

CREATING A DISH GARDEN

A Dish Garden is a miniature garden (miniature landscape), planted in a shallow dish or dish-like container. A deep container is not suitable or desirable. The deeper the dish, the heavier it is. A plastic container is preferred because it is lighter weight than a ceramic or clay container. AVSA rules allow use of a bonsai dish and a long-stemmed compote. However, it's the designer's choice.

Dish gardens are arranged so that plants and the container together complete an artistic design. All parts of the design should be in proportion. There should be one focal point or center of interest. All plants must be removed from their pots and planted in the container. No treated or cut plant material is permitted.

Accessories may be used, but must not predominate and must be placed within the container, not outside. No bases are allowed and you can't have multiple or divided planting areas.

Prohibited items include: The American flag, state flags, flags from other nations, plants on the endangered list from any state or nation, artificial plant material and live creatures.

The garden should contain plants with similar culture requirements, as well as one or more blooming African violets. All of the plants must have similar needs as to soil, temperature and watering. Select plants of different heights, contrasting but harmonious colors, and some with interesting textures. Choose 5 different kinds of plants. If you use too many varieties, your garden may appear crowded and confusing.

Unlike a terrarium, a dish garden does not have a cover. None of the plant material may hang over or touch the table.

The AVSA scale of points for Container Gardens is:

Landscape Plan.....	40 points
Suitability of Materials.....	20 points
Condition of Materials.....	20 points
Cultural Perfection.....	10 points.
Relation to Container.....	10 points

STEPS TO MAKING A DISH GARDEN

1. Read the Schedule – the Schedule is the law of the show
 - a. Does it require a theme?
 - b. Any size limitations?
2. Choose an appropriate Container – plastic, ceramic or clay (clean)
3. Prepare a Landscape Plan. Doesn't have to be an "architect's drawing," but it should be comprehensive enough to give you an idea of how your garden will look.
4. Drainage. First layer should be gravel, rocks or perlite, maybe even Styrofoam bits.
5. Cover with light layer of charcoal to absorb acids produced by soil bacteria.
6. Add moistened, porous soil in small amounts. Build up the soil at the back, make hills and valleys, and make it low in front. In one of the valleys you may want to create a lake using a small mirror.
7. Add the tallest plant at the back. If your plant isn't as tall as it should be, add an appropriate size piece of wood. Add remaining "filler" plants – ivy, mondo grass, fern, palms, aralias, etc. Then add your African violets and Sinningias. Make sure that all of your plant material is clean.
8. You can create a pebble path down the side of a hill or add colored sand. The path should lead the eyes of the viewer deeper into the scene.
9. Stand back and admire your garden. You may decide it is complete or you may wish to add some final touch such as an unusual small stone or a piece of wood.
10. Cover exposed soil with moss and/or gravel.
11. If you plant your garden 2 or 3 weeks before show, be sure to keep it in a well lighted area and mist it often. You may need to lightly cover with a piece of clear plastic.

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First Lakeland AVS

Mary Lou Harden