

Thoughts on Containers

Definition of Container: A receptacle for plant material and other design components that provides visual and artistic interest to the overall design. NGC uses the term "container" to refer to a design component which is more than a mechanic used to hold water or support plant material, although it may serve those purposes as well. *HB page 155*

More than something that holds water..... CONTAINERS should suit the design, in color, form, size, texture and style or period. Container should relate to the class theme or title. A container adds interest, and contributes to the overall harmony of the design. Should be chosen thoughtfully as it becomes an integral component of the design. Containers are the designer's choice in style, design type, and/or composition (wood, glass, metal, ceramic, etc.) unless limited by the schedule.

Containers should hold water! Sometimes they don't. TEST in advance! [solutions include wax, foil, plastic wrap, liners, recycled plastic containers - margarine, mushroom, whipped topic, cheese, etc.]

Traditional Containers: Vase, pitcher, basket, urn, bowl, containers designed for floral foam. The library is a good source for older flower arranging books which are worth studying for traditional containers and designs.

Guidelines for Containers for Traditional Designs (stress is on 'guidelines')

- Size and Proportion—container/ vase: 1-1/2 – 2x the greatest dimension of the container
- Plant material should come over the edge of container
Style: traditional shape & form. 'traditional' container, formal or casual; can use candlesticks, wine bottles, bowls, a wine glass, etc
- Part of design but not dominant;
- Things to consider to keep container subordinate to design: color (receding and advancing, same color as some flowers); texture (shiny, dull) ' Best containers usually earth tones, matte finish. NOTE: black, brown, grey containers can add weight and cause design to look bottom-heavy (visually unbalanced)
- Contrasting color—can add interest, rhythm; if using a white container, design should include white component (s).
- Avoid decoration on containers, animal shapes,
- Avoid containers with narrow openings .

Containers for Creative Designs:

- Can be any style, any shape, any material. Sometimes it can be hard to call it a container (doesn't have to hold water); Can simply be a 'support' Still, it must be chosen with care because it is a major component of the design.
- Should be in harmony with the other design components.
- Should add interest to the design & distinction.
- Can be the dominant part of a design and can set the theme for the entire design.
- Creative Containers: columns, tubes, pvc pipe, . May have more than one opening.
- The NGC Vision of Beauty Calendar is an excellent source/inspiration for creative containers.

Containers can be **costly**. Often inexpensive containers that you make or buy at thrift shops become the ones you use over and over again. Re-purposing everyday items as containers can add creativity, including abstraction, to a design.

With thanks and much appreciation to Dody Douglas, Chesapeake Bay Garden Club, Virginia, for sharing her thoughts on containers, from which this information was adapted.

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