

Lavant Horticultural Society

Annual Flower Show – Helpful General Guidance

General Advice about Showing

This information is to help you show your exhibits at their best and remove any doubts that might discourage you from entering this year's competition.

It may not answer all your queries, and if you need more information ahead of the day, please contact the Show Contact, Michael Kingsford (01243 527414, e-mail: shows@lavanthortsoc.org.uk). On the day itself Michael will be on hand to ask, so too the Show Reception and any of the Stewards.

- Do not be put off by the descriptions of what judges are looking for – that is the ideal scenario - Perfection. When you are selecting items from your garden or allotment, choose those that come closest. Remember that just because your runner bean is not quite straight, it remains to be seen how much straighter other entries are; and what's more, they might not compare well with yours on other points. Judges use more than one criterion to select The Best on the day.
- Do read the wording of the Show Schedule carefully and abide by it. If, for example, the number of items in any exhibit is more or less than specified in the Show Schedule, the judge will immediately disqualify it as "not according to schedule". The show stewards will be on hand as you stage your entries and will try to point out such errors while they can still be corrected. However, if a lot of people are staging their entries at the same time it may not be possible to spot everything and the state of any exhibit is ultimately the responsibility of the exhibitor.

Some recent examples:

Garlic with the neck trimmed but not tied with raffia, beat its opponents with their necks beautifully tied, simply because the garlic was of better quality; tying with raffia helps show the garlic at its best, but as that is not specified in the Show Schedule, it is not essential. However, if 2 exhibits had been equal in all other respects, then the one tied with raffia would have edged it.

Carrots - The Show Schedule states that carrot leaves must be trimmed back to about 75 mm. There were two entries of carrots of equal merit. However, the carrots of one exhibit were at least half as big again as the other. Unfortunately, their leaves had not been trimmed back and so the smaller carrots won. This was because the larger ones were not presented correctly ie 'not according to schedule'.

Preparing your Entries

For the Fruit and Vegetable classes, and for Flower classes where only one cultivar is being shown; the items that make up the exhibit should be as uniform as possible, in size, shape and colour. So, if for example, you have two really beautiful large beetroot, and a large number of smaller ones, pick out the three most uniform of the smaller beetroot.

Discard anything that has blemishes or damage from weather, pests, diseases or handling.

Cut your flowers in the evening or early morning when flowers & foliage are cool and not affected by heat. Cut the stems as long as possible, with a slanting cut to assist uptake of water. Remove any undeveloped side-shoots & unopened buds. As soon as they are cut the stems should be plunged up to their necks in deep containers of clean water, do not use very cold water. Ideally overnight, this encourages the flowers to expand before the Show begins. It is best to keep them in the dark, so that the natural tendency to move towards light does not cause stems to become curved.

If you are entering potted exhibits in classes 28-34, the pot should be clean, undamaged and must not exceed 350mm diameter inside rim. Do ensure that they have enough water to keep them in good condition for showing.

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Staging your exhibits

If possible, bring more than the required number for each class, in case of accidents. Arrive at the Memorial Hall allowing plenty of time – it always takes longer to stage the exhibits than you think, and a last-minute rush can easily lead to errors.

You will be given your entry cards and information about where to stage your exhibits at Show Reception as you come in.

For cut flower classes - you must use the Society's green plastic vases which you will find in the kitchen. Find a space around the hall in which to do your preparation, avoid doing it on the show table, as it can make a mess and get in the way of other exhibitors. Choose a suitably sized vase to match your flowers. The length of stem should be in proportion to the flower(s) it bears and to the vase size you choose. Fit the base on the bottom, cut a small portion from the base of each stem to help water uptake, and install the blooms in the vase, not forgetting some water. You can use tissue etc in the vase to keep the stems in place. No supports protruding out of the vase are permitted. Then take the exhibit to the numbered place for its class on the show tables. Now make any final adjustments to your display after placing the vase on the show table.

For each vegetable, fruit and flower class: There are paper plates on the show table places, one for each entry in that class. These are there firstly to ensure that enough space is allocated. They should also be used for smaller roundish exhibits (e.g. tomatoes, gooseberries) to keep them in position. Larger vegetable exhibits (e.g. runner beans, rhubarb) and flowers should be placed directly on the show table in the appropriate place and the paper plate removed.

Home Produce Classes 61 – 71: Use a clean white plate provided, unless, for 65, 66, 67, & 68, that risks damaging your exhibit.

And Finally - For all exhibits: *Firstly, check that your cards for the exhibits you want to keep after the show are marked "R" in the top right corner of the side that shows your name.*

Now place your entry card (the correct one for the class !) in front of your exhibit. Make sure the side with your name is facing downwards. The top side which will be seen by the judge, shows **only** the number and name of the class, the entrant's exhibitor number, and in the case of Juniors, the age. If you have a label with **just the variety name of your exhibit**, eg Class 65, place this next to the exhibit or the entry card, so that it is obvious which exhibit it refers to but does not get in the way of other exhibits.

You then must leave the Hall by 10.45 am, taking all your paraphernalia with you, please.

Any questions? Just ask any of the Stewards – they are there to help you.