

TRIANGLE NURSERY  
ACADEMY  
OF FLOWERS

# Basic Flower Glossary

A-Z

## List of technical terms and words

Floral Design may be a completely new subject area for you, here is a list of phrases and words used in the floristry industry to refer to and familiarise yourself with.

# A

**ABSTRACT:** Expression of ideas

**ABSTRACTION:** The process of removing parts or pieces of the plant material, changing its appearance and distorting the shape.

**ACCESSORY:** A subordinate component in a design other than the plant material; container, base, background and mechanics.

**ACHROMATIC COLOURS:** Without colour. Black, grey and white are regarded as neutral in floral design.

**ADVANCE COLOURS:** Warm hues

**ANALOGOUS COLOUR HARMONY:** Colours that are next to one another on the colour wheel. Usually match well and create comfortable designs.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Synonymous with design and composition

**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Visual stability achieved by equilibrium of visual weight on either side of the imaginary central axis.

# B

**BACKING:** Used to cover the back of a mossed ensign to retain moisture and prevent damage when placed in situ.

**BALANCE:** A design principle. Visual stability achieved by placing equal visual or actual weight on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis. Balanced can be achieved through the proportion, scale and placement of the elements.

**BASE:** An optional object on which the container rests. This component is considered part of the container.

**BASING:** A technique otherwise known as mashing or blocking. Plant materials placed very close together without gaps, usually on very short stems, to cover a surface (usually on a foam or moss base).

**BEADING:** Creating decorative accents by stringing beads, jewels etc. on plant materials.

**BIEDERMEIER:** A "bunch" of flowers and foliage made up of concentric circles with a single binding point.

**BIENNIAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle within two years.

**BINDING POINT:** Securing materials together at one specific point using wire, raffia, ribbon or string etc. Can be decorative or functional.

**BLOOM:** An open flower

**BOTRYTIS:** A bacteria which forms on fresh products causing a shorter shelf life and decay

**BRACT:** Modified leaf at the base of a flower or flower head. It is not considered to be a bloom.

**BUD:** An unopened or partly opened bud

**BULB:** A rounded underground storage organ present in some plants, consisting of a very short stem surrounded by fleshy, non-green scale-like leaves, lying dormant over winter.

**BUMP:** A mechanic used to create a spray on a funeral tribute (using a foam or moss base).



**CACHE POT:** A decorative container often used as a receptacle for a standard pot.

**CASCADE:** An overflowing waterfall-like bouquet, constructed in a hand-held base.

**CHROMA:** The perceived intensity of a colour determined by the degree of freedom from white, grey or black.

**CLUSTERING:** A technique. Positioning the same material so close together that the identity of the individual is lost and the cluster functions as a single unit of colour and texture.

**COLOUR WHEEL:** A circle of different colours arranged to show the relationship between colours: Primary (colours that can't be mixed from other colours), secondary (colours created by mixing primary colours) and tertiary (colours created by combining a secondary colour with a primary).

**COLLARING:** A technique. Making a collar or frill at the base or underside of the flower holder. This can be achieved with plant material or decorative / ornamental materials.

**COMPLEMENTARY COLOUR HARMONY:**

Colours opposite each other on the colour wheel. This combination provides a high contrast and impact - together. These colours will appear brighter and more prominent.

**COMPOSITE:** Hand-made construction of different petals or buds wired together as one stem to create the illusion of a giant flower.

**COMPONENTS:** Materials from which a design is composed of plant material, container, background and mechanics.

**CONDITIONING:** The procedure of re-hydrating fresh materials by cutting and placing into water to ensure lasting freshness.

**CONSERVATION:** Practice of preserving and protecting native plants.

**CONTAINER:** A receptacle that can hold water and provide support for plant material. It can contribute to the design.

**CONTEMPORARY DESIGN:** A design using artistic expression of how flowers are arranged together with other aesthetic enhancers to deliver a themed flower design.

**CONTRASTING COLOUR HARMONY:** A combination of hues, values and intensities, which are farthest apart on the colour wheel.

**CRESCENT DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in an arc or semi-circle. The arc length should be between a half and a whole circle.

# D

**DESIGN:** An arrangement organised using elements and principles of design resulting in beauty, harmony, distinction and expression.

