

TIPS FOR EXHIBITORS

Here is some advice to guide exhibitors as to what judges will be looking for and how to display exhibits to their best advantage. However, please also note that some classes have specific directions listed. Judges will eliminate entries which do not exactly meet the specifications in the schedule, however good they are.

Double-check all your entries against the schedule before you leave the marquee.

FLOWER ARRANGING

Where maximum sizes are specified, you are expected to use most of the space, not just one corner. Where accessories are allowed, these should not dominate the exhibit, merely enhance the natural materials. Give flowers a long drink before arranging, preferably overnight.

FLOWERS

Pad the container with newspaper to take up space and help keep flowers upright.

VEGETABLES

A uniform shape and size is all important with all vegetables, so is presentation. Vegetables should be displayed as attractively as possible on plates or boards or directly on the table. Water thoroughly before harvesting for the show. Root vegetables should be washed carefully with a soft cloth and plenty of water.

Beetroot - feed with salt water once a week for three weeks before the show to improve colour (one tablespoon to a gallon). Select roots about the size of a tennis ball and avoid specimens with poor skin colour at the base of the root or which don't have a single small tap root. Small side roots should be removed.

Broad beans - select pods of an even green colour, discarding old ones. Display lengthwise across a plate, with all stalks at one end.

Carrots - avoid pale coloured specimens or those that have turned green at the top.

Courgettes - select young, tender, shapely and uniform fruits not less than 4" and not longer than 6", preferably with flower still attached. Display flat.

Lettuce - lift with the roots intact in the evening or early morning. Wash roots and wrap in moist tissue and plastic bag. Wash upside down, remove only markedly damaged outside leaves, and lay on the show bench with firm hearts facing the front.

Onions - avoid soft, stained specimens with thick, immature necks. Avoid over-skinning. Tops should be cut and then tied or whipped using raffia or similar material and the roots neatly trimmed back to the basal plate. Can be displayed on rings or on soft collars.

Peas - select long pods which are nice and full, but not old. When cutting from vine, try to keep the waxy bloom intact without finger-marks and leave approx. 1" of stalk. Hold up to strong light by stalk to check for internal damage. Display on a plate.

Potatoes - choose ones which are medium sized for the variety, with shallow eyes and no blemishes. Display on a plate and cover with cloth to exclude light until judging starts.

Rhubarb - stalks should be fresh, straight and long. Foliage should be cut off leaving approx. 3". Wipe clean and trim off any bud scales at the bottom.

Runner beans - the beans should be uniform and as straight as possible. They should include the stalk, so cut them from the vine with scissors or secateurs. Wrapping them in wet newspaper the night before the show helps to straighten them.

Shallots – bulbs should be thoroughly dried, be free from staining and loose skin. Prepare as onions. Display on sand or similar material to keep upright on a tray.

Vegetable collections – presentation is important but so is the choice of vegetable as some carry more points than others:

20 points – leeks, potatoes, pointed/long carrots, cauliflowers, large onions, peas and tomatoes.

18 points – long beetroot, aubergines, runner beans, stump rooted / ball carrots, house or frame cucumbers and exhibition shallots.

15 points – globe artichokes, dwarf/french/broad beans, round beetroot, cabbage, capsicums, ridge/outdoor cucumbers, lettuces, marrows/squashes and sweet corn.

12 points – mange tout peas, pickling onions, rhubarb, spinach, cherry tomatoes and garlic.

10 points – courgettes, chives, leaf lettuce, salad onions, cress and radishes.

5 points – herbs.

FRUIT

Pick as close to the show as possible and pick more than called for in the schedule, so that reserves are available when setting out. Select fruit which is fresh, free from blemish, uniform in size, shape and colour. Cut from the plant and handle by the stalks and as little as possible.

Currants - must be ripe, but not over ripe and be left on the bunch. Choose the ones with the longest strings and largest fruit.

Gooseberries - leave the stalk on.

Raspberries should be clipped from the vine to leave the stalk on. If wet weather, cut pieces of fruit bearing canes and bring under cover and place ends in water until dry enough to cut. Berries look best staged in a line with stalks all one way.

HOME BAKING

Where a recipe is provided, it must be followed closely.

Cakes - with an even texture and level top will probably be looked on favourably. Display on paper doilies for best effect. Judges may feel an excessive coating of sugar is hiding something.

Victoria sandwich – no cream, the jam should be raspberry and dusted with caster sugar. The sponge can be made the day before and filled on the day.

HANDICRAFT

Embroidery - judges like to be able to see the back of the work.

Photographs - look best mounted on paper or card slightly larger than the print itself.