

# Hurst Horticultural Show

## A Guide to Showing Fruit, Vegetables and Flowers

These notes are the result of frequently asked questions. Gardeners who have perfect specimens, but are put off by the supposed formality of showing, can take comfort in knowing that at our village show there are few rules, and these are contained in the schedule. There are however some practices and conventions that help in the presentation of your entries. This is not the Olympic Games ... No gold medals for the longest carrot! What our judges look for in general is condition, form, uniformity, size and cleanliness. These qualities mean different things for different produce. But good staging and preparation can make all the difference. Some examples....

### **Carrots**

Free from dirt, 3 roots in schedule ideally uniform in shape and size. Foliage cut to about 4" and tied with string or raffia. Be careful to keep the root tips intact.

### **Parsnips and Beetroot**

The same as for carrots - do not trim roots, except those small wispy ones that grow on the sides.

### **Potatoes**

Clean and uniform in size and shape. ***Do not peel!***

### **Runner Beans and French Beans**

Can be picked in advance; wrapped in a damp cloth and kept in a cool dark place, ie veg compartment in the fridge. Can be straightened (carefully) whilst damp. Leave a short length of stalk on every bean.

### **Onions**

Towards the end of July take off any unsightly skin BUT be careful not to damage the sound skin which will need final ripening. Ease from the ground about one week beforehand allowing them to harden off and finally ripen. Place them in the sun for a day or two once lifted. Remove loose skin but be careful not to over-peel. Watch for soft tops and bases.

Onions and Shallots should have their roots removed and their tops should be trimmed and tied neatly with plain string or raffia.

## **Tomatoes**

Uniformity is important. Leave on the calyces (stalks) and ***do not polish***.

## **Leeks**

Leave the roots on but cleaned. Tip from our judge, comb the roots! Leave the flags (foliage) intact but tied neatly.

## **Courgettes**

Courgette flowers can be left on or removed. If they are really fresh they are very attractive and might catch the judge's eye.

## **Sweetcorn**

Leave the green husks on but peel down a narrow one inch strip to show the yellow kernels.

## **Collection of Vegetables**

This class can include vegetables which are in the schedule or others which are not. If showing leafy vegetables (spinach, purple sprouting, etc.) place in a jam jar of water to keep fresh.

## **Any other vegetable**

Anything from a single pumpkin to a set of 12 pea pods. The more interesting and unusual the better! If showing leafy vegetables (spinach, purple sprouting, etc.) place in a jam-jar of water to keep fresh.

## **Fruit**

All fruits (except apricots, nectarines, peaches and nuts) should be shown with stalks intact. Apricots, nectarines and peaches are shown without stalks. All nuts are shown without stalks or husks. Please make sure that each fruit is displayed correctly. The same general notes apply for condition, uniformity, etc. ***Do not polish fruit***.

## Flowers

Desirable merits and defects vary considerably between varieties and types however some general common hints are –

- Freshness, cleanliness and condition, form and uniformity, trueness of colour, size of blooms in balance with stems, stems clean and free from defect.
- When placing flowers in vases, they can be supported by a small amount of newspaper (do not use sand or Oasis).
- When a number of blooms are specified, check that there are no extra buds. If small, these can be rubbed off carefully.
- **Single Rose class** - This is a specimen class and should be shown with stem and a small amount of foliage.
- **Foliage class** - Do not include any flowers or berries.
- **Dahlia classes** - Check different groups of classes carefully with either a good gardening book or online. The National Dahlia Society website has helpful classification details.

## How to Grow

No mention has been made of how to grow. There are many books on the subject but we in Hurst are fortunate in having good soil in the main and good growing conditions (some times!). Any queries or not too difficult problems please ask one of our members. Please consider entering and help keep alive a village tradition that goes back over 100 years

## Novice?

Adults and Children - If you have not entered exhibits into the Show before and are not too sure about it all, do start off by trying the novice classes.

## More Information

There is more information on showing in the Royal Horticultural Society Show Handbook. Our judges use this for reference as they look at the exhibits.

## Why Show?

A sense of pride and satisfaction can be one reason, good therapy another.