WOOLSERY & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SHOW

# HINTS AND TIPS FOR HANDICRAFT ENTRANTS

Woolsery and District Show is a friendly show, with a handicraft section run for local amateur growers, bakers and crafters of all ages.

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. The purpose of these tips is to help those exhibitors who want to know more and not to discourage entries.

## On The Day of The Show

- Arrive at the show in plenty of time to stage your exhibits - this can often take longer than you think!
  The show is open to exhibitors to 'stage' (i.e. set out) their entries on the morning of the show. **This must be completed by 9.30am**, after which the marquee will be closed for judging.

- When you get to the marquee with your items, go to the Show Secretary's desk to pick up your entrant tickets. There will be one ticket to place by each of your exhibits. This should be placed under your exhibit with your name face down.
If you are unsure what to do, any of the committee/stewards will be happy to help.

- The marquee closes at 9.30am for judging and reopens to the public around 2:00pm for viewing, with prize-giving being around 3.30pm.
Exhibits must not be removed before 4pm.

## Tips on Showing Vegetables/Fruit/Flowers -

If any exhibitors wish to have even more information on what is required for individual exhibits, the RHS publishes "The Horticultural Show Handbook" which gives more detailed information and criteria on showing flowers, fruit and vegetables. The book can be purchased from the RHS.
Ian Clemens (Hort/Handicraft Show Sec.) has shown vegetables/flowers for over 20 years and is a qualified National Judge. He will be happy to help answer any questions/queries you may have – contact him at:
volehousefarm@gmail.com or call 01409 241 233

## General guidelines

- Read the schedule (entry form) carefully!

A major piece of advice has to be to READ THE SCHEDULE. Judges never like to mark an entry NAS (not as schedule) so always ensure that the stated number of items are placed on the bench and that they are in the correct class. If the schedule calls for five specimens, do not enter four or six. It is worth bringing along a few extra as spares just in case you find you need them when you are placing your exhibit.

- Judges are looking for vegetables, fruit, flowers, etc. in excellent condition, that are the most uniform in size, shape and colour. Uniformity in size is more important than impressive size unless the class calls for 'largest', 'heaviest', etc.
- Fruits and vegetables should be ripe for eating – do not choose under ripe or over ripe specimens.
- Exhibits should be free from any defect such as disease, insect infestation and damage, for example from garden tools.
- Protect your exhibits well, on the way to the show – it's amazing how much they roll around in a car even at 5mph, especially along the Devon roads, avoiding the potholes! You may find it easier to pack entries individually in newspaper or kitchen paper, place in a box and pack around them so they do not move and become damaged in transit.

For flower stems and herbs, do not forget to put them in water when you stage them.

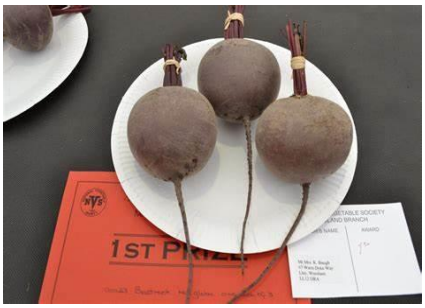
***Please remember that perfection, is not always attainable – and that applies to everyone else who is entering as well!***

**Beans, French:**



Cut all pods from the vine using scissors and ensure each pod has a portion of stalk still attached. Stage on a plate or directly on the show bench; stalks at one end and facing in the same direction. Ideally the pods should be uniform in size, shape and colour.
Judges will usually determine freshness by snapping a pod.

**Beetroot:**




When taken from the soil, one should be careful to try and maintain a long tap root. Carefully trim any side roots from the main tap root leaving just a single root. All beetroot should be firm, fresh, and clean with a single root. Select roots of even size: as a rule of thumb, the ideal size for globe beetroot is that of a tennis ball, between 60 and 75mm, if they are too large and woody they will be marked down. Trim foliage to approximately 75mm



**Carrots:**

When harvesting, care should be taken to try and maintain the 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 soil free, especially around the top of the shoulders. The skins should be undamaged, and they should be of similar size and shape, with tap roots intact. The leaf stalks should be cut to a length of about 75mm. 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.

**Courgettes:**



Courgettes should be fresh of between 100 to 150mm in length and of uniform shape (straight if possible) and size, whilst displaying a good, all-over skin colour, without blemishes. The flowers can be left attached, but this is not essential. Do not cut the courgettes too close to the fruit as they should have about 20mms of stalk attached. They should be clean without the need for washing which can be detrimental to their natural appearance. In the case of round cultivars, they should be around 80 to 100mm in diameter.

