

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Mirror Image Designs from a Novice's Point of View

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Many of you are uncomfortable with the prospect of doing one design. Therefore, I have no doubt that you question the sanity of those of us who take on the double designs of the mirror image. Personally, I enjoy the challenges that the mirror image design presents and will sign up for that category before the other designs. As I have done only three mirror image designs we are going to approach this from the novice's point of view.

The only definition of a mirror image is the one found in your show schedule and it varies from schedule to schedule, club to club and year to year. For example:□

Mirror image: *a presentation using 2 arrangements with 5 inches allowed in front of an open picture frame for the foreground arrangement and 5 inches allowed behind the frame for the background arrangement.□No backdrops may be used with the frames, which measure 10" high 8" wide.□This can include the following directions: (the background arrangement should appear as though you are looking at the back of the foreground arrangement)*

Mirror Image Arrangements: *One half of your design must reflect the□other half as a mirror would.□A white 8" x 10" frame will be provided. Small design not to exceed 8" in any direction.*

And to complicate the issue – *Create a **duplicate** arrangement – staged in a frame that is 10" high by 8" wide and 4" deep.*

These examples are for small arrangements, most commonly used in mirror image designs. I understand that it is possible by use of a larger frame (11" x 14") to produce a mirror image arrangement of a larger dimension. For these purposes we are going to limit ourselves to small mirror image designs and leave the duplicate design for another time.

From lectures and discussions with experienced designers the following are suggested guidelines to be used in designs. By definition, small designs do not exceed 8" inches in any direction. The container should not be any larger than 2 _ to 3 inches tall, making it approximately 1/3 the height of the overall design. It is suggested that the number of colors used be kept to a minimum. Bases provide finishing touches to the mirror image designs. Read and follow any instructions indicated in the show schedule.

Live plant materials can come from your yard, pot plants or a new pot of greenery from the nursery. Dry materials are available from craft stores. Craft stores are a good place to purchase duplicate containers as multiple quantities of containers are available. Line material and containers used in mirror image designs can be spray painted as in other small designs.

When it comes to line material, I will lay out a package of dry plant material or live plant material and start looking for pieces that curve in opposite directions. As you do this you have to be certain that materials "present" from the same directions. In other words, if the your cane spring comes off the main stem and curls forward left to right, the opposing piece must come off the main stem and curl forward right to left. Additionally, each piece should have similar fullness.

As I start to assemble the mirror image designs, I set up my two containers face to face in front of me, just as they will be on either side of the frame. I do not work one full design and then hope to duplicate it in reverse. I use the *sock and then the other sock, a shoe and then the other shoe method*. In other words, I will work from one container to the opposing container, one piece at a time. I start by inserting the larger materials in each container. Then I place the medium height materials at appropriate angles. Filler, such as babies' breath, will appear to be the same in each

design as long as it is full enough. Watch while placing each piece from one container to the other that each piece mirrors the opposing piece in angle and height.

While working on my design, I frequently get at eye level directly in front of the design. If my rear design is hidden by the front design, I can be pretty certain that my angles and lengths of my materials are accurate. I will also shift my view from left to right to see if the mirror effect is working. I also find it helpful to look at the design from across the room. If it is pleasing and appears to be one item reflected in a mirror then your effect is correct.

When placing the designs on either side of the frame, they should be spaced an equal distance behind and in front of the design. This is necessary to promote the mirror effect. Again check your show schedule, it should indicate how many inches are available for your designs on either side of the frame. Position your base and then position your design on the base in the same area (example: centered on the base or to one side). Do a last minute check of height of the overall design at this time.

Blossoms should be placed at the last available opportunity before judging and you should have a variety of blossoms available. Sometimes the planned color does not “spark” in the design and having an alternative available could save your design.

I hope that this helps eliminate some of the mystery of mirror image designs and we’ll see more novices entered in this category.