

Point Scoring Orchid Flower Arrangements and Corsages

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It has been said that few people on this planet have been sprinkled with that magic dust known as talent. Those rare individuals have the amazing ability to select the best flower arrangement in a show without point scoring. There are always a few who think they have such a gift, and there is nothing that can be done for them. However, the majority of orchid flower arrangements and corsages.

Flower Arrangements

Flower arranging is an art form where the arranger designs with plant material just as an artist creates with paint, as a sculptor creates with clay or marble, and as an architect creates with metal, bricks, and concrete. The following is a discussion of the many categories to be considered when judging a floral design:

Media — Components of this art form include flowers, leaves, branches, containers, bases, mechanics (such as pinholders), accessories, and backgrounds. Accessories often are necessary as finishing material of a composition but must not dominate. A background is part of the overall design and, most importantly, determines the design's frame of reference. Lack of a background tends to create visual confusion in judging a specific arrangement.

Elements of Design — The visual characteristics of the media are:

- **Space.** This is the total area within a design. It may be determined by the show schedule but is controlled by the designer.
- **Line.** This is predominately one-dimensional and is the primary foundation of the design, creating visual paths and movement, whether they be short, long, curved, weak, strong. Line forms the design skeleton.
- **Form.** This is three-dimensional and beyond the simple line. It can be a closed form such as a peony, or an open form, such as a poppy. Or it can be regular, as in a zinnia, or irregular, as in an orchid. Regular form tends to attract the eye quickly but does not hold interest as well as the irregular form does.
- **Size.** This is not an actual measurement but rather is a visual determination with relationship to other components in conjunction with distance. A shiny container may appear larger than a dull one of equal size from a specific viewing point.
- **Pattern.** This involves the lines, shapes, forms, and voids of all the components in the finished design.
- **Texture.** This refers to the surface qualities of the material which appeal to sight and touch. Consideration of this element must be given to all media, including container, accessories, and background.

Employment of the elements of design in a flower arrangement must be organized according to the principles of design.

Design principles which form the standard for all art forms and are based on natural laws are:

- **Balance.** This is the illusion of symmetrical or asymmetrical stability. The design axis is vertical because balance is related to the force of gravity. Heavy feeling

- can be expressed with dense, bold, coarse media and dark colors. Lightness is achieved with fine texture and light colors.
- Proportion. This is the relationship of the design areas (including voids) to each other within the entire frame of reference. Nothing can be too large or too small alone but only in relationship to each of the other elements.
 - Scale. This is a measure of component size to the individual design parts. Use of repetition and variety of the size enhances this principle.
 - Rhythm. This creates the presence of continuous visual movement through the design. Use of a range of one color or groupings of small masses in place of one large mass establishes an ever-flowing path.
 - Contrast. This implies different characteristics of components: rough/smooth, coarse/fine, dark/light.
 - Dominance. This demonstrates the greater impact of some elements, thereby subduing other such as the force of more curved lines than straight lines, rounder single flowers than a spray of delicate flowers, or greater use of one color.

The discussion thus far deals generally with the section of a point scoring scale concerned with design.

Color harmony — This is an important, vibrant area in an arrangement. Therefore, it is of singular recognition in the point scale. Color is probably the most powerful element of design due to the emotional and visual impact of its use in an artistic composition. While it is not necessary to have a comprehensive in-depth “Isaac Newton” approach to it, there are three qualities of color that should be considered for flower arranging. They are:

- Hue. A specific name of color. Terms color and hue often are used interchangeably.
- Value. The degree of lightness (tint) or darkness (shade) of a hue.
- Chroma. This is the degree of color intensity applied.

Color is never used alone because its usage is relative always to surrounding colors.

Conformity to Schedule and/or Suitability of Purpose — This is an essential division in the scale of points. If there is a theme designated in the show schedule, not too much of the “story” should be told in the design because it may then lack subtlety and no longer excite the imagination of the viewer. Frequently, no theme is written into a show schedule, so a judgment must be made as to the suitability of the flower arrangement to the general feeling of the particular show.

Distinction — This category suggests the feeling of superiority in artistic skill of the overall execution of composition. It is treated as a scoring division.

Creativity — This is the section where artistic ability reigns. It recognizes that intrinsic gift of originality when the designer dares to present innovative concepts. One may use plant material in unorthodox concepts, such as placing a flower upside down to achieve the desired effect — Picasso dared to present anatomy not as did Henry Gray in *The Anatomy of the Human Body*. This section allows for pizzazz.

Condition — This the physical quality of both live material and other media at the time of judging and needs point scoring recognition.

In summary, a flower arrangement is the manipulation of the media by organizing the elements of design according to the principles of design to create education, interest, and pleasure for the viewer as well as to suggest a story, mood, idea, or emotion. With reference to the eighth edition of the American Orchid Society's Handbook on Judging and Exhibition (page 57, Section 6.3.5, Orchid Arrangements), please note that in this article Color Harmony is an individual section. Texture was discussed as a design element. The container as part of overall design is included in media.

Corsages

Corsage judging occasionally is required in a show. This section may include wrist corsages, hair arrangements, nosegays, or bridal bouquets.

One point which must be stressed in this section is that judging should be done at eye level. Frequently, these creations are displayed on backboards or tables. Care should be taken to examine them at the correct judging level.

Techniques such as wiring, taping, finishing of the back, and weight are extremely important mechanics in this category. Lightness of weight is most essential, so the design must be picked up as well as turned over for judging observation.

Design point determination in this section is the same as for flower arranging.

Color harmony has the same type of evaluation as in flower arranging, even though the point amount may differ.

Combination of material stresses the dominance of flowers. The composition should not be overwhelmed by ribbons, tulle, artificial leaves, glitter, etc.

Distinction of a corsage, nosegay, and the like has the same controls as those of flower arrangements.

Condition pointing is noting that all components are at the peak of perfection at the time of judging.

Point scales are not set in stone. They may be adjusted for a particular show. If they are changed for a show, it is important that the scale be included in the show schedule because the schedule is the law of the show.

When judging, you should remember that the standard is set by the quality of each show and not by something seen at a show six weeks ago.

It has been suggested that the first approach to judging, be it an orchid arrangement or corsage, is to find something pleasing about the design, such as flowers, container, or foliage. Make constructive criticisms. While a judge may not like a design, it may be well done and well presented.

It should be noted that kindness is a desirable quality in judges when rendering judgmental pronouncements in a show. The main function of an orchid show is to educate and present a pleasurable experience for the viewing public. Therefore, the exhibitors must be encouraged to continue to enter shows.

It must be remembered that the decision of the judging team is final, and no other individual or group can change it.

If available, it is suggested that accredited flower show judges of the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. be asked to judge artistic arrangements in orchid shows until the American Orchid Society judging program includes more training in this area.

Orchid Corsage Suggested Point Scale

Technique.....	25
Design.....	30
Color harmony.....	15
Combination of material.....	10
Distinction.....	10
Condition.....	10
Total points	100