



# A GUIDE TO EXHIBITING AT OUR SHOWS

With thanks to David Empson

(based on a document prepared by David Empson for the Flitwick Gardeners' Association)

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## **The Show Schedule and How to Enter**

The Show Schedule tells you everything you need to know about the classes being judged at the show.

You are asked to make your entries in advance. The Schedule tells you how to do this using the form. This allows the Committee to allocate sufficient space for each entry. Before entering any of the shows be sure to read the rules and class details! This may sound rather obvious but you would be surprised how often people make simple mistakes.

### **What to expect when you arrive**

Look at the schedule for the show and ensure that you arrive with plenty of time to spare before the judging begins.

We must begin judging on time, so that the judge can finish before the doors open to the public - so if you are still placing exhibits on the show bench at judging time you will be rushed or perhaps even asked to leave.

At each of our shows, on arrival you need to check in at the desk and you will be handed your entry cards.

Areas are available for entrants to prepare their entries. It is important that you do your preparation here and not on the show benches in order to avoid accidentally disturbing someone else's carefully arranged entry. Show Stewards will be on hand to guide or assist you if you need them, but they cannot stage your exhibit for you.

We provide bikini vases, and paper plates for your use in displaying your entries. Once you have prepared each item, take it carefully to the show bench, find the correct place for the class number and arrange it, placing the appropriate entry card beside it — folded over so that your name is hidden.

Please be careful not to move or to disturb other people's exhibits. If you find that you do not have enough room to stage your exhibit, you must ask a Steward to make sufficient space for you.

## **Vegetables**

### **General tips**

Pay particular attention to the number and size of specimens required, the amount of foliage or stem you are asked to leave (if any). You need to carefully read both the full show rules and the instruction for the specific class you are entering since relevant instructions could appear in either place.

Probably the most important tip of all for any show entry requiring more than one specimen is to try for '**uniformity**'. Submit specimens that are of the same variety and very similar in shape and size.

Bring spare specimens. This way you will not be disappointed if an item is accidentally broken or spoiled while preparing it for display.

Vegetables should be cleaned gently. The only exception to this is for the autumn show when entering an item for one of the 'heaviest' classes.

Remember that bigger is by no means always better. A good, clean, tidy specimen will often beat a larger but less perfect entry.

If you know the variety of your vegetable, it is useful to write it on your entry card. However, this is not a *requirement* and you will not lose marks if you do not do so, but you could gain extra points if you do.

Below are some tips for specific classes. Vegetables for which the general tips above are sufficient are not included.

### **Onions and Shallots**

It is important that every onion or shallot in your entry is the correct size for the class; the judge will check them all. The best way to measure is to make a ring or circular hole of the stated diameter and see if the onion or shallot will pass through it. If you are unsure, please ask a committee member to help you as we usually have a ring available.

Tidily trim the top and the roots of your onions and shallots. You will see from the rules that onions 'may be dressed'. Dressing of onions with raffia is optional and most entrants to our shows do not do it. However, if you would like to dress your onions there is information on the web page [www.allotment-diary.co.uk/How-to-dress-exhibition-show-onions.html](http://www.allotment-diary.co.uk/How-to-dress-exhibition-show-onions.html)

Ideally you should remove untidy or broken skin a few weeks before the show and leave the onions in the sun to develop a new smooth skin. If you remove skin closer to the day of the show, don't overdo it!

A good way to display onions is to stand each on a ring cut from a toilet roll tube or similar. Shallots meanwhile are often shown standing in sand on a paper plate. There will be plates available in the setting up area.

### **Tomatoes**

Ensure that you measure your tomatoes and enter them in the correct class. This is done in the same way as onions and shallots.

Tomatoes should be shown with some stalk attached. Pick your tomatoes as near to the show as possible so that they look fresh. Wrapping the stalk in a little moist tissue paper can help keep them looking fresh a little longer.

You can display your tomatoes either on the show table or on a paper plate. Arrange them symmetrically and with the stalk uppermost.

## **Beans**

Both French and Runner beans should be cut from the vine with scissors leaving a little piece of stalk on the end of each bean. Cut them as near to show time as possible as they should look fresh, the judge is likely to snap one in order to check this.

Try to get a set of beans of the same or similar size and as straight as possible. If your beans are not quite straight it is possible to straighten them very gently in your warm hands... take care though in case they snap!

Depending on the size of your beans you may choose to lay them directly onto the show table or arrange them on a paper plate.

## **Potatoes**

You must enter your potatoes into the correct class depending on whether they are white or coloured. A potato is described as coloured even if it only has tiny patches of colour. The variety Cara is an example of this as it has pink eyes.

