

LESSON 3

VERTICAL LINE-MASS DESIGN

I. REVIEW: Lesson Plans No. 1 & 2.

1. Types or forms of plant material needed: spike, round, transitional.
2. The best time to cut plant materials is either in the early morning or late evening.
3. Conditioning explained in Lesson 1 pages 1 & 2.
4. Mechanics: Clippers, needleholder and/or Oasis, waterproof floral tape wire, and "Cling".
5. Plant material selection and placements for vertical and horizontal designs.
6. Review diagrams illustrating text.

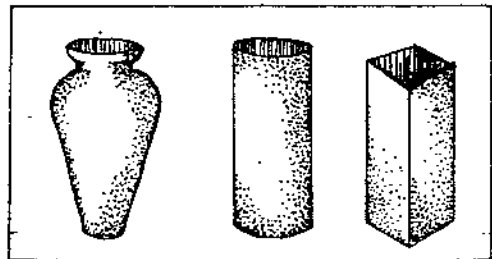
II. PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS OF DESIGN. In the first two Design Study lessons, **line** was emphasized as an element of design necessary to create an arrangement. The other elements are **space, light, form, pattern, texture, color, and size.** The **forms** found in plant material have been pointed out in the selection of plant material. A **color** should be selected that will coordinate with the area where the design is placed. **Texture** refers to the surface structure as rough or smooth, shiny or dull.

The principles of design are basic in all art. The principles are **balance, rhythm, contrast, dominance, proportion and scale.** Balance is visual stability. **Rhythm** is the dominate visual path through the design. **Proportion** is the relationship of one area or amount to the other area or the whole design. **Scale** is a pleasing size relationship to the container and to the other plant material. **Contrast** of one or more elements is necessary to make the design interesting, to stimulate the eye and the senses. However, there must be more of one element stressed to achieve **dominance.**

III. VERTICAL LINE-MASS DESIGN. In a vertical Line-mass design, additional material is added to strengthen the line. The dominant line is combined with more plant material at the center of interest. The center of interest is placed at or near the point where all plant materials emerge from the container. Strive not to cross the line of another stem. Line-mass designs are generally narrow instead of wide, with the tallest lines grouped together for **dominance of line.** Each piece of plant material should be of a different length to keep the design thin and eye movement toward the center of interest. The first flower, if a bud, may be inserted toward the back so this vertical movement will continue. Flowers are added one at a time, each one of a different length along the established lines. Turn one to the right slightly and the next one to the left. Follow the lines down to place the largest most open flower at or near the top of the container. Two or more flowers may be used together to create this center of interest or focal area.

A. Materials needed:

1. Tall straight-sided container, either round or square between 10 and 20 inches in height. Color; any color that harmonizes with the plant material chosen. Green, beige, blue etc.
2. Prepare Oasis by soaking in water, or if the container has a wide mouth it is possible to place a needleholder down into the container with florist clay. Florist anchor tape, clippers, and knife (see lesson page 1).



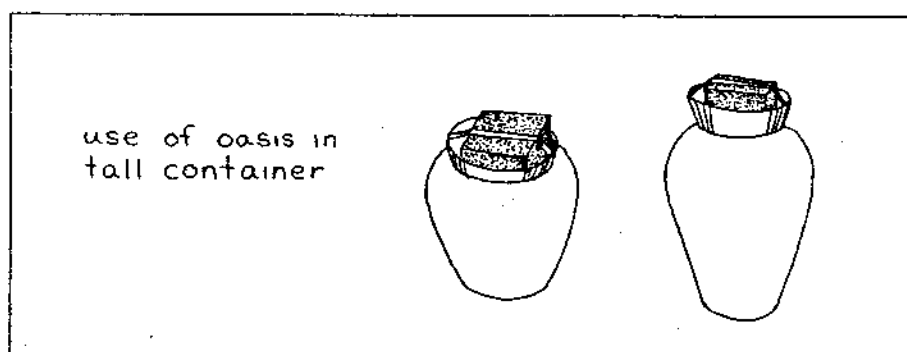
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A. Materials needed: continued:

