

Principles and Elements of Design

Flower Arranging is the art of organizing the design elements of plant material and other components according to artistic principles to achieve beauty, harmony, distinction, and expression. The terms flower arrangement, design or composition are synonymous.

Components used in creating a design are plant material, container, background and mechanics. Optional components that may be added to the design include accessories, featured objects, and bases.

The principles and elements of design guide arrangers in creating and judges in analyzing flower arrangements. It is imperative that all flower arrangement judges be thoroughly familiar with these concepts.

Principles of Design

Balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion and scale are the basic standards used to organize the design elements and an arrangement is judged on how well these principles are applied.

1. **Balance** is visual stability achieved by placing equal visual or actual weight on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis.
 - a. **Symmetrical balance** is achieved by placing equal amounts of similar materials on either side of a central axis.
 - b. **Asymmetrical balance** is balance without symmetry achieved by placing approximate equal visual weight of different elements on each side of a central axis.
2. **Dominance** is control of a design by one or more of the elements. It implies the presence of primary and subordinate elements within the design.
3. **Contrast** is the use of opposite or unlike elements to emphasize differences and add interest.
4. **Rhythm** is a dominant visual path through a design. It is achieved by the use of gradation and repetition in a linear direction.
5. **Proportion** is the relationship of one area of a floral design to other areas of the design and to the design as a whole.
6. **Scale** is the size relationship of the individual component parts of a design to one another and the size relationship of the arrangement to the surrounding area.

Elements of Design

Light, space, line, form, size, pattern, texture and color are the visual qualities used in creating a design and are common to all art forms. An arrangement is judged on the effective use of these elements.

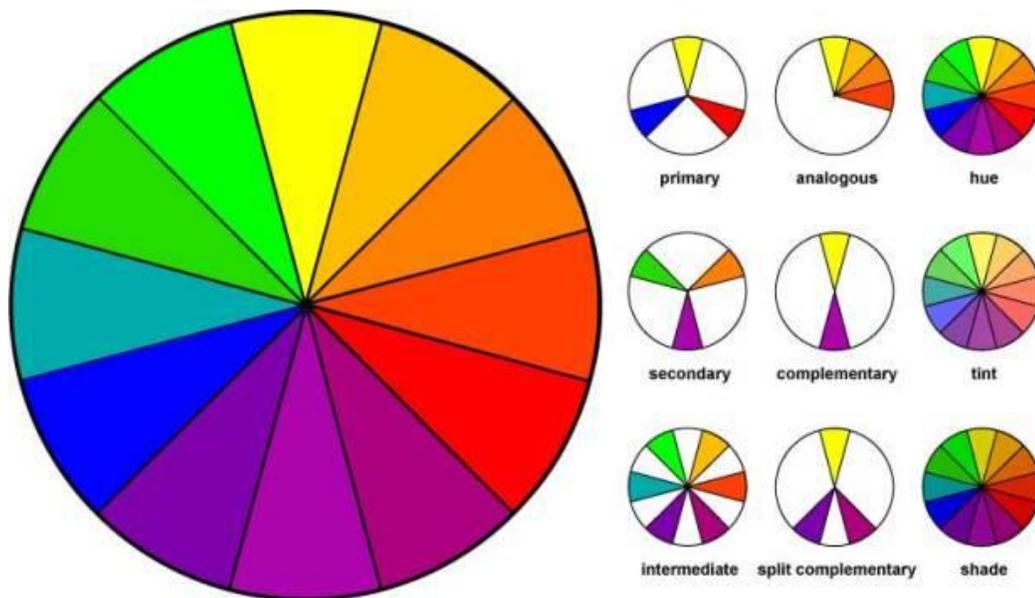
1. **Light:** Illumination (natural or artificial) is necessary for vision. It affects color, shadows, and the visibility of a design.
2. **Space:** The open area in and around the arrangement. It includes the space in which the design is placed.
3. **Line:** A visual path that leads the eye through the design and establishes the structural framework of the design. It carries the rhythm through the design.
4. **Form:** The contour of two-and three-dimensional material. It applies to individual components within the design as well as the contour of the design as a whole.
5. **Size:** The visual dimension of line, shape, form and space.
6. **Pattern:** The visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, colors, textures and spaces in the design. It is dependent on illumination.
7. **Texture:** The visual surface quality of the components, e.g. rough vs. smooth, dull vs. shiny.
8. **Color:** The 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. The qualities of color are:
 - a. **Hue or Chroma:** The specific name of a color such as red, green, etc.
 - b. **Value:** The lightness or darkness of a color. Pink is a light value of red obtained by adding white. It is called a tint. Maroon is a dark value of red obtained by adding black and it is called a shade.
 - c. **Intensity:** The brilliance or dullness of a color.

Color Wheel



Relationships between colors are described by the color wheel. Used by artists of various expertise, the color wheel introduces primary, secondary and tertiary colors as well as color complements. The primary colors are red, blue and yellow, and cannot be created by mixing other elements. However, any two primary colors mixed together will yield a secondary color - orange, green or purple. Tertiary colors are created by mixing a secondary color with a primary color. For example, yellow-green is made by mixing the secondary color green with the primary color, yellow.

Color Complements are color opposites and contract each other, creating a vibrant, active color palette. They are located on opposite sides of the color wheel from each other. An example of a pair of complementary colors is purple and yellow.



Color Terms

Primary Colors	Red (carmine), yellow and blue (phthalocyanine) from which all other colors may be mixed.
Secondary Colors	Orange, green and purple, made by mixing adjacent primary colors on the color wheel.
Tertiary Colors	Colors located between primary and secondary colors on the color wheel, created by mixing any adjacent primary and secondary color.
Hue	The clearest form of any color, without the addition of black, white or its complement.
Chroma	The intensity, strength or saturation of a color. The intensity of a hue can be reduced by its complementary. For instance, the intensity of green can be reduced by adding red -- the eventual result being a neutral gray.
Value	The lightness or darkness of a color, e.g. light or dark blue.
Shade	A color darkened by adding black.
Tint	A color lightened by adding white.
Complementary Color	Colors opposite each other on the color wheel. Mixing complementary colors will produce gray.
Monochromatic	A color scheme using values of only one color. Sepia (reddish-brown) is a common choice in illustration.
Analogous	A scheme using two or three adjacent colors on the color wheel. Example: yellow, yellow-green, green or blue, purple, violet. This scheme is equally useful in creating a simple palette for an illustration or a garden design.
Warm colors	Generally thought of as yellow, orange and red, which seem to advance toward the viewer. However this distinction may also be made of blues and greens. Example: ultramarine blue is 'warmer' than cobalt blue. Willow green is 'warmer' than sage and Cadmium red is 'warmer' than carmine.
Cool Colors	Generally, blues, greens and violets, which appear to recede.