Potato skins should be clean. This can be done by soaking the potatoes for a while and then gently wiping dirt away. Take care not to break the skin.

## **Beetroot**

Don't choose huge roots as they are liable to be hard inside. The judge is likely to cut one of your roots in order to check for this.

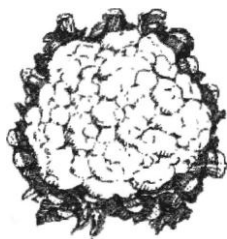
Wash the roots gently taking care not to break the skin.

Beetroots should have a single tap root. Small side shoots can be carefully removed.

## **Lettuce, cabbage and cauliflowers**

Please clean your exhibit gently.

A few outer leaves can be removed if damaged. In the case of cauliflower trim the leaves to reveal the curd.



## **Peas**

Pea pods have a 'bloom' which makes the pods look more attractive. Because of this try to pick and display your peas without actually handling the pods.

## **Leeks**

Leeks should be of uniform length and be firm. Avoid excessive stripping of outer leaves. Roots are best left on but should be teased out and gently cleaned.

## **Any other vegetable**

You can enter into this class any vegetable not specifically named in any of the classes preceding it. There is no required number here but if you show more than one specimen (as per the schedule) they should be of the same type and variety and as uniform as possible in shape and size.

## **Flowers**

### **General**

The tips included here can be applied to showing any flowers in any of our shows. Tips are only included for specific classes where there is any extra or different advice to add.

Cut flowers in the evening or early morning when the flowers are cool. Cut stems as long as possible with a slanting cut to improve uptake of water. Remove undeveloped side shoots unopened buds and some lower leaves and plunge up to their necks in clean water.

Cut more stems than you need for the show to allow choice when staging. Give yourself plenty of time to set up without rushing.

Flowers must be shown in one of the vases provided. There are several sizes so choose carefully. The vase should not be so large as to overpower the flowers or vice versa.

Do not forget to put water in the vase as your flowers need to stay alive and fresh for several hours.

Cut the stems to an appropriate length for the vase and to achieve a balanced, symmetrical display.

Pay attention to the number of blooms required.

The use of "oasis" is preferred, but newspaper can be used to hold stems in position in the vase. Fill the vase two thirds with cold water, loosely place newspaper into the vase and then press stems into position, back blooms first. Add more paper before front blooms and finally enough paper to hold all the stems firmly in place.

Varying the angles of blooms in a vase can sometimes make the exhibit look more balanced and pleasing so try holding the bloom in various positions before placing it. Larger blooms often look better at the back of a vase while smaller ones may look better at the front.

Flowers should be clean, fresh and unblemished.

## **Fuchsia florets**

Fuchsia florets are shown by inserting them into a box, made from an ex-ice cream tub, painted black, with evenly spaced holes in the lids.

Fill the tub with water and put the lid in place. Insert the fuchsia florets into the holes so that they will reach the water. If you have more than one size or variety of floret, try to arrange them symmetrically or in a pleasing pattern.

## **Gladiolus**

The ideal spike is straight and is one third in full flower, one third with buds in colour and one third in green bud. The spike should still be carrying the bottom bloom.

However, do not be afraid to show a less than perfect spike of gladiolus, perfection is hard to come by and your flower might still be the best!

## **Chrysanthemum**

At the autumn show, there is a class for 3 stems of spray chrysanthemums. A spray chrysanthemum is one where each stem bears multiple branches of foliage and multiple flowers.

Ideally the blooms of sprays should be of uniform size, development and colour; foliage should be fresh and clean. Remove any dead blooms and fading foliage before staging.

## **Pot plants**

Pots or containers should be clean, undamaged and of an appropriate size. According to the rules the pots must be plain, terracotta or plastic, and must not exceed 260mm (10.25") in diameter

You must have owned the plant for at least six months prior to the show.

If you need to stake or tie your plant, make sure you have done this neatly and that it does not detract from the appearance of your plant.

Entries in the class 'Pot plant – foliage' should be plants normally grown for their attractive foliage. Your plant will not be disqualified if it happens to be in flower at the time of the show. The judge will ignore its flowers.

Similarly, in the class 'Pot plant – flower' you may enter any flowering plant including those normally grown for foliage. The judge will award foliage points only on the normal scale ie for its general condition.

Remove any dead or dying foliage and blooms before the show.

## **Fruit**

### **General**

Pick fruit as near to show time as possible.

Handle all fruit as little as possible and by their stalks where applicable so that any natural bloom is not spoilt.

