

Parallel style

This style became popular in Great Britain at the end of the twentieth century. The style originated in the low countries predominantly using flowers and foliage from the florist. The style has been adapted to the plant material available in British gardens, to which it is ideally suited. It often has a less structured form than that on the Continent of Europe.

Characteristics

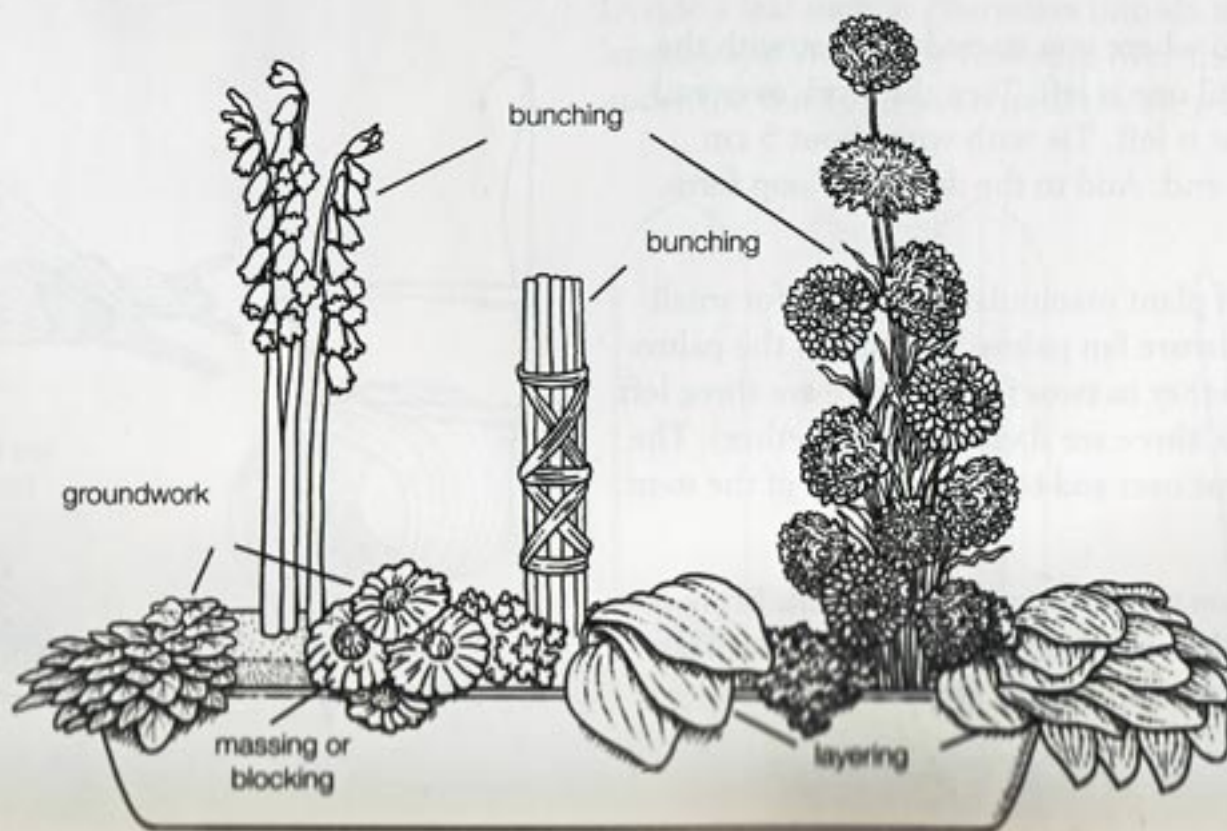
- There is little or no radiation of plant material.
- Plant material is grouped rather than scattered.
- There is great emphasis on form and texture.
- The most frequently seen designs are created on a floral ring or posy pad or in a slim, rectangular container that is low sided in relation to the height of the completed design.
- Bare stems are an important feature of the design.
- The outline is rectangular.
- Space occurs between the groups.

- Techniques include most of those mentioned on page 79, such as grouping, bunching, bundling, groundwork and layering.

