

**13. The preparation and presentation of produce at shows.** All exhibits should be staged as attractively as possible in accordance with the rules and schedule. In close competition points for arrangement may be the deciding factor, and a judge cannot fail to be favourably influenced by good presentation. Always take a few extra specimens to the show in case of accident, and before leaving the show bench check that the correct numbers have been staged so that your exhibit is not marked NAS (not according to schedule).

The preparation and presentation of flowers.  
see *Booklet 2: Flowers*

The preparation and presentation of fruit.  
see *Booklet 3: Fruit*

The preparation and presentation of vegetables  
see *Booklet 4: Vegetables*

Other leaflets in this series:

Booklet 2—Flowers

Booklet 3—Fruit

Writtle Garden and Allotment Society

[www.writtlegardeners.org](http://www.writtlegardeners.org)

See our website for details of how to join  
and of our shows



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Allotment Society

SUGGESTIONS TO EXHIBITORS OF  
HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITS

Booklet 1—General Points

Taken from the RHS Horticultural  
Show Handbook

1. **The Schedule.** An exhibitor should read the schedule very carefully, including all the rules. If anything is not clear he/she should contact the show secretary immediately. The solution of problems should not be left until the show day, as exhibitors and officials are then particularly busy.
2. **Dates and Times.** The dates and times given in the schedule should be carefully noted, particularly:
  - The latest day and time for the receipt of entries;
  - The time when staging may be started and the hour by which it must be finished; and
  - The time when the show closes and the hour by which exhibitors must have removed their property.

In his/her own interest every exhibitor should do his/her utmost to adhere to the timetable and avoid doing things at the last moment.

3. **Entry Form.** An exhibitor should see that his/her intentions are stated quite clearly on the entry form, that the name and address are legible and that the form reaches the secretary by the appointed day but earlier if possible. If the entries arrive over a period of a week or so it is much easier to cope with the secretarial work than if nearly all the entries arrive on the last day.
4. **Prizes are not everything.** When selecting the classes in which to compete, an exhibitor should bear in mind that there is more honour in exhibiting in a strongly contested class without winning a prize than in winning a prize in a class where there is little or no competition.
5. **Avoid making too many entries.** No exhibitor should put in an entry for a class unless he/she is reasonably sure that he/she will be able to stage an exhibit in it. Those who make numerous entries and fail to produce the exhibits or cancel the entries at the last moment make it difficult or impossible for the staging to be allocated as it should be, with the result that in some classes the exhibits are crowded and elsewhere there are vacant spaces.

6. **Encourage beginners.** If, when looking through a schedule, it occurs to an exhibitor that a friend is a successful grower of some particular flower, fruit or vegetable for which there is a class, the friend should be persuaded to enter. If the friend has never exhibited before and needs advice, he/she should be helped as much as possible. Similarly, if when staging exhibits a beginner is encountered, the experienced exhibitor should give any assistance needed. If, when putting up exhibits, one exhibitor notices that another has inadvertently made a mistake (such as staging the wrong number of specimens or omitting to put labels or entry cards in position) attention should be drawn to the matter while there is time for it to be put right.
7. **Allow ample time for staging.** Plenty of time should be allowed for putting up exhibits and for finishing of well before the time scheduled for the completion of staging. A last-minute rush should be avoided as this is when mistakes are likely to occur.
8. **Labels and entry cards.** Labels with the names of the cultivars to be exhibited should be prepared at home in order to save time on the show day. It is best to use block capitals. On arrival at the place of the exhibition an exhibitor will find their entry-cards laid out on the display tables and care should be taken to see that they correspond to the exhibits.
9. **"Should" and "Must".** As many schedule-makers inadvertently put 'should' when they mean 'must' and many judges do not distinguish between the meanings of the two words, if the schedule says 'should' it is often wise for an exhibitor to act, if possible, as if the work were 'must'.
10. **The number of specimens required.** Particular attention should be paid to the number of specimens for which the schedule asks, as an exhibit consisting of either more or less will be liable to disqualification ("Not According to Schedule")
11. **Uniformity of specimens constituting an exhibit.** In any competitive exhibit uniformity of all the characteristics of the specimens constituting the exhibit is important. Therefore it is unwise to weaken an exhibit by mixing, for example, large specimens with others that are smaller.

12. **Selection of cultivars.** Some cultivars are naturally better for horticultural-show purposes than others. Exhibitors are advised to visit other shows and to make a note of those cultivars that are successful. Other useful sources of information are experienced exhibitors and national specialist societies.
13. **Be absent during judging.** If they have not already done so, at the time fixed for the completion of staging, all exhibitors should leave the show venue and not return until the time fixed for re-admission.
14. **Judges' decision.** The judges' decision, whatever it may be, should be accepted with good grace.
15. **Protests.** These should not be made lightly but only if, after careful consideration, an exhibitor feels sure that a mistake has been made. In those circumstances an appeal should be made in writing to the secretary. The final decision should be accepted without question. If, however, the time fixed in the schedule for the receipt of protests has passed, the judges' decision should be accepted without comment and no action taken.
16. **Liability for loss.** The organisers usually stipulate in the schedule that exhibits and other property of exhibitors will at all times be at the risk of the exhibitors. It is impossible for the organisers to ensure the safety of exhibitors' property especially when the exhibits are being removed at the close of a show. Therefore each exhibitor should arrange to take charge of his/her exhibits immediately after the show closes and if he/she cannot do so personally, arrangements should be made beforehand for someone else to do so.