**Peas:**

The pods should be uniform in length and in good condition. Judges will open and check pods during their evaluation. Cut pods from the vine with scissors, retaining 25mm of stalk and handle by this stalk to retain the natural bloom of the pods. Holding pods up to a strong light will detect internal damage and reveal the number of peas.



**Potatoes:**



Select medium-sized specimens, generally between 170g and 250g. As a guide, each potato should be of a size to just cover the palm of your hand. Select equally matched tubers with shallow eyes and free from skin blemishes. Wash carefully with a soft sponge in clean water. Should look a fresh colour. Stage on a dish or plate with ‘rose end’ pointing outwards. The exhibit will be marked down if they are misshaped, damaged by slugs, worms or blight. The presence of green colouring as a result of exposure to light is also defective.

**Rhubarb:**
Trim top foliage off leaving approx. 75mm from start of leaf stalks. Wipe stalks clean, but do not trim the base of the stems.





**Tomatoes:**
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 polished and have a fresh green calyx (stalk), attached. Stage on a plate or dish, with the calyx intact and uppermost. A small amount of sand on the plate can help to settle the fruit upright.

**Berries:**
Are best exhibited placed in lines so they can be easily counted. Stalks and calyces should be fresh and all point one way.

**Currants:**
The strigs should be intact and laid roughly parallel, the bottom of the strigs to the font of the plate.

## Tips on Showing Flowers -

**Floral Arrangements:**
Floral exhibits are judged on condition, uniformity and attractiveness of presentation.

- Make sure you interpret the title of the class you are entering and use appropriate plant material for that class
- Keep within the measurements allowed
- Condition your plant material thoroughly i.e. gather foliage 24 hours beforehand and stand foliage and flowers in buckets of cool water in a cool place
- Ensure your plant material is in peak condition and there are no damaged leaves or blooms

**Mixed Flowers and other Cut Flower Classes:**
Choose exhibits that are in good condition, that is, when they are at their most perfect and all parts are fresh and free from damage due to weather, pests, diseases, careless handling, etc.

In vases of one kind of flower, choose exhibits that are the most uniform, such as the most alike in age, size and form.

DEFINITIONS:
A vase has a greater height than the width of its mouth.

Choose vases to suit the height of the stems.
All vases must contain sufficient water to last the duration of the show.

Exhibits are judged on their appearance at the time of judging.

**Sweet Peas:**
Should, if possible, show 4 flowers per stem – with long straight stems.
Everlasting Sweet Peas are not allowed in this class.

# Tips for Cookery -

Careful attention should be paid to the instructions/recipes – particularly tin sizes.
Cakes should be well risen, even in shape and baking.
The cake should not bear any cooling rack marks.

**Cookery -** All items should be covered in cling film if possible. This will be available on the day if required.
**Scones:** Even in shape, size and colour (suitable size 2 to 2½" – 5 to 6cms). Erect and flat on top – almost as tall as round. Texture firm and springy. Cheese/savoury scones should be cut with a plain cutter and fruit scones with a fluted cutter. Glaze with milk or egg. Savoury scones can be sprinkled with cheese.
**Cakes:** Should generally be well risen, even in shape and baking. Any fruit evenly distributed. Domed top with slight cracking acceptable for light fruitcakes.
**Shortbread:** Flavour much enhanced by using butter. Cut uniformly and cover with light sprinkling of caster sugar (better added when warm).
**Cordials/Squash:** Should be presented in clear glass bottles.

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

**Chutney:** 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.

## Tips for Craft Items -

Things a judge may be looking for:

**Materials used** – Are they appropriate for the item, too heavy, too light, etc?
**Stitching** – Colours chosen, is it neat, finished off?
**Textures** – Use of interesting textures and a range of textures will catch the eye of the judge
**Colour** – Is it pleasant to look at? Do the colours, stitches and any embellishments go together?
**Finish** – The judge will look closely at how your item is finished off - are the stitches neat, the ends sewn in almost invisibly?
**Attention to detail** – This is what will catch the eye of the judge. What is special about your item, that makes it a bit more eye-catching than everything else on the table?

## Tips for Photography -

**A good photo is judged on the following criteria:**

1. Its impact.
2. The lighting.
3. The story it tells.
4. Its technical quality.
5. Points of interests.
6. Use of colour.

**Hints and tips -**

1. Make sure the main subject of the photo is in focus
2. Be careful it is not too dark or too light
3. The picture should have a point of interest
4. Horizons should be level and verticals straight
5. Does the picture meet the criteria of the competition subject
6. make sure the judge knows what they are looking at.
7. If taking a photo of a people or animals try not sure to cut off arms/legs

**Most of all – have fun entering and enjoy the show! Good luck!**