

Rules for Showing Vegetables, Flowers and Cookery Exhibits

It should be noted that the following tips and suggestions are what most competent judges will be looking for in the perfect exhibit, but at the end of the day, judging is largely an inexact science and judges may have personal likes and dislikes. If however you are able to follow these tips you should stand a better chance of being among the prizes. Showing vegetables should however be enjoyable, not a chore, and the purpose of these tips is to help those exhibitors who want to know more and not to discourage entries. The maxim is - the more entries the better the show!!

VEGETABLES

Leeks - Class 11

Leeks should be thoroughly washed with the soil teased from the roots, which should not be cut off. The flags (leaves) should also not be cut and in good condition. The barrel of the leek should be straight, even and not swollen (bulbous) at the base. The longer the blanched (white) part of the barrel the better. The leeks should be uniform in shape and size. It is advisable to tie the flags loosely with strands of raffia in two or three places along their length.

Potatoes should be shown on a plate - Class 12

Potatoes should be as far as possible of the same shape and size, with eyes that are shallow. They ought to be carefully washed so as not to damage the skins, but with all traces of earth removed. They ought to be of a good size, not too large and not too small (around 170g to 225g is a good guide). The exhibit will be marked down if potatoes are mis-shaped, damaged by slugs, worm or blight. The presence of green colouring as a result of exposure to light is also defective.

Runner Beans - Class 14

The beans should be exhibited with some stalk (the handle) attached. They should be straight and of equal length and uniform size. They should also be fresh and not coarse and stringy. The seeds should not be overly prominent in the pod (the judge will snap one of your beans when judging to check that they are fresh and not stringy). They should be of a good even colour and free from blemishes.

Onions presented on a plate of sand - Class 15

Onions should be uniform in shape and size. Be careful to ensure that they conform to any weight restrictions. The onions should be well ripened, firm and with a dry, unbroken, unblemished and ripe skin. The onions should not be over skinned and green. The roots should be trimmed neatly and the top of the onion (the neck), which ought to be thin, should be turned over and bound neatly with raffia.

They should be presented neatly on a plate of clean dry sand.

Tomatoes - Class 16

The tomatoes should be regular in shape and size and firm but fully ripe (showing the true colour of the variety). They should be unblemished but not be polished and have a fresh green calyx attached.

Beetroot - Class 19

When taken from the soil one should be careful to try and maintain a long tap root. This can be achieved by watering them well and easing them from the soil. Carefully trim any side roots from the main tap root leaving just one root. The beetroot should be carefully washed with a soft cloth to ensure they are free from earth. The skins should be undamaged and they should be of similar size and shape, as a rule of thumb the ideal size for globe beetroot is that of a tennis ball. The leaf stalks should be cut to a length of about 75mm and neatly tied with raffia. If they are too large and woody they will be marked down. Rubbing them with cooking oil to enhance their appearance is also considered defective.

Carrots - Class 20

When taken from the soil one should be careful to try and maintain a long tap root. This can be achieved by watering them well and easing them from the soil. The carrots should be carefully washed with a soft cloth to ensure they are free of earth especially around the top of the shoulders. The skins should be undamaged and they should be of similar size and shape - try to keep a long tap root. The leaf stalks should be cut to a length of about 75mm and neatly tied with raffia. They will be marked down if they display damage by carrot root fly grubs and green colouring around the shoulders due to exposure to light.

FRUIT - Classes 25, 26, 29

Apples and Pears should be presented on a plate

Apples and Pears should be exhibited with stalks attached. The fruit should not be polished. Fruit should be uniform in shape and size with skins free from blemishes, patches of discoloration and bruising etc. Specimens should also be fresh. Ripeness of fruit is not so important.

FLOWERS - Classes 1 to 10

Generally speaking, flowers and foliage should all be clean and free from disease and insect damage. Where possible, choose vases to suit the height of the stems. Unless the variety has different characteristics, the flower should be at near to a right angle in respect of the stem. When showing more than one flower in an exhibit, the flowers should be of similar size and arranged symmetrically, e.g. if three flowers are shown, the centre flower should sit higher than the other two. Leaves of the flower can enhance the appearance of the exhibit – use one leaf per flower with the leaf placed behind the bloom and being slightly taller than the flower. It is also meritorious if you can have the petals of the perianth totally symmetrical, this can be achieved by very gently rotating/twisting (“clocking”) the stem/immature seed head at the back of the flower so that the petals of the perianth are in identical positions for each flower. To ensure your blooms are upright in the vase it is useful to use some kitchen roll or similar material to pack out the vase. Remember that good staging always impresses the judge and the exhibit that sits up and stares the judge in the face is going to be noticed!! Sometimes, the flower blooms can show signs of green discoloration. This is more likely than not going to be caused by immaturity. The problem can often be rectified by placing the bloom in a vase of warm water (more than tepid but not boiling) for a few hours.

CULINARY Classes - 30 to 45

Cakes/Bread

Cakes should be well risen, even in shape and baking. Any fruit should be evenly distributed throughout the cake. A domed top with slight cracking is acceptable for light fruit cakes. The cake should not bear any cooling rack marks.

Careful attention should be paid to the instructions – particularly tin sizes.

Sausage Rolls - Class 44

Sausage Rolls should be 2” long with a good ratio of sausage meat to pastry. Sausage meat filling and pastry is down to you

Jams and Marmalades - Classes 47 to 50

All preserves should be labelled with small labels stating the main fruit used together with the day, month and year of making. The jar should be filled to the brim to allow for shrinkage. For the top of the jar use a good fitting wax disc and cellophane, or a new twist top (in which case the wax disc is not used). For Lemon Curd, use a good fitting wax disc and cellophane. Use clear jars free from commercial trademarks with unmarked lids.

Chutney - Class 46

There should be a ½ inch head space between the contents and the lid and the jar must be topped with a new vinegar proof lid, i.e. a plastic lined twist lid. The chutney must be a minimum of two months old. Use clear jars free from commercial trademarks with unmarked lids.

Prize Money Awarded

1st £3

2nd £2

3rd £1