3. Five pieces of linear material (spiked forms like glads, liatris, snapdragons and/or bare, flowering or green branches of trees or shrubs, long pointed or strap foliage as iris, flax, yucca, sansevieria, etc.
4. Seven round flower forms (carnations, mums, zinnias, roses, crested or trumpet shapes also may be used like iris, lilies or celosia.
5. Five or six pieces of transitional/filler of intermediate size or small leafed material. If the line and round forms are of similar texture these should be of a contrasting texture. Example, podocarpus and pompom chrysanthemums need smooth textured larger leaves for the third material.



- B. Construction:** Cut a piece of new Oasis to fit into the container that will extend 1 to 1 1/2 inches above the rim of the container. Float the Oasis in water in a sink until it is saturated. Tall containers should be filled within 2 inches of the rim with newspaper, gravel or sand etc. Place the prepared Oasis into the container. Secure with one or two strips of waterproof florist anchor tape over the top, placed slightly off center. (The center is needed for the main line.) Press the tape firmly to each side of the dry container.



C. Measurements and placement of line material:

1. First piece of line material; cut a **minimum** of 1 1/2 times the height of the container. Hold the stem in your hand over the spot you desire to place it and check if the length is correct. Oasis will break easily so stems should not be pulled out once placed. Insert gently 1/2 inch to 1 inch into the Oasis slightly back of the center point of the top of the Oasis. This is the main line of the design. It sets the pattern all other lines follow. The top of the line should be over the point that it emerged from the oasis for proper balance. When completed all the lines should appear to radiate from one point.

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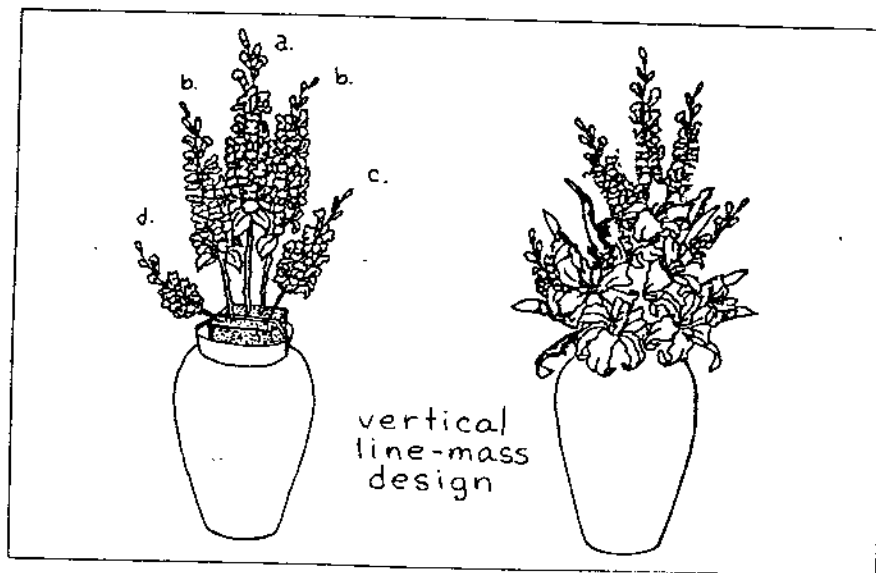
2. Second line should be cut noticeably shorter than the first line. About 1 to 3 inches depending on the width of the line and the length of the material. Insert it in back of the main line. Let the tip flow out to the right of the main line, but close so the vertical pattern will be established.
3. Third line should be cut shorter than the second line. Insert it in front of the main line and let the tip flow out to the left from the main line, but still close (within an inch or two) at the top.
4. Fourth line should be cut shorter than the third line. Insert it to the right of the main line and let the tip flow to the right, maintaining the vertical pattern.
5. The fifth piece is the shortest. It is placed low and to the left of the main line.

