

DESIGN 101

aka Floral Design Made Easy!

by Kathy Ward

Article Three – Creating a Traditional Mass Design

In our last article, we reviewed a Line Design. In a Line Design, the most important things to remember were to use a minimal amount of plant material, create an open silhouette (open space within the design) and to have a strong, dominant line. In this article, we will be creating a simple Mass Design. **The requirements for a Mass Design are the opposite of those of a Line Design.** In a Mass Design, there is an abundance of plant material, a closed silhouette (little empty space within the design) and the element of form has more dominance than the element of line.

Creating your Design –

Step 1 – Purchase your plant material. For a small, simple Mass Design, you will need:

- linear foliage – 11 to 12 stems (about 12”), consider using branches from your garden
- smooth, round leaves – like camellia or lemon leaf
- round flowers – 9 or more, medium sized (one flower per stem); you may use more than one type of blossom
- filler flowers/foliage – 7 to 9 stems (smaller spray flowers or foliage)

For the demonstration design, I have used a dozen orange roses, purple statice, and bright green pennycrest. The orange, purple and bright green were chosen because they are bright and vivid together. The rose is larger with a smooth texture; the statice is smaller with a frilly or fuzzy texture; and the pennycrest is even smaller with a bit of a vertical line and interesting form. These

contrasts in form, color and texture create interest in the design. More information on selecting your botanical components was included in article one (*Footprints*, Fall 2023).

Step 2 – Select your container. For a small Mass Design, a shallow bowl works well as a container. Black, brown and green are always good colors. You can also use a container that echoes the colors of your flowers.

Step 3 – Decide on your mechanics. The most common mechanics for a Mass Design with fresh flowers are floral foam (Oasis) or chicken wire. A kenzan can be used but it is usually more effective with less plant material.

Step 4 – Condition your flowers. For more information on conditioning, see article two (*Footprints*, Winter 2023).

Step 5 – Prepare your mechanics. For a Mass Design, if you are using floral foam, you will want to have the foam 1 to 1 1/2” higher than the rim of your container. This allows you to place some of the plant material into the arrangement at a downward angle, helping to hide the rim of the container. Use a single block of foam rather than trying to fill the bowl with pieces. An “X” of waterproof tape can be placed over the foam and attached to the sides of the bowl to keep the foam in place.

Step 6 – Cut your line foliage. Cut all pieces the same length. They should be about the width of the container or a little longer. For line foliage, I used Israeli ruscus.



Step 7 – Place your line foliage. Place six pieces horizontally, near the rim of your container – on the left side, on the right side, two evenly spaced toward the front and two evenly spaced toward the back (Image 1 right). Place one piece in the middle of the floral foam straight up (Image 2)



Place four more pieces in the top of the foam, equal distance between the center and the corner, at a 45-degree angle (Image 3).



All pieces of foliage (and all floral material in the design) should look like it is radiating from the center of the foam/design. With the line foliage, you have just created the basic outline of your design. When you place your other plant materials, they should remain within this framework. If you plan to use your Mass Design as a centerpiece, remember that the height of the arrangement should be such that people sitting at the dining table can still see each other.

Step 8 – Place your round leaves. Place your round leaves throughout the design. Use stems of different lengths. These leaves are meant to fill out the design and not to necessarily hide the mechanics. For the round leaves, I used camellia leaves. (Image 4.)



Step 9 – Place your round flowers. Place your first blossom so that it is vertical and in the center of the arrangement. Place the other round flowers equally throughout the framework of your design.



Depth is added to your design by recessing some of the flowers and finishing the back of your design. Remember to stay within your framework. (Image 5)

Step 10 – Fill in with spray flowers. Tuck the spray flowers throughout your design. They can be used to hide mechanics, hide the rim of your container and just round out your design (Image 5). A second filler was added to increase the design interest with an additional texture, form and color (Image 6).



Note – When creating a design that will be viewed from all angles, it is helpful to make your design on a rotating tray (Lazy Susan). This will allow you to easily see all sides of your design with a twist of your wrist.

Summary, Lesson Three –

These instructions give you a very simple framework to get you started with a Mass Design. Mass Designs are always geometric in shape. By adjusting the length of your linear foliage, you can create a triangle, oval or round design. The Mass Design can also be varied by using linear flowers instead of or along with your linear foliage. Have fun experimenting with different combinations of round forms and filler flowers.