books, 1984).

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## **Glossary**

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### GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA GLOSSARY

**ABSTRACT:** Expression of ideas in an unrealistic manner. Emphasis on the non-naturalistic.

**ACCESSORY:** A subordinate component in a design other than plant material; container, base, background or mechanics. Schedule governs use; if not prohibited in the schedule, can be used.

**ADVANCING COLORS:** Warm hues such as orange, yellow or red.

**ANALOGOUS COLOR HARMONY:** Closely related colors that are next to one another on the color wheel. Usually match well and create serene and comfortable designs; found in nature. Use fewer than three adjacent hues, no more than one third of the color wheel, and no more than one primary color.

**ANCHORING:** See Technique.

**ANNUAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle in one growing season.

**ARMATURE:** Framework or grid work constructed for mechanical and/or decorative purpose.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Synonymous with design and composition.

**ASIAN MANNER:** Art of flower arrangement using traditional or modern Asian designs, which are steeped in tradition and symbolism.

**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Visual stability achieved by an equilibrium of visual weight on either side of the imaginary central axis, though the components used on each side are different. See Balance.

**AXIS:** An imaginary straight line that divides an arrangement into equal parts.

**BACKBOARD:** A surface against which an arrangement is seen. Unless specified otherwise by the schedule, it is to be considered a neutral background like a wall, and the arrangement is not to be judged using it as a frame of reference.

**BACKGROUND:** The surface against which an arrangement is viewed. Includes back and sides, when present, as well as the surface beneath arrangement.

**BALANCE:** A design principle; visual stability achieved by placing equal visual or actual weight on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis. Balance is achieved through the proportion, scale and placement of the elements as well as their visual force. See Asymmetrical Balance and Symmetrical Balance.

**BANDING:** See Technique.

**BASE:** An optional object on which the container rests. This component is considered part of the container.

**BASING:** See Technique.

**BIENNIAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle within two years. The bloom occurs only or primarily the second year.

**BLOOM:** A blossom; an open flower.

**BRACT:** Modified leaf at the base of a flower or flower head. May be small and scale-like, or large, brightly colored, and petal-like; or resemble normal foliage. Is not considered to be a bloom.

**BRAIDING:** See Technique/Weaving.

**BUD:** For the purpose of exhibition, an unopened or partly opened bloom.

**BULB:** A modified underground stem, which is typically very short, flattened, and surmounted by a group of usually fleshy, non-green scale-like leaves. In horticultural classification corms, tubers or thickened rhizomes may be considered bulbs, as they resemble them and have similar cultural requirements.

**CACHE POT:** A decorative container often used as a receptacle for a standard pot. Permitted unless the schedule prohibits.

**CARD OF INTENT:** A 3X5 inch card on which the arranger states their inspiration and expression of the class schedule. See Statement of Intent. Allowed unless prohibited in the Schedule. See Statement of Intent.

**CHALLENGE CLASS:** A class in flower shows where the Flower Show Committee supplies identical components to each arranger; arrangers create a design from the Schedule using some or all of the components.

**CHROMA:** The perceived intensity of a color determined by the degree of freedom from white, gray, or black.

**CLUSTERING:** See Technique.

**COLLAGE:** A flat surface on which plant materials and, optionally, other components, are attached to create a low relief.

**COLLARING:** See Technique.

**COLLECTION:** An exhibit of specimens, three or more, of cut flowers. Judged for perfection and variety.

**COLOR:** A design element; visual response of the eye to light waves. There is a corresponding relationship between the principles of design and color. Warm colors (yellow, red, orange) seem to move forward. Cool colors (blue, green, violet) recede and seem farther away. An area of cool color will seem smaller than an equal area of warm color. See Hue, Chroma, Value, Tint, Tone, Color Harmony.

**COLOR HARMONY:** Techniques for combining colors. See Complementary, Analogous.

**COLOR WHEEL (CIRCLE):** A circle of colors arranged to show the relationship between colors; primary (those that cannot be created by mixing), secondary (those created by mixing primary colors), and complementary (those opposite each other on the color wheel).

**COMPLEMENTARY COLOR HARMONY:** Colors opposite each other on the color wheel. Creates a vibrant look.

**COMPOSITION:** Synonymous with Arrangement or Design.

**COMPONENTS:** Materials from which a design is composed; plant material, container, background and mechanics; determined by the Schedule. Optional components include accessories, featured objects and bases.

