

Exhibiting Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables

1. General Advice

These notes are a brief guide for exhibitors at the Wickham Market and District Annual Autumn Show. Any one seeking more detailed advice should consult 'The Horticultural Show Handbook' available from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Condition of Exhibits

All items for exhibition should be in good condition, well shaped (according to the variety) and free from disease, insect damage and blemishes.

Where a Class specifies more than one item (for example '3 blooms', or '5 potatoes') the items should be as evenly matched as possible. Make sure that you are exhibiting the correct number of items for the Class!

Pots, Containers and Trays

Where a pot, container or tray size is specified, the measurement is taken to the inside edges at the rim. For flower pots we accept the manufacturer's marked size. Measurements in mm or inches are equally acceptable.

Where a group of items have to be displayed within the boundaries of a tray (for example in Class 173, Collection of Vegetables), make sure that no part of the exhibit extends beyond the inner edge of the tray.

The Club does not supply standard vases for flower exhibits. The Show Schedule defines a vase simply as 'any vessel that can be used to hold cut flowers that is taller than it is wide, at its widest part'.

Labels

Whenever possible varieties should be labelled. This will assist the Judge in making good decisions (for example a Judge will know that a ripe 'Sungold' tomato is orange and not red). Such information will also be of interest to visitors to our Show.

2. Flowers

Any dead flower heads and/or damaged leaves should be removed. For multi-petalled flowers (for example chrysanthemums) it may be appropriate to remove any individual misshaped or damaged petals.

Where more than one bloom (or stem) is specified in a Class the degree of openness of the flowers should be as evenly matched as possible.

Cacti

Use a clean paint brush/make-up brush to remove dust. Leave the blooms on even if dead.

Carnations

Make sure they have enough room. Do not squash them together.

Chrysanthemums

Heads may be supported with cane but make sure you tie them neatly. For multi-petalled flowers individual misshapen or damaged petals may be removed

Flower must sit on the top of the stem. No supports are allowed.

Gladioli

Stems should be tall and straight with 1/3 in full flower, 1/3 in bud and 1/3 waiting. No more than 2 dead blooms may be pulled off. No extra foliage is required.

Vase choice is important. You need a heavy bottomed one to support the flowers and an opaque one is best. Use tinfoil around clear glass if necessary. Be careful not to squash the blooms. You can use kitchen towel to pack the vase and space the blooms.

Roses

One discrete wire support is allowed. You can remove the 'guard' petals but the flower will not be judged on these. Blooms should be three quarters to fully out. The flower continues to open after picking so it's best picked early on the morning of the Show or kept in a cool place if you have to pick earlier.

Standard Fuchsias

Remove all side shoots. The height of the plant should be three times diameter of pot.

Sunflowers

Aim to have all heads should be the same size and degree of openness.

3. Fruit

Fruit in General

All fruit Classes are to be displayed neatly arranged on white paper plates. All fruit should be picked with the stalks intact.

Apples

Do not remove the stalks. Display with the the calyx uppermost (that is with the stalk downwards). Cooking apples should not be polished. Dessert apples should fit in the palm of a lady's hand. It does not matter if the apples are ripe or not.

Figs

It doesn't matter if the fruit is split.

Pears

Do not remove the stalks. Pears can be display with stalks up or laid flat, depending on their shape.

Plums, Greengages, Damsons, Grapes

Do not remove the stalks and try to retain any natural bloom on the fruit. If possible cut the fruit off the tree straight onto the plate.

Raspberries, Blackberries, etc

Use scissors to harvest the fruit and do not remove the stalks. Handle the fruit by their stalks so they are shown 'as grown'. Do not leave juice on plate.

Some exhibitors choose to enhance the appearance of the display with a few leaves from the appropriate plant. The calyces should look fresh and show no signs of dryness.

4. Vegetables

Vegetables In General

Vegetables should be as fresh as possible. Root vegetables should be washed to remove all traces of soil, but not so vigorously as to damage the skins.

Beetroot

Leave the roots generally intact, but any small side roots should be removed. Trim the leaf stalks to 3 inches (75 mm).

Beans (Runners and French)

Pick the beans with the stalks. Beans must be straight and break crisply when bent. Some competitors find that they can straighten beans by wrapping them tightly in damp newspaper and leaving them for a couple of days in the refrigerator.

Cabbage

Keep the leaves surrounding the heart. The stalk should be trimmed to 3 inches (50mm)

Carrots

Leave the main tap root intact. Trim the leaf stalks to 3 inches (75 mm).

Courgette

Choose young, tender fruits with uniform shape about 6 inches (150mm) long. If flowers are still present, do not remove them.

Cucumbers

Choose young, tender and straight fruits. If flowers are still present, do not remove them.

Culinary Herbs

Herbs for culinary purposes should **not** have flowers present.

Leeks

Wash the roots but leave them intact. Leeks should be uniform in thickness with a long blanched section. The leaves should still show some freshness and may be plaited if appropriate.

Lettuces

Choose young, fresh plants. For each lettuce wash the roots and wrap them in wet kitchen paper enclosed in a small polythene bag which can be held in place with a rubber band. This will keep the lettuces in best condition. The lettuces can be displayed with the polythene bags still in position, but hidden as well as possible.

Marrow for Table

Choose young, medium-sized, tender fruits of uniform shape.

Marrow Championship (Class 59)

This Class is judged simply by weight. It is **not** a beauty contest!

Onions

Onions should be well ripened with dry, narrow necks. Any loose outer skins should be removed, but leaving at least one brown layer. Trim the roots neatly, but leave the root plate intact.

The dry necks should be trimmed, folded over and tied down with raffia to make a neat presentation.

Parsnips

Leave the main tap root intact. Trim the leaf stalks to 3 inches (75 mm).

Potatoes

Coloured varieties of potatoes have at least some colour on the skin, usually more pronounced around the eyes (eg King Edward, Desiree). White potatoes have no such colouring.

Tubers should be medium sized with a uniform oval shape.

Radishes

Young and tender with a good colour. Trim the leaf stalks to 1½ inches (40mm)

Shallots

As for onions. Pickling shallots are best displayed arranged in a small dish/saucer of dry silver sand

Tomatoes

Fully ripe, firm fruit (ie neither over- nor under-ripe) with calyx in place. The calyces should look fresh and show no signs of dryness.