

DESIGN HINTS

by Joyce Stenger

Have you ever wanted to do a design for an African violet show? Well go ahead and try one. Even the best known violet designers had their "first" entry at one time or another. *Hint: Take photos of other designs in shows.* You can put together a small blossom arrangement with little cost and effort. Even if you do not enter it, you can enjoy practicing small designs.

You need measurements for the niches in a small blossom design category. The schedule usually gives measurements. Often the small niches (framed areas for designs; may be lighted) remain the same from year to year. *Hint: Read a show schedule several times.* Size is important! All materials for your tiny design have to be small. *Hint: Go to garage sales, flea markets, or your own home and back yard to find materials for your design.* Let's get started!

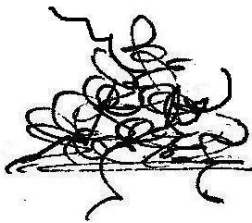


Container

The container is used to hold a design upright; it can be made of glass or metal, or wood. Find a container that catches your eye. A small vase is good. It should be about 2 inches in height. *Hint: put a measuring tape or ruler in the box of your "stuff" that you continuously add to.*

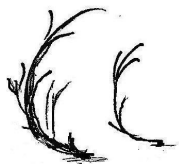
Moss

Spanish moss can be found on old oak trees in your yard, college campuses, or nearby parks. Southern states. Its color is light grayish-blue. Gather a hand full sack. Spray the moss inside the sack with **RAID House and Garden** to discourage pests from getting into your home or the showroom. *Hint: Allow the moss to dry before using it.*



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Line



Line material can be a narrow piece of wood or a few long leaves or a sprig of tree branch. *Hint: Use natural materials instead of plastic or metal.* Gather a variety of items so you can select the right ones that fit what you are now designing. It might be a nice surprise how easily things go together when you have an abundance of items to choose from.

Filler

The filler material can be small dried branches, grasses, or leaves. These design items "pull" the line material together. Unlimited items can be use for filler, dried flowers, bamboo sticks, or grasses. If the color is wrong it can be dyed or spray painted to blend beautifully with the rest of the colors. *Hint: Decide if you want the filler to have a shiny or flat look.* Paint items outside on paper



when there is no wind, pets, or children.

Base

The base

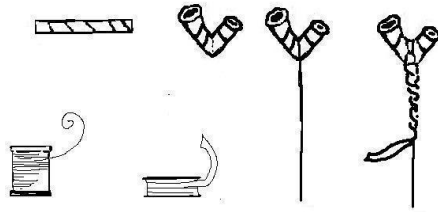


of a design can be any small flat piece of

wood (like cork used under small plants in plant nurseries) or a doily (such as lacy paper under baked goods) or ceramic items (such as a saucer under a tea cup). A base provides contrast of color or material while it anchors everything into the niche. *Hint: A base adds height so re-measure the design.*

Holder

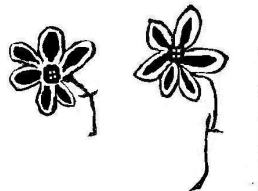
Fresh blossoms need a water holder to keep them from wilting. To make a holder, use a plain drinking about 1½ inches long. Bend these in half and seam with florist tape or glue gun. Wrap the bent straw piece onto a toothpick or floral wire. Place the holder in front of the line and filler in the vase. *Hint: Do not put early morning on the show day.* Designers are allowed an hour before judging to freshen their arrangements.



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Blossoms

In a tiny design, one large whole stem of blossoms for complete design. Use an ink other materials on a 3"x5" (still on the plant to keep from sale room. *Hint: You for design entries.*



blossom can be used or you can cut a impact. Their color is added to the pen to write the violet name with all white card. Bring your own blossoms them fresh) or buy plants with blossoms do not have to grow your own blossoms

Background (optional)

A background in your niche can be covered with paper, felt, burlap or other cloth that enhances a design and reflects the show theme. Measure the background, side panels, back panel and floor of a niche. Use straight pins or masking tape (folded sticky side out) to hold background materials in place. *Hint: Mechanics must not be visible.*

START YOUR DESIGN NOW

- 1) You should now have gathered all the items for your small blossom arrangement. Start by pushing a small amount of Spanish moss into the top of the vase. *Hint: You can use florist clay to hold material in place but moss is cheaper and easier to find.* Allow 2-3 moss pieces to hang off the lip of the container.
- 2) Put line material in the vase next to provide your design with height. No portion of a design is allowed to touch the sides of a niche or extend past the top. If you need to make the length shorter, cut it off the bottom of the material not the top. *Hint: At home you can make a simple niche from a cardboard box with correctly measured inside measurements to see how your design fits.*
- 3) Insert filler material into the vase. Filler material closes gaps between the line material and moss. Filler to be a color and texture that is **opposite** of other materials to add interest. Or, it can be a **complimentary** color and texture for unity. Have a couple of different colors to practice with before you decide which one is right. *Hint: You can find a color-wheel on the Internet. Ask: find a "color-wheel."*

- 4) Attach each bent straw piece to a toothpick or thin floral wire. Use a hot glue gun or a piece of florist clay to connect one toothpick to one bent straw piece. Adjust the straws so that each faces upwards to hold a few drops of water. Place the straw holders in the center front lower portion of your design. Later, you can use an eyedropper with room temperature water to fill the holder. *Hint: Get an eyedropper from a drug store pharmacist.* Put in background, water and blossoms at the show. A design is done.
WOW!