

## **BASICS FOR PREPARATION OF FRESH PLANT MATERIALS FOR USE IN DESIGN**

- A. **Selection:** before cutting, consider line, size, color, form, direction of growth, and pose of flowers and leaves, to be sure they relate well to proposed use.
- B. **Cutting:** early evening best, as sugar has been stored in plant tissues all during the day; early morning is next best; avoid middle of a sunny day.
- C. **Conditioning of fresh plant materials:**
  - 1. **Definition:** process allowing plant material to take on more water than it gives off, which puts it into prime state of freshness.
  - 2. **Conditioning process** has the following steps:
    - a. Carry bucket of tepid water with you into cutting area.
    - b. Cut stem end as long as possible on slant with sharp implement.
    - c. Remove unnecessary foliage, place in water up to flower head.
    - d. Cut foliage to be used in design, place in bucket.
    - e. Keep bucket in cool, dark room, out of drafts, for several hours or preferably overnight.

If possible, do not cut too far in advance of design use. Study the materials a day or so before actually cutting, but try to allow for overnight conditioning. Cut foliage of flowering materials for use in creating a realistic and natural "look".

Tip: with hollow stemmed flowers, the fat, puffy chenille sticks from a craft store works wonders in preventing broken stems for placement in design. This also gives you more manageability of exact placement.

Have fun designing with turgid materials,  
Charmane Truesdell

## **MEMO TO ARRANGERS**

The handbook defines flower arranging as the art of organizing the design elements of plant material and other components according to design principles to obtain beauty, harmony, distinction and expression.

### **Elements are:**

1. Space - total, within plant materials & components, within design
2. Line - continuous visual path, communicating factor
3. Form - 3D, total overall outline
4. Size – visual effect of actual size affected by textural finish
5. Color – visual impact
6. Texture – surface finish, tactile sense
7. Pattern – outline or silhouette of design

### **Principles are:**

1. Balance – visual stability -- symmetrical or asymmetrical
2. Proportion – relationship of areas & amounts to each other and to the whole
3. Scale – size relationships
4. Rhythm – dominant visual path thru design, suggests motion
5. Dominance – more of one thing than another – color, plant material etc
6. Contrast – difference – long & short, rough & smooth, mat or dull & shiny, color, plant materials etc. That little touch of pazazze!

Remember flower arranging is an expression of your enjoyment of plant materials, so don't get uptight when entering flower shows because that's what your exhibit will say to the judges! Block out an hour or so, look carefully at your materials and place them to show their best. Then, sit back, enjoy your serene mood as much as the inscrutable Orientals.

Happy Arranging Always,  
Charmane Truesdell, Master Judge