Use scissors rather than fingers to remove soft fruit.

You should use the paper plates provided for the staging of fruit.

Fruit should be fresh, uniform in size and colour. It should be free from blemishes.

Pick spares in case some items are damaged during transportation or staging.

All fruit except nectarines, peaches and apricots, should be shown with stalks intact.

Aim for an attractive, symmetrical presentation.

Apples, pears and gooseberries may be shown ripe or unripe. Other fruit should be ripe but note that over ripeness is considered to be a defect.

### **Apples**

Must be shown with the eye uppermost, stalk end down.

### **Soft fruit**

Berries look attractive placed in lines and are easily counted. Stalks should look fresh and all point in one direction.

### **Pears**

These are usually best arranged around the plate with the stalks towards the centre.

### **Grapes**

Choose a complete well-filled bunch which is balanced in shape.

### **Any other fruit**

Sprigs of currants and similar should be placed with the bottom of the sprigs to the front of the plate.

## Household classes

Please ensure that no brand names are visible on jars, containers, etc., that you use to display your entry. Make sure that the jars are clean.

We provide cling film which will be used to cover your produce after judging.

Be aware that the judge will cut cakes, open pickles and jams, cut cooked beetroot, etc., in order to examine them closely and taste them. Pay close attention to and only use the tin sizes given in the schedule.

Make jars etc. attractive with neatly written labels. As usual though these should not bear your name.

## Photography

Photographs must be 7" x 5", and shown mounted on the black card provided, using corner mounts, which will also be provided. Photographs must be printed with a white border, and a title given to your work. This can be written on your entry card.

Photographs may be taken using digital cameras or film. Judging is based on the quality of their composition and focus.

You should exhibit new pictures every year. As from 2017, you may now enter up to two photographs per class.

## The Spring Show

### General

All of the tips about arranging flowers above apply also to daffodils and tulips.

### Daffodil classification

#### The Basic Daffodil Dictionary

**Anther** the pollen-bearing part of the stamen

**Corona** refers to the cup or trumpet

**Filament** the stalk of the stamen

**Pedicel** is the 'neck' of the flower which joins it to the stem






**Perianth** refers to the petals


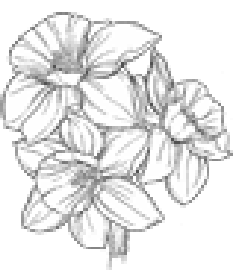
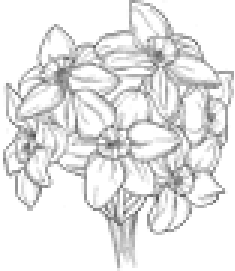


**Reflexed** petals are those which are angled away from the corona


**Stamen** the male part of the flower, consisting of filament and anther

Further, more detailed information can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society web site at [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk). A further summary is also reproduced in the reference section of the Spring Schedule, which is reproduced here for ease of reference.



Division 1: Trumpet	
	One flower to each stem. The corona is as long as, or longer than the perianth. Examples: Golden Harvest, Rembrandt
Division 2: Large Cupped	
	One flower to each stem. The corona is more than one third but less than equal to the length of the perianth Examples: Armada, Carlton, Ceylon, Desdemona
Division 3: Small Cupped	
	One flower to each stem. The corona is NOT more than one third the length of the perianth. Examples: Angel, Barret Browning, Birma, Lemonade
Division 4: Double	
	One or more flowers per stem, with doubling of the perianth segments or corona or both. Examples: Acropolis, Golden Ducat, Unique
Division 5: Triandrus	
	Usually two or more pendent flowers per stem, perianth segments often reflexed. Examples: Rippling Waters, Thalia, Hawera

Division 6: Cyclamineus	
	One flower per stem; perianth segments prominent reflexed. Flower at an acute angle to the stem with a very short pedicel. Examples: Charity May, Dove Wings, Jetfire and Apodanthus
Division 7: Jonquilla	
	Usually 1 to 5 (more rarely up to 8) flowers per stem; perianth segments spreading or reflexed; corona cup shaped, funnel shaped or flared, usually wider than long; flowers usually fragrant. Examples: Lintie, Suzy, Sweetness
Division 8: Tazetta	
	Usually 3 to 20 flowers to a stout stem; perianth segments spreading (not reflexed); flowers usually fragrant Example: Geranium
Division 9: Poeticus	
	Usually one flower to a stem, perianth segments white; corona very short or disc shaped, usually with a green/ yellow centre and a red rim, but sometimes of a single colour; flowers usually fragrant. Example: Actaea
Division 10: Bulbocodium	
	Usually one flower to a stem; perianth segments insignificant compared to the corona; anthers attached more or less centrally to the filament; filament and style usually curved. Examples: Golden Bells, Julia Jane, Nylon