**CONDITIONING:** Preparation of cut plant material to ensure lasting freshness. A consideration in the judging process of the exhibit.

**CONFORMANCE:** Adherence to requirements of the Flower Show Schedule.

**CONSERVATION:** The practice of preserving and protecting native plants.

**CONTAINER:** Any receptacle that can hold water and provide support for plant material. Contributes to the design. A container may be made of multiple receptacles, which touch each other and appear as one. Container may be set on a base. See Base.

**CONTEMPORARY DESIGN:** A design using imagination and creativity for new approaches in both the selection and organization of components while using the principles and elements of design. Not using traditional or geometric styles.

**CONTRAST:** A design principle; use of opposite or unlike elements to emphasize differences and evoke interest.

**CONTRASTING COLOR HARMONY:** A combination of hues, values and intensities, which are farthest apart on the color wheel.

**CONTRIVED FORM:** A form created from fresh, dried and/or treated plant material.

**CORM:** A bulb-like swollen under-ground stem stored with reserve food and bearing buds or growing shoots on its surface, for example crocus, gladiolus, cyclamen, colchicum.

**CREATIVITY:** Inventiveness and originality in choice of components and their organization within the principles of design.

**CRESCENT DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in an arc or semi-circle; the arc length should be between a half and a whole circle.

**CULTIVAR:** A horticultural exhibit of a plant or group of plants selected for desirable characteristics that can be maintained by propagation. The cultivar name consists of the scientific Latin botanical name followed by a cultivar name in a vernacular language in single quotation marks. For example, Paeonia 'Bowl of Cream'.

**CUTTING:** Propagation by stem cutting of a shrub or tree to make a plant with identical characteristics.

**DECORATIVE WOOD:** Dried wood of interesting form; polished, treated or weathered.

**DESIGN:** An arrangement organized using the elements and principles of design resulting in beauty, harmony, distinction and expression. Synonymous with Arrangement and Composition.

**DIRECT COMPLEMENT:** Hues directly opposite each other on the color wheel.

**DISABILITY POLICY:** The Garden Club of Virginia Disability Policy: In any class, where joint entries are not permitted, the Show Chairman can allow an exhibitor with a disability (temporary or permanent) to have the physical assistance of one person. This person should not be an experienced designer.

**DISBUDDING:** The thinning out of flower buds to improve the size and quality of bloom.

**DISTINCTION:** Noticeable superiority in every respect.

**DISQUALIFY:** To remove an entry from consideration because of non-conformance to schedule requirements. Duty of the Passing Committee.

**DOMINANCE:** A design principle; control of a design by one or more of the elements. It implies the presence of primary and subordinate elements within the design.

**DRIED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material from which all moisture has been removed.

**ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:** The visual qualities of the parts or components used in an arrangement—space, line, form, size, texture, pattern, color. See the Principles and Elements Of Design section in the online [GCV Flower Shows Handbook](#).

**ENDANGERED PLANTS:** Native plants whose status in the wild is listed in a conservation priority ranking system as in danger of becoming extinct. See Threatened Plants.

**FAMILY:** The name of a group of plants with similarities in their structures.

**FEATURE:** To give prominence to.

**FEATURED OBJECT:** An object used as a dominant component in a design. Schedule to govern use. For example; "An arrangement featuring a book..."

**FOAM BOARD:** See Backboard.

**FOCAL AREA or FOCAL POINT:** An area in an arrangement to which the eye is drawn.

**FOLIAGE:** The leaves of a plant.

**FORM:** An element of design; three-dimensional form of the whole arrangement. Forms of the individual components; open, closed, linear, solid, etc.

**FRAME OF REFERENCE:** The area available to an arranger in which to stage a design, as delineated in the Schedule.

**FRAMING:** See Technique.

**FROND:** The leaf of ferns cycads, and certain palms.

**FREE-STANDING DESIGN:** A design to be viewed from all sides.

**GENUS, GENERA (pl):** A sub-group of plants with similar characteristics within a Family.

**GRADATION:** A gradual change in size, form, color or texture; used to provide visual movement.

**GROOMING:** Procedures to ensure that a specimen presents the best possible appearance. Cleaning of flowers, foliage, and pots and removal of damaged leaves or blooms, spray residue, dust, shed pollen, etc. Leaves may not be polished with any product that alters the natural character of the foliage.