D. Selection and placement of 7 flowers:

1. If there are different sizes of flowers, cut the bud or smallest flower a little longer than the fourth piece of line material. If it is a bud or smallest of the flowers, insert it in front of the main line. If all flowers are the same size consider placing it behind the main line and peeking out to the left so only part of the flower will show.
2. Cut the rest of the flowers different lengths, according to size. The tightest and least open should be the longest/tallest.
3. Insert each flower in a gradual descent down to the rim of the container. Unless the flowers are large two or three should be used in front and low near the rim of the container. One of them should be placed at or near the base of the main line and come forward over the rim of the container.

E. Selection and placement of transitional/filler material.

Use this material to add depth by placing to the back of the flowers and line material and to obscure the oasis. It may be related or contrasting in color and texture. Bring some of the material over the front of the container in a downward manner to prevent the appearance of a design sitting on top of the container not in a container. Usually with oasis the lower plant material is inserted with an upward motion so that the material will flow over the rim. Sometimes an extra flower is needed to achieve this goal.



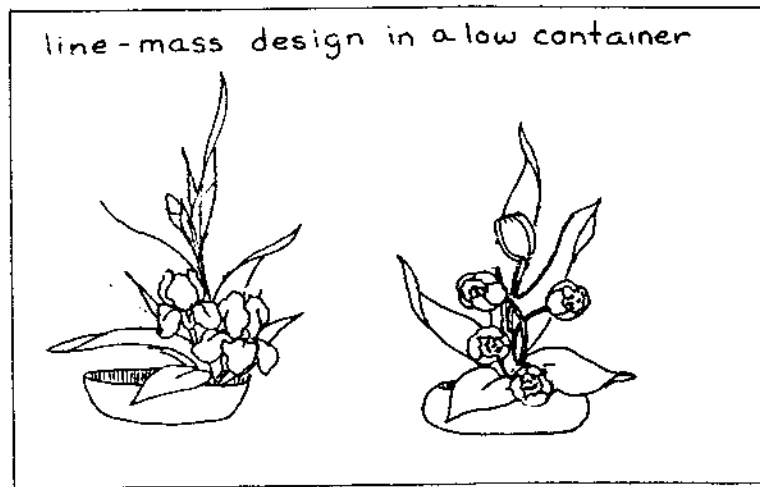
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IV. LINE-MASS DESIGN IN A LOW CONTAINER:

A. Container. The same line-mass design is attractive in a low, shallow container. Use the plant material as needed in the tall container. A needleholder is advisable. It should be anchored into the container as described in lessons 1 & 2 using florist clay.

B. Measurement and placement of lines, flowers and transitional/filler.

1. Measure the diameter of the container, plus the depth, a minimum of 1 1/2 times the length for the main line (first line). The remaining lines are cut as on pages 9,10 & 11 and in lessons 1 & 2.
2. Cut and place the flowers (round forms) by the same general measurements as on pages 9, 10 & 11.
3. The transitional/filler forms are cut and placed in the same manner. Care should be taken to cover the needleholder and to come out over the front of the container to prevent the horizontal line from being too strong.



V. APPRECIATION TIME

Is all of the plant material well conditioned? Fresh, crisp? Does the design appear to be stable? Has anything fallen out of the container? Is the tip of the main line at or near the point from which the lines radiate? These questions refer to the principle of Balance.

Is the selection of plant material suitable for the container? Elements to be considered at this time are line, the correct forms, contrast in textures, harmonious colors, and size. Does it follow the established pattern of a vertical line-mass design.

Focus on what you have achieved. Skill in design comes with **practice** and **study**.

Note: Line-mass designs are popular. They may follow any pattern, vertical, horizontal, right-hand or left-hand triangles, crescents, s-curves, or zigzag direction. The dominant line has a larger amount of plant material in the focal area and the silhouette is open. There are large spaces between the lines, flowers and foliage.