

Usk Show  
Horticulture Section  
Guidance notes for exhibitors 2001

The intention is for the Horticultural Section Team to provide exhibitors, especially those who are novice entrants, with some basic pointers, so they can make to most of their exhibits. It is a guide to the standards that Judges expect to see in an exhibit.

The standard guidance notes are those published by the Royal Horticultural Society, which can be obtained online, from [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk) 'fruit and vegetable show schedule'. These notes are intended to be matched to the classes that you will find in our competition.

J Chaloner  
Section Chair

### General

1. Always check the schedule, for the details of each class. It is a good idea if you plan your planting of seeds etc, so the plants are mature near the show date; and a few days ahead of the show, select potentially good looking specimens. Some plants such as specimen dahlias may need side shooting a few weeks in advance. Some varieties of vegetables are better for exhibition, not necessarily for taste, specialist firms such as Fothergill's, Fosters, D T Brown sell show varieties which should provide 'show standard' exhibits.
2. Collect your show exhibits either the night before or early morning of the show, and ensure they are full of water. Collect extra examples, in case of accidents, and how they have travelled, to the show.
3. Protect the exhibits with Kitchen towel, or deep water buckets for the cut flowers, and as soon as you get to the show, unpack and let the exhibits breathe.

A range of show categories, follow, the same advice principles can be applied to each type, e.g for onions, exhibition, pickling, garlic all have the same basic preparation techniques.

### BEANS

This includes Climbing French, Italian Climbing French, Dwarf French, Runner, all easy classes for novices.

- a. Pick plenty of extra beans, don't mix the types or varieties. They should be plump, with no seeds showing ( Italian beans will show dents for seeds). When they are snapped, the snap will be clean, with no

stringiness. Cut the stalks of the beans with scissors, and the flower end should be fresh and clean. with no evidence of slug or insect damage.

- b. Once picked, protect the beans from drying out by wrapping them in damp kitchen towels; if the beans are slightly bent, wrap them tightly, they should straighten slightly.
- c. The beans should be all the same length, and colour. The best way to display them is on a black cloth, otherwise use a flat white plate.

## COURGETTES

- a. To get an even pair, pick from the same plant if possible. The courgettes are better exhibited as small matched fruit, still carrying the flower; large fruits i.e over 6" are considered marrows.
- b. When you select possible examples, if they are shaded by leaves, causing discolouration, trim back the offending leaves, to allow sunshine in.
- c. Wrap them separately in damp kitchen paper, avoid crushing the flower.

## ONIONS

These classes include all onions, including garlic; there are two distinct show categories, 'dressed', and 'shown as grown'. Shown as grown is the easiest class for novices, as the onions are just lifted from the soil, and dried off, only a light brushing off of the soil is required. Normally show onions have flat bottoms, shallots have lop sided bases, but it will depend on varieties grown.

- a. Dressing requires curing of the onion, outside in the sun, removing of the outer skin (dried scale leaves,) trimming of the roots, and the neck of the onion.
- b. The neck of the onion, should be dry and trimmed, tied with raffia or fine twine. The neck of a bolted onion will be soft and not acceptable.
- c. The flesh of the onion, should be firm and dry. Take care that when the dry outer skin is removed, that the dry skin does not split, and ensure that none of the inner greenish flesh is exposed.
- d. Larger onions are displayed on stands, eg cardboard rings, small onions are displayed on dry silver sand on a white plate. Silver sandman be obtained from most garden centres.
- e. Garlic just has the discoloured outer dry skin removed, dry leaves trimmed, and displayed on the show bench. Elephant and common garlic can be entered in the same class unless stated otherwise.

## FRUIT

The guidance for all top fruit; eg, apples and pears, is similar, and that for soft fruit is similar.

a. All fruit should be pest and disease damage free. If the fruit has a stalk it should be retained for the show, especially soft fruit like raspberries.

Take care not to bruise the fruit, as over the period while on the bench, the bruise will enlarge, and the fruit will start to rot.

b. All fruit should be the same size, variety, none should be polished or cleaned.

c. When transporting the fruit, wrap each one in paper dry towels, lay soft fruit on paper towels in small boxes. don't put lids on, the fruit will sweat.

## FLOWERS

a. 'Specimens' - means a single flower, you may have to side shoot the chosen stem well in advance of the show.

b. 'Staged for display', means a collection of flowers, but all separate stems must be of a show quality, no pest and disease, not too tight in the bud, not over blown. The class may specify annual, biennial perennial, make sure your exhibit is correct. The artistic appearance such as co-ordinating colours is also considered by the judge.

c. Where a spike of flowers is displayed, such as a gladiolus, 1/3 should be in full bloom, 1/3 should be coming into bloom, 1/3 in tight bud. The same applies for composite flowers, such as Chrysanthemums, the outer ring of florets fully out, the middle ring coming out, the inner most rings in tight bud.

Finally remember, that most of the 'Experienced' exhibitors are more than happy to help novices become experts themselves! They are usually very keen to give advice, pass on tips about varieties that do well in show conditions, and point out when you have put the entry in the wrong class!

We wish you luck in your future showing and look forward to welcoming you to next year's show.

Judy Chaloner  
Section Chair