

# CONSTRUCTING AND JUDGING DISH GARDENS

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If you haven't entered a design yet in a show, try a dish garden! I'll help you. While you are constructing it, you should keep in mind how it will be judged.

## AVSA SCALE OF POINTS FOR DISH GARDENS

Landscape plan	40 points
Suitability of materials	20 points
Condition of materials	20 points
Cultural perfection	10 points
Relation to container	10 points

### LANDSCAPE PLAN (40 points)

You want to create a miniature landscape to portray the class title. The final effect should be of an established planting with a contrast of texture, size, color, and height to add interest.

**SUITABILITY OF MATERIALS (20 points)** Pick plants that portray the title and ones that would grow together. If accessories are used, don't overdo it. They should be appropriate and reasonably in scale with the container and each other.

### CONDITION OF MATERIALS (20 points)

Plants should be in good shape. The container should be clean.

### CULTURAL PERFECTION (10 points)

Plants should be well-grown and free of pests and diseases. Violets should have a reasonable amount of bloom.

**RELATION TO CONTAINER (10 points)** The size and amount of the planted material should be in proportion to the container. The container should not dominate the design.

Reread the schedule. Spread some newspapers on a table to minimize the mess. Remember that all plants must be planted in the dish garden and that no cut plant material is allowed.

Start by putting a layer of gravel in the container for drainage. Then add some soil, a little at a time, varying its height to create interest.

Add some plants. Take breaks often to look at the overall design. Sometimes you have to move a few plants, or replace them with others, to get the look you want. If you are doing your dish garden more than a day or two before the show, put an empty pot in the spot for the African violet so it can be

planted there later. Depending on the class title, cover most of the soil and perlite with sifted soil, bark, ground cover, gravel, sand, or whatever is appropriate. After you are finished, brush off any excess soil that is on the plants.

Many dish gardens could have been a Best-in-Class with a few changes. Refer to the following drawings.

### *Class Title.- "Down Under"*



**This dish garden has a few problems.**

- 1 The overall height is too short for the size of the container. As a rough guideline, the height should be about 1 1/2 times the width of the container.
- 2 Although a kangaroo could help to portray the title, this one is too big. It is very distracting! This violet needs more blooms and it has several gaps in its symmetry.

**garden is**



**This dish better!**

1. It has more overall
  2. height, and the plants are more varied in
  3. height.
- The container is shallow. A small kangaroo, partially hidden behind the violet, helps to portray the class title.

This violet is much nicer than the one above. It has more blooms, it is more symmetrical, and its lighter foliage stands out better in a dark container.

Source: AVSA Handbook for African Violet Growers,