The following gives guidelines on how to create a front-facing arrangement that can be viewed from three sides.

You will need:

- A low rectangular dish.
- Foam to fill the inside of the container.
- An assortment of flowers and foliage chosen for their form and texture. Plant material with smooth or interesting stems give height. Smooth leaves are ideal for layering. You will probably need more material that you originally thought to cover your foam.
- Flat moss, reindeer moss, *Tillandsia* (Spanish moss) – all these can be used to cover the base inexpensively.
- Fruit, vegetables and/or pebbles which will give additional colour, form and texture.



Creating the design

- 1 Soak your foam and fill the inside of the container but slice off a corner at the rear to allow easy watering. The foam should rise sufficiently above the rim of the container so that you are able to layer the ends/sides of the design.
- 2 Create your vertical placements. For a container approximately 25 cm (10 in) long three verticals look the most effective. For a 30 cm (12 in) container you may need more. Avoid having the vertical placements the same height as they would look too predictable. The central placement of the three verticals is often the shortest. The verticals should **not** be positioned too close to the side edges of the container or the balance will be upset. The verticals can be bound with raffia, bunched at the same height if their stems are interesting, or simply graduated down in length (see bunching and bundling page 79). Each stem, however, will have its own point of origin and will not radiate from a central core, although minor radiation does frequently exist to give a less rigid design.
- 3 You will now need to cover your foam with plant material. This is kept short and is used in blocks of contrasting form, texture and colour. This is often referred to as 'ground work'. Layering is also a feature of this design. It is vital that your plant material comes over the rim of the container – particularly at the front and sides of the design. The rim should be mostly obliterated by plant material. Paths can be created through the central two thirds of the design with plant material meandering through from the front to rear. Ideally, do not use a single variety of plant material more than once.
- 4 Fruit on sticks, vegetables, stones and pebbles can be added into the design to heighten interest. Use the techniques that form part of this design to give an original and exciting design.

■ *Molucella laevis* (bells of Ireland), *Scabiosa* seedheads and larkspur create the verticals in this parallel design. The groundwork is composed of *Tellima* leaves and individual ivy leaves. Roses and smooth pebbles create low areas of strong interest.



Techniques

The following terms and techniques are those principally used in this section that relate to contemporary design.

Massing or blocking

Massing or blocking of one type of plant material is something of a modern phenomenon. Immediate impact is achieved through a mass of colour and texture. Individual form does not exist – only the mass as a whole. Space only occurs within the design by cutting stems to different lengths within the mass to avoid flatness.

Grouping

Grouping is enjoyed both in contemporary and in classic design where it gives a contemporary edge. It is exciting and challenging but how can it be successfully achieved?

Flowers are grouped not scattered. There is often only one group placement of each variety of flower. The important criteria is balance. Each time a placement is made it must be balanced by another placement although the colour, form and texture is unlikely to be identical. In classic design there can be greater variance in the length of stems.

Bunching

Bunching is taking several or many of the same variety of flower and placing the stems together in parallel format to form one unit. The stems can then be placed freely in position or tied with raffia or similar materials which blend. The tie should be of secondary interest.

The stems can be approximately the same height or step down in height.

Bundling

Bundling is another term for the mass positioning of one variety of flowers in a parallel format. The difference is that the tie is of decorative interest, for example coloured wire, and an integral part of the design.

Groundwork/Patchwork/Tuft work/Carpeting/Paving

This is when the base of a design is covered with very short stems of plant material of varying forms, colours and textures. One type of plant material leads into another which distinguishes itself by virtue of strong contrast. There can be some variation in height.

Layering or terracing

A way of understanding layering is to think of tiles on a roof. Layering can be:

- The placing of several or many of the same type of leaf on top of each other. They can be slightly angled to give depth and movement.

■ Overleaf: A design showing simple grouping. *Rosa* sp. 'Leonidas', *Lilium* 'Casablanca' (lilies), *Dianthus*, limes and *Pinus* (pine cones) surround three gold candles.