Division 11: Split Corona	
	<p>Corona is split, usually for more than half its length.</p> <p>a)corona segments opposite the perianth segments; the corona segments usually in two whorls of three</p> <p>b)corona segments alternate to the perianth segments; the corona segments usually in a single whorl of six.</p> <p>Examples: Articol, Broadway Star</p>
Division 12: Other	<p>Miscellaneous cultivars which do not fit above Classifications</p> <p>Example: Tête-à-Tête</p>
Division 13: Other	<p>Cultivars distinguished solely by botanical name</p>

## Tulips

To prevent the head of a tulip from drooping use a pin to make a tiny hole in the stem just beneath the flower.

## The Autumn Show

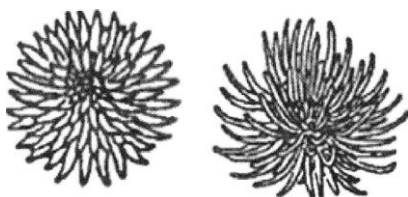
### Dahlia

There are classes for several types of Dahlia in our autumn show. In some cases, size limits are given and you must ensure that *all* of your blooms are of the correct size.

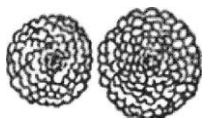
Blooms can be staged with some dahlia foliage, preferably on the stem.

The brief descriptions of types below should help you decide which class your dahlias belong in. They are also reproduced in the reference section of the show schedule. There is further information and examples at [www.dahliaworld.co.uk](http://www.dahliaworld.co.uk), and as usual we will be very glad to advise you.

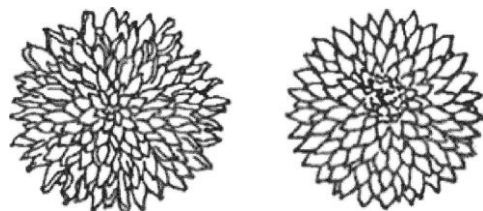
**Cactus and Semi-cactus** varieties are those in which the petals are fairly narrow and are pointed giving the bloom a spiky appearance.



**Pompon and Ball** varieties are those where the bloom is ball shaped (sometime slightly flattened). Pompons are smaller – not exceeding 51 mm diameter.



**Decorative** varieties have broad and usually flat petals.



### **Heaviest, longest - the fun of the Autumn Show**

At the autumn show we have some `fun' classes for heaviest, longest, etc. Not much explanation required here!

However note that if entering the `heaviest' category for example, there is no need to trim off roots or untidy leaves ... they can all count towards the weight!

Vegetables do not need to be fresh or pretty, for example your longest bean can look dead and inedible!

We have lots of fun looking at the 'freak' or unusually shaped vegetables. Please save yours and bring them along to show us.

### **Wine & Beer**

You must make sure that your bottles are clean before you exhibit them. So often this is not the case, and points can be lost for presentation. You must also use clear, colourless bottles with a punted bottom. Corks must be flanged, or "tee" shaped. The liquid in each bottle should be within 2.5 to 3 cms from the top. You can exhibit up to three different entries per class.

### **After judging**

After the judging is completed the show is open to the public. This is when you will find out how well your exhibits have fared. At our shows there are no cash prizes, if you have won first, second or third you will find a certificate placed beside your exhibit. For some classes and groups of classes a trophy or a voucher to spend in the Depot may be awarded also. The trophies for each category are set out in the Schedule.

Any trophy that you win must be returned (clean!) to the Secretary before the next show so that we can award it to next year's winner.

Please do not remove your exhibit or certificates until the end of the show. We want the public to be able to see all the entries when they look around. As a rule of thumb do not remove entries until the raffle has been drawn. If you need to go before this then please speak to a member of the show committee or Show Steward.

If you would like to know more about what the judge thought of your exhibit please ask a member of the show committee as judges do sometimes make comments to us as they work.

**And finally.**

It cannot be stressed often enough that we are there to help; we want you to enter and to do well. If you have any questions about your entries you can contact us before the show or during staging for advice.

If you are still in any doubt about whether to enter, please come along to any of our shows and have a good look around. We feel sure that you will see that it is not too difficult to take part and that you have vegetables, flowers or handicraft items which are as good (or perhaps better) than those on display.

We welcome especially, ideas for new exhibits, photography or household subjects, and any suggestions generally about how to make our shows better.

**Remember, it's the joy of taking part, not the winning that counts!**

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