**HARMONY:** The pleasing organization of all components of a design. Or use of similar components or color throughout an arrangement.

**HEDGING:** See Technique.

**HOGARTH CURVE DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in a curve which suggests a smooth, flowing S curve. The curve can be horizontal, vertical, or slanted.

**HORIZONTAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis parallel to the horizon.

**HUE:** The name of an individual color.

**INFLORESCENCE:** The characteristic arrangement of buds and flowers on the stem or branch; a mode of development of individual florets.

**INTERPRETIVE DESIGN:** A design of any style that expresses or explains an idea. For example; a description in a Flower Show Schedule.

**INTENSITY:** The luster or brilliance of a color that can be measured. Dullness is its opposite.

**KENZAN:** The Japanese name for a flower pin holder or "frog".

**KINETIC:** Dynamic, energizing.

**KUBARI:** A straight, bent or forked branch or twig used to support material in an arrangement. An Ikebana term.

**LAYERING:** See Technique.

**LIGHT:** A design element; light is necessary for vision. Light sources can be artificial or natural in the staging area and hall of a Show and can be within a design.

**LINE:** A design element; a visual path that leads the eye through the design and establishes the structural framework of the design. It carries the rhythm through the design. The line can be vertical, horizontal, zigzag, curved as in a crescent or Hogarth curve, or any path that leads the eye through the design.

**LUMINOSITY:** Relative brightness; mix hues with white to make them more luminous.

**MANIPULATED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material which has been altered from its natural condition including, but not limited to, bending, cutting, folding, and braiding.

**MECHANICS:** Components that control an arrangement and thereby ensure its stability (pin holder, oasis, clay, wire, tape, etc.). Mechanics should not be exposed except as an integral part of the design.

**MOBILE:** A group of freely moving, suspended forms, having visual balance with actual movement produced by air currents.

**MODERN:** Current trends in the Arts and in flower arrangement.

**MONOCHROMATIC:** Consisting of one hue, its tints, tones, and shades. (White is not a hue.)

**NATIVE PLANT:** Any plant native to the region in which it is growing.

**NICHE:** A defined space enclosed on three sides as stated in the Schedule.

**NOVICE:** In the Artistic classes, one who has not won an individual Blue ribbon in a GCV Flower Show. In the Horticulture classes, one who has never won an individual horticulture blue ribbon in *any* show approved by the GCV flower show's sanctioning flower society. A horticulture exhibitor may be considered a novice in each of the GCV flower shows sanctioned by the American Rose Society, the American Daffodil Society or the North American Lily Society.

**ORGANIC:** See Sustainable Practices.

**OVERLAY/DRAPE:** If there are no restrictions in the Schedule about altering the staging area, an overlay or drape may be used.

**ORIGINALITY:** Use of independent thought and imagination for a fresh approach of aspect, design or style in an arrangement.

**PARALLEL:** Shapes such as lines, curves, or even concentric circles that are equidistant from each other.

**PATTERN:** A design element; visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, colors, textures, and spaces in the design.

**PAVÉ:** See Technique.

**PEDESTAL:** A plinth, stand, or column, freestanding or attached, used as staging for a flower arrangement.

**PERIOD ARRANGEMENT:** A design with characteristics typical of an historic period. Plant material need not be authentic but must interpret the class.

**PEDICEL:** The stem of a single flower on an inflorescence. See Inflorescence.

**PERENNIAL:** A plant that lives for more than two years. In flower shows, generally includes herbaceous plants hardy to the area in which they are being exhibited.

**PESTICIDE FREE:** See Sustainable Practices.

PETIOLE: Leaf stalk.

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**UNITY:** The combining of parts resulting in a harmonious effect.

**VARIETY:** A sub-group of a species. Used for naturally occurring variants. See Cultivar for species selected by man. The terms cultivar and variety are sometimes used interchangeably, however, for Show purposes, cultivar is the accepted use.

**VEGETABLES:** The parts of a plant that are used for food. Includes, but not limited to, seeds, tubers, bulbs, stems, and fruit.

**VEILING:** See Technique.

**VOIDS:** Spaces created in a design.

**WEAVING:** See Technique.

**VALUE:** The lightness of a color (tint), a mixture of pure hue and white, or the darkness of a color (shade), a mixture of pure hue and black.

**VERTICAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis perpendicular to the horizon.