**DIRECT COMPLEMENT:** Hues directly opposite each other on the colour wheel.

**DISBUDDING:** The thinning out of flower buds to improve the size and quality of the bloom.

**DISTINCTION:** Unusual use of plant material such as leaf manipulation.

**DOMINANCE:** A design principle. Control of a design by one or more elements. Implying the presence of primary and subordinate elements within the design.

**DRIED FLOWERS:** Plant material from which all moisture has been removed through a natural dehydration process (such as hanging them upside down).



# E

**ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:** The visual qualities of the parts or components used in an arrangement - space, line, form, size, texture, colour and pattern.

**ETHYLENE GAS:** A colourless gas given off by decaying fruit which is detrimental to flowers.

**EXTERNAL WIRING:** A technique. Wire is inserted into the base of a flower head and wound around the stem to aid support and manipulation.

# F

**FACING:** The use of plant material to conceal mechanics i.e. binding point.

**FEATURE:** To give prominence to

**FILAMENT:** The slender part of a stamen that supports another.

**FILLER FLOWER:** A flower which usually has multiple heads, and used to compliment focal and more dominant flowers within a design.

**FOCAL FLOWER (OR POINT) :** The most dominant(s) flower or point within the design which the eye is drawn to.

**FOLIAGE:** The leaves of a plant.

**FORM:** An element of design. Three dimensional form of the whole arrangement. Forms of the individual components, open, closed, linear and solid etc.

**FRAMING:** A technique. Outlining an arrangement with one or more sides with additional material to define the space.

**FREE-STANDING DESIGN:** A design to be viewed from all sides.

# G

**GENUS:** A subgroup of plants with similar characteristics within a family.

**GRADATION:** A gradual change in size, form, colour or texture that is used to provide visual movement within the design.

**GREENING UP:** The use of foliage to cover a medium before the use of flowers and other plant materials.

**GROOMING:** Procedures to ensure that a specimen presents the best possible appearance.

# H

**HARMONY:** The pleasing organisation in which all components of the design or use of similar components or colours through the arrangement.

**HAND-TIED:** A dense gathering of multiple components tied together with tape. Finished with ribbon as a wedding bridal bouquet, or presented in water bubble for gift bouquet.

**HEDGING:** A technique of trimming materials into a form.

**HOGARTH CURVE DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in a curve which suggests a smooth, flowing S curve. The curve can be horizontal, slanted or vertical.

**HORIZONTAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis parallel to the horizon.

**HUE:** The name of an individual colour.



**INFLORESCENCE:** The characteristic arrangement of buds and flowers on the stem. A mode of development of individual florets.

**INTERPRETIVE DESIGN:** A design of any style that expresses or explains a concept.

**INTENSITY:** The brilliance of a colour that can be measured. Dullness is its opposite.

**IKEBANA:** A Japanese style of floral design known for its simplicity of line and form incorporating three parts: heaven, man and earth.

# L

**LAYERING:** A technique. Groupings of material are overlapped to create a textured design. Spacing is important and can vary the results.

**LIGHT:** A design element. Light is necessary for vision. Light sources can be natural or artificial in the staging area where an arrangement is displayed and can be within the design.

**LINE:** A design element. A line represents the visual movement between two points. Line gives an arrangement structure and rhythm through the design. The line can be vertical, horizontal, curvilinear, zigzag, diagonal or any path that leads the eye through the design.

**LUMINESCENCE:** The emission of light given off by a flower. The more luminous, the more dominant a flower will appear in the design.

# M

**MANIPULATION:** Plant material which has been altered from its natural condition skilfully to your own advantage. For example, bending, cutting, folding, wiring or braiding.

**MECHANICS:** The components that are used to hold, control and secure plant materials in position and thereby ensure its stability (i.e. pin holder, foam, clay, wire, tape etc).

Mechanics should not be exposed except as an integral part of the design.

**MOBILE:** A group of freely moving, suspended forms.

**MONOCHROMATIC:** Colours of a single hue, its tints, tones and shades. White is not a hue.

**MOUNT WIRING:** The use of wire to create a false stem adding stability and strength.

# N

**NATIVE PLANT:** The region in which a plant is growing.

**NICHE:** A defined space enclosed on three sides.

**NOSEGAY:** A small round cluster of flowers, cut to the same length made usually with one dominant flower.





## **ORGANIC:**

**ORIGINALITY:** Use of independent thought and imagination for an approach of aspect, design and style in an arrangement.

