

JUDGING MATTERS



Newsletter of the Garden Clubs of Ontario Judges' Council
March 2017

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Spring is officially here and the countdown is on for our seminar and workshops with Hitomi Gilliam. We're very excited about this event and hope you are as well. Materials have been purchased, flowers ordered and registrations received. Thank you for sending in your payments so promptly. In order to ensure that no one was left out, we added five extra spots to all 3 workshops. Thanks must go to Elizabeth for her amazing juggling skills to accommodate everyone's preferences.

Our fall seminar program has now been set and the speakers engaged. The topics will be dahlias and ornamental grasses. While the focus will be on horticulture, a short design program is also planned. I apologize if the change in date has inconvenienced anyone. It was necessary to ensure dahlias would be available for our presenter and for entry in the flower show.

With spring flower show season upon us, we've included two articles in this issue that may assist you both in preparing your entries and in judging. We'd love to receive your conundrums, ideas for future programs as well as what you think about waxing flowers as explained on page 8.

Heinke

JUDGES' COUNCIL EXECUTIVE 2016 – 2018



Heinke Thiessen
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Judy Zinni
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Michael Erdman
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SPRING SEMINAR & WORKSHOPS, APRIL 11th & 12th, 2017

April 11, 2017

8:30 a.m. Registration
 9:00 a.m. Welcome
 9:15 a.m. Demonstration by Hitomi Gilliam
 12:00 noon Auction of designs
 Lunch
 1:15 Check in for workshop
 1:30-4:00 p.m. Design workshop
 (participants must be preregistered)



April 12, 2017

(participants must be preregistered)
 Morning Workshop
 Check in: 8:45 a.m.
 9:00-11:30 a.m.
 Lunch
 Afternoon Workshop
 Check in 12:45 p.m.
 1:00-3:30 p.m.

FALL SEMINAR, OCTOBER 3rd, 2017

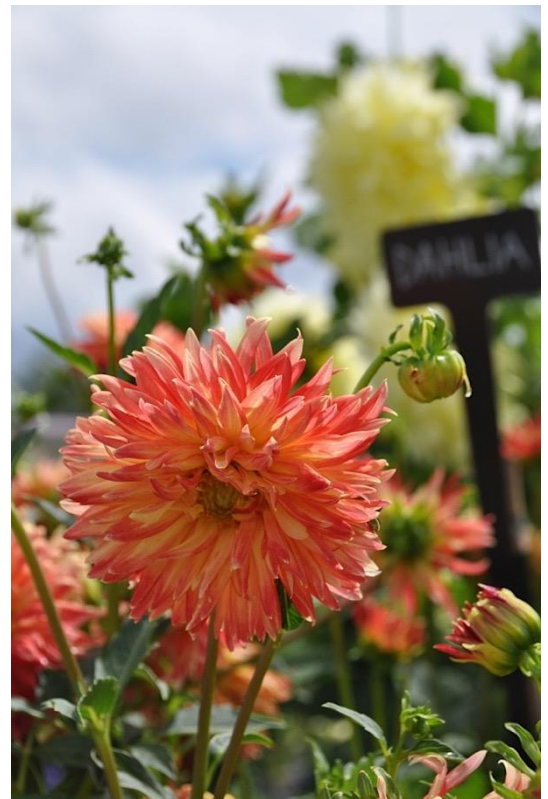


'Ornamental Grasses' presented by Diana Pooke

'Dahlias' presented by Dawn Suter & team

Flower show for entering and practice judging.

Floral design techniques.



OJES REVISION, UPDATE, MARCH 2017



The OJES revision project is moving toward completion. The GCO committees reviewing sections of the publication have completed their work. This has been a joint project with OHA and GCO, each doing a separate review of each section. Currently, these two revisions are being consolidated into one. The next step will be to pass this material on to a team of editors who will review the manuscript for content. Following this it will be edited for language and to be professionally formatted.

From the beginning it was the intent to have this material online. A number of issues are surfacing and some negotiating between the two organizations is needed to bring this to fruition. The OJES committee has prepared a document to be presented to both organizations, OHA and GCO, outlining the pros and cons of such an undertaking. The decision to have an online version and what form it will take will be decided by mutual agreement.

It is now generally agreed that the format will be similar to the previous publication, a spiral bound purse size edition. Printing costs are being investigated, with the number of copies required a determining factor. The more we order, the lower the printing price. If the publication is online, this may limit the number of printed copies required. Until we know this, the final cost of this project is difficult to determine.

It is the intent to make this a self-sustaining project. In order to do this, we need to sell advertising space in the publication. There is an opportunity here for a GCO member to come forward to take on this assignment. Because this is a document used by members across Ontario, and will be in publication for a lengthy period, advertising space should be of interest to businesses, especially those with a focus on gardening. If this is a project that you can take on, it would be much appreciated if you would contact me at dawn.suter@accglobal.net.

Dawn Suter, GCO Chair OJES Revision Committee

CONUNDRUM

Q. Are neon tetra fish allowed in a water-viewing design?

A. No they are not. Living creatures, of any kind, are not permitted in design.

OJES states "Design is a combination of fresh and/or dried plant material and/or **inorganic** objects arranged to produce an artistic unit" (pg. 82).

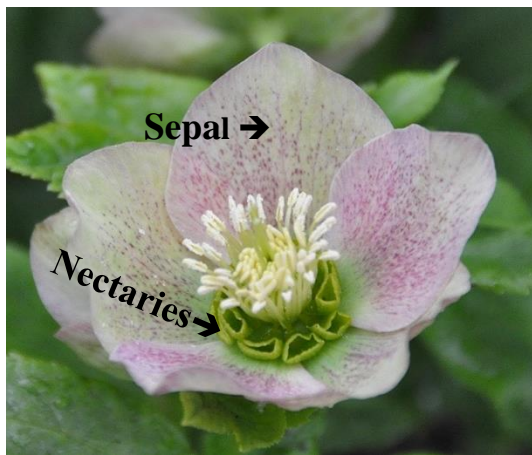
An accessory is defined as "An **inorganic** object(s) used in a subordinate manner to enhance a design of plant material." (OJES pg. 89).



Photo: Dr. Tom Bailey

PLANT FEATURE: Helleborus by Heinke Thiessen

Hellebores are valued for their winter and early spring flowers. They could appear on show tables as early as January. In my Mississauga garden, *Helleborus niger* flowers reliably between Christmas and New Years. It doesn't care if there's snow or not. Right now, other *Hellebore* species are showing buds and a few of the Lenten Rose hybrids are close to flowering. Expect to see *Helleborus orientalis*, *H. x hybridis*, *H. foetidus*, *H. argustifolius* etc. on show tables in April and May.



Individual flowers appear to last a very long time when in fact, the flowers are spent. A close look at the anatomy of Hellebore flowers explains why. What appear to be the petals of the flower are not petals but sepals. They cover the flower bud and once opened, attract insects. Sepals can last for a couple of months without looking old or worn.

At the base of the sepals is a ring of tubular nectaries, usually yellowish green in colour. These are highly modified flower petals. The petals have fused at their edges to form tubes. Inside this ring of nectaries are the flower's reproductive organs. Nectaries provide food for pollinators.

A flower in peak bloom will have fresh stamens and nectaries. As the bloom ages, the stamens and nectaries fall off. Since the sepals last long after the flower is fertilized and never fall off, the plant appears to still be in bloom. It's not.

Preparing Hellebore specimens for entry into shows can be challenging. When the flowers are fresh, the tissue is quite soft and difficult to condition. So far, my efforts haven't been reliably successful. After consulting expert Lizzie Matheson, I suspect my error is not placing them in deep enough water after pricking the stems as suggested in the Garden Club of Toronto Snippy Tips publication. Here are suggestions from both sources:

- Prick the stems just under the flower head and at intervals down the stem with a needle, especially under the water line and submerge the entire stem overnight.
- Put the stems in an inch of boiling water for a few seconds and then place immediately in cool water up to their necks. Leave overnight. Can prick stems as well.
- Press the point of a sharp pin just below the flower head and draw it down to the bottom of the stem making a fine groove, followed by a deep drink.
- For design, especially when using a shallow container, Hellebores are easier to use once the flower has matured and the seed set.



If you a favourite method of conditioning Hellebores cut from the garden, please share it.

WATER-VIEWING DESIGN *by Michael Erdman*

When I was studying forms in the most recent Design School for Judges, the one that I struggled with the most was Traditional Line. And a close second was Water-viewing. Somehow I don't think I was alone, as on the very first day, when we are all asked to bring in a traditional line design for our initial assignment, the tables had lots of line-mass and modern line and even mass designs; but virtually no one presented a true traditional line design.

In school, we didn't touch much on Water-viewing, with just a few instructions – “Usually a line design in a shallow container(s), with 1/2 to 2/3 of the container surface showing water” (the basic OJES definition). Armed with that scant information, we went into the world of exhibiting only to discover that there were MORE RULES, gleaned from judge's notes on entry cards, such as “Container is a bulls-eye”, “you should only use plant material that grows next to water – no meadow flowers allowed”, “the flowers should be seasonal”, “too much transitional material”, “it must be a traditional design”, etc., etc. The problem seemed to be that a lot of these rules were coming from vague and unwritten memories, rather than from the foundations of the form, which in one sense is very recent, but in another sense, based on old “traditions”.

The Water-viewing Design was developed and promoted in the late '60's by Mary Baillie, a highly respected GCO judge and a member of the Garden Club of Toronto and Etobicoke Horticultural Society. An avid follower of Japanese floral design, Mary was also a member of the Toronto Chapter of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society and made trips to Japan to study with ikebana teachers there. In Japan, she was exposed to the various ways in which the Japanese used water in design, including the water-reflecting styles, aspects of moribana (Ohara School), kabuwake (two arrangements in one dish), and Futakabu-ike (a divided arrangement in a shallow dish). In one of her articles, Mary Baillie wrote the following:

“Water-viewing designs were probably inspired by the Orient. The age-old Kabuwake (water material) and Futakabu-ike (land and water) styles used seasonal plants growing in or near water and placed them in a naturalistic fashion. It seems to suggest that we adapted this style to our own flower shows for certain classes. The simplicity is very pleasing to the viewing public as well.”

Definition: "A water viewing design is a line arrangement with a dominant line of plant material and great use of space. Careful scale is important to give an illusion of space and, very importantly, designs must show 1/2 to 2/3 water as part of the design."

What Mary created was a synthesis of certain aspects of the Japanese styles, but with differences that kept it within the European/American classification of “traditional line design”. Some of the main similarities to the Japanese practices include:

- Low flat dishes of a more traditional character are normally used, i.e., subordinate to the design itself
- A kenzan is typically used to secure plant material (not Oasis), and it should be placed in one of the rear quadrants of the container depending on the flow of the branches you use and the direction of the line being created.
- Strong line material of different lengths is placed so that the tips outline a scalene triangle, which forms a framework for placement of flowers

- Line material is usually curved (can be bent by hand) to soften the line, and the contours of the bends are aligned to match each other
- No crossed lines
- Material is placed in a naturalistic fashion, to resemble the features of the edge of a pond or stream
- Plant material must not touch the water's surface
- No manipulated plant material (apart from the gentle bending of stems and leaves)
- The goal is to have a clean uncluttered emergence of plant material surrounded by or next to a great expanse of water

Where the Water-viewing Design diverges from the Japanese styles is in:

- A single point of emergence
- We cover our mechanics, so the kenzan should not be visible, e.g., it should be covered with stones or hidden by overhanging leaves (however, try to avoid "ring-around-the-collar")
- Some Japanese water-reflecting designs use branches with great masses of seasonal blossoms, whereas Water-viewing designs should show a great deal of space. Line and floral material should be kept to a minimum.

For example, in Peg Spence's notes on The Making of Traditional Line Designs, she lists under Plant Material:

- three branches, more if they are weak; branches should be from the same shrub or tree and well trimmed.
- three to five flowers preferably at different stages of maturity, including with buds yet to open if possible, and well-conditioned
- three to five leaves for the base, well-conditioned.

These are just suggestions for numbers – some beautiful designs could be created with as few as three flowers and no branches.

- While Japanese designs often use flowers as a central focal point or in a secondary role to line material, in Water-viewing and western traditional line designs, we use flowers to reinforce the line and to create rhythm, depth, etc. A linear pattern must be dominant.



Design by Marisa Bergagnini
Photo by Tim Saunders
Publication: The Canadian Flower Arranger

In traditional forms of ikebana, there are very strict rules about choices of plant material, largely related to seasonality. But those rules have steadily eroded over the past 50 years, and we now see almost every flower used, even in water-associated designs. Similarly, when Mary Baillie first introduced the Water-viewing Design, she imagined that designers would use just seasonal plant material associated with the water's edge. Unfortunately, in our Ontario climate, that leaves us with few options other than water irises in the spring and bulrushes in the fall. So, the choices began to evolve. Peg Spence recounted to me how she was horrified for a moment when she first encountered roses in a Water-viewing design; but the design was so beautifully crafted that she had to give it a chance.

The key to flower choice in Water-viewing is strong form, and of course, conformance to the class title. Some obvious choices are irises, tulips, chrysanthemums, perhaps smaller dahlias, bulrushes, callas, glads, and lilies. But there are no rules against roses or "meadow flowers".

Alluding to what I mentioned earlier, one of the more important elements of this type of design is naturalistic placement of material. In a traditional line design, you should aim to have the plant material look like it always grew there – nothing stilted or unnatural about it.



In the new OJES, you will see the following refinements to Mary Baillie's definition that came about as a result of a discussion I had with Peg Spence preceding this article:

- it should always be a traditional line design based on the geometric form of a triangle
- it would always be in a single container
- the notion of "great use of space" is key - without this qualifier one could produce a modern line design without open space, that would conceivably and incorrectly fall within the definition

The following is the proposed definition for the revised OJES:

Water-viewing Design - A traditional line design with great use of space, in a shallow container with one-half to two-thirds of the container surface showing water. Modern line design does not fit this definition, but can be used in a design with Visible Use of Water.

To summarize other points concerning naturalism and choice of plant material -- Peg's take, based on examples she has seen over the years, is that Mary Baillie's original concept of a very naturalistic composition using water-loving material has evolved over the years because of limitations on seasonality and plant material choices, and that use of non-water-loving material (including roses) is OK as long as it fits within the over-arching concept of line-open space- open water.

So how do you make roses look natural next to a pond, you say? I'm sure you'll figure it out!

Happy judging!

WAXING FANTASTIC *by Judy Zinni*

Every year at Canada Blooms, the Toronto Flower Show invites floral designers from around the world to compete. These international competitors are also invited to take the stage at Canada Blooms to participate in a floral design demonstration. This year, the exhibitor from the U.S.A, Debbie Stockstill, chose to share a technique that she learned from Bill Schaffer, a well-awarded professional floral designer, and she used in her beautiful design in the "Mon Pays" class.



Debbie used open white calla lilies in her design and used paraffin wax to seal the stem ends and also to depict "ice" dripping from the bloom heads. Here's how Debbie did it:

- 1) A small electric heater that florists use for hot glue (it looks like a small electric fry pan), was used to melt undyed (white) paraffin wax used for pedicures in spas. (Caution must be used when melting paraffin wax as it melts at a low temperature; in addition, the vapours from the wax can be ignited by a flame, so don't melt it on a gas stove. On-line research will yield safe procedures for melting wax, if you don't have the purpose-built appliance. Keep a constant eye on the wax; do not walk away while melting or using it.) The pedicure paraffin wax can be sourced with a quick Google search (Canadian Tire and Amazon.ca came up when I searched). I would suppose that regular paraffin wax could be substituted.
- 2) Warm wax was placed in a measuring cup and allowed to cool slightly (until cool enough to touch but still liquid) in order that the plant material is not damaged by too much heat. The depth of the wax in the measuring cup allows the stem end to be immersed about 1" in order to seal it properly.
- 3) To create the "ice" on the flowers, slightly cooled wax can be poured from a measuring cup, or dripped from a syringe, which was Debbie's chosen method. Hold the bloom head over the electric heater, so that the excess wax can be collected. Layers of wax should be built up by repeating this process. The icy-looking drips of wax start to occur after a few layers have been laid down.



Debbie noted that she had not experimented with this technique on flowers other than calla lilies, so she didn't know the outcome with other blooms. I should note that I saw some of the calla lilies that she prepared during the demonstration, five days after the presentation; they still looked completely fresh!

Debbie Stockstill is a member of the Flower Arranging Study Group of the Garden Club of America.

*Is this allowed in our flower shows? When judged by OJES standards?
When judged by WAFAs rules? What do you think?
Send your opinion to judgescouncil@gmail.com.*