

# Floral Design Characteristics As Evaluation Criteria for Anthurium Cut Flower Variety Development

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Breeding objectives for the cut flower anthurium breeding program have traditionally focused on desirable production traits from the growers' standpoint:

- Yield of at least 6 stems per plant per year
- Short internode length to delay the need for top cutting tall plants in the field
- Resistance to black nose due to *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*
- Resistance /tolerance to bacterial blight caused by *Xanthomonas axonopodis* pv. *dieffenbachiae*
- Plant vigor
- Vase life of at least 3 weeks
- Spathes resistant to cracking and bruising yet pliable enough to facilitate packing

In addition, individual plant (seedling) selection has been based on the following spathe characteristics:

- Good or unusual spathe color, shape, carriage
- Spathe color should be clear, glossy and uniform
- Spathe color does not fade with age

While advanced selections were undergoing field testing, feedback from growers were solicited, but floral designers were hardly consulted, if ever.

Floral designers play increasingly important roles in the advancement of the flower industry. The growing niches for floristry are weddings and special events. Currently, floral designers and the DIY event designers are buying more of the floral products directly from the growers instead of traditional wholesalers, therefore driving the consumer demand for floral products. Thus, in July 2016, the Hawaii Flower and Nursery Association sponsored a one-day workshop for flower researchers to gain familiarity with the design process.



More than one color in the spathe and spadix is desirable to provide transition, ie. change in color from light to dark, or from one color to another. Previously, the role of the spadix color in providing transition in the design color scheme, or the finish on the underside of the spathe were not considered during seedling or individual plant selection.



Larger spathe size is not necessarily better. Small to medium spathe sizes are needed for smaller design pieces such as centerpieces. Spathes and stems should be pliable.



Hitomi Gilliam AIFD introduced the basics of constructing a simple table arrangement, while Lois Hiranaga AIFD instructed on designing hand-tied bouquets. The designers commented on the desired attributes of anthuriums in relation to designing.

An example of a table arrangement for special events, utilizing tropical mokara orchids and obake and tulip-type anthurium in combination with temperate growing cymbidium orchid. "Tropical Nouveau", the combination of temperate and tropical flowers, is a new and growing trend in floral design.



Selections showing desirable transition colors. These selections have more than one color in the spathe and spadix.



The workshop provided an opportunity for researchers and designers to exchange ideas regarding floral traits of anthurium that would be useful in floral design. Photo credit: J. Tanouye/Green Point Nurseries.

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