

## TIPS FOR SHOWING FRUIT & VEGETABLES.

### Garden produce



For further information regarding this section refer to the current edition of the **ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOW HANDBOOK**.

This can be obtained from RHS Enterprises Ltd, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB.

The schedule will ask for the number of items to be exhibited in a class or the number on a dish (for example, four carrots or a dish of six strawberries).

### **Basic guidelines**

- Stage exhibits as attractively as possible.
- Prepare all vegetables carefully, making sure they are clean.
- Use plenty of water; do not scrub: wash roots gently.
- Handle all fruit carefully -the appearance is enhanced by natural bloom.

The interest and educational value of a show is greatly enhanced if the name of the cultivar (variety), species or genus is given. Accurate and neat labelling is essential.

A judge will look for the following points and mark accordingly:

- **Condition:** Freshness, cleanliness, tenderness and freedom from coarseness and blemishes,
  - **Size:** Not so overgrown as to be coarse or too small to be useful.  
This will vary with cultivars.
  - **Uniformity:** size, shape or form, colour and maturity.
  - **Colour:** Attractive and naturally produced.
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## VEGETABLES

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### Beans and peas

- All beans and peas are cut from the plant with a short stalk and staged in a neat row.

### Broad beans and peas

- Pods of good size, fresh and dark green in colour.
- Well-filled with tender seeds.
- Free from disease or blemish.
- Peas should have a natural bloom.

### Beans (French, dwarf and runner)

- Straight, flesh, crisp pods