# P

**PARALLEL:** Shapes such as lines, curves that are at equal distances from each other.

**PATTERN:** A design element. Visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, textures and spaces in a design.

**PEDESTAL:** A plinth, stand or column, freestanding or attached that can be used as a stage for flower arrangements.

**PERIOD ARRANGEMENT:** A design with characteristics typical of historic period.

**PEDICEL:** The stem of a single flower on an inflorescence.

**PEDUNCLE:** The stalk of a flower.

**PERENNIAL:** A plant that lives for more than two years.

**PETIOLE:** Leaf stalk.

**PHOTOTROPIC:** One which bends towards the light.

**PIPPING:** A technique. Wiring using an individual flower, often removed from a multi-flowered stem. The wire is pushed up into the bloom, bent into a hair pin shape at the top and then pulled back into the flower head. Often used in a corsage or wedding work.

**PISTIL:** The female organs of a flower.

**PLAITING:** A technique.

**PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:** Basic artistic standards used for design elements - balance, contrast, rhythm, dominance, scale and proportion.

**PROPAGATION:** Reproduction of plants with seeds, spores or using cuttings.

**PROPORTION:** A design principle. Relationship of one area of an arrangement to another or to the whole.

# R

**RACEME:** Same as spike, but with short-stalked flowers.

**RECEPTACLE:** The part of the flower that the stalk is attached to.

**RECESSION:** Lower placements of flowers within a design to emphasise other components and colours.

**RHIZOME:** A thick, horizontal stem which forms roots, stores food and sends up leaves and flowering stalks.

**RHYTHM:** A design principle. Dominant visual path through the design. It can be achieved by the use of gradation and repetition in a linear direction.

**ROLLING:** A technique. Rolling flat materials such as leaves. Rolls can hide mechanics or simply add interest to an arrangement.

**ROOT:** The part of a plant which attaches to the ground or to a support, typically underground, conveying water and nourishment to the rest of the plant via numerous branches and fibres.

# S

**SCALE:** A design principle. The relationship of the size of the individual parts of a design.

**SEEDLING:** A young plant raised from seed.

**SECONDARY FLOWERS:** Plant materials that help to emphasise the focal point or flower. Usually they are not as significant in both cost, colour or dominance to the focal flowers.

**SEPALS:** Each of the parts of the calyx of a flower which encloses the petals.

**SIZE:** A design element. The physical or implied dimensions of line, shape, form and space.

**SPECIES:** A group of plants forming a subset of genus.

**SPECIMEN:** A single plant, fruit, spike, stalk or vegetable.

**SPIKE:** A lengthened inflorescence bearing stemless flowers such as gladiolus.

**SPRAY:** A branched, many-flowered inflorescence usually on a single main stem.

**STACKING:** A technique. Placing materials singly or in bunches side by side or on top of one another.

**STAMEN:** The male fertilising organ of the flower. Usually consists of a pollen containing anther and filament.

**STEM:** The stick-like part of a plant which grows above ground.

**STYLE:** A way of doing something that is unique to a person or period. The arranger's own style or technique.

**SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE:** A movement toward making sure that floral practices align with environmental and human health. Considerations such as flower sourcing practices, floral foam use and low impact mechanics.

**SYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Using similar components on each side of the imaginary central axis of the arrangement.

# T

**TECHNIQUE:** Methods of preparing components when creating an arrangement.

**TERRACING:** A technique. Placing materials in an overlapping manner to create a star step effect.

**TEXTURE:** A design element. Visual surface quality of components.

**STONE:** A characteristic of colour.

**TRADITIONAL:** Arranging style.

**TRIAD:** Three hues at equal distances on the colour wheel.

**TUBER:** A swollen underground stem, usually rounded with buds or eyes from which new plants or tubers are produced i.e. Dahlia.

# U

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# Z

**UNDERWATER:** Positioning plant material under water or partially under water.

**VARIETY:** A sub group of a species.

**VEILING:** A technique. Placing light components using see through plant material or threads to create a sheer overlay effect.

**VOIDS:** Spaces created in a design.

**WEAVING:** A technique. Interweaving material by a set pattern to create texture.

**VALUE:** The lightness of a colour (tint), a mixture of pure hue and white, or the darkness of a colour (shade), a mixture of pure hue and black.

**VERTICAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis perpendicular to the horizon.



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**Thanks for  
reading.  
Familiarise  
yourself with  
the terms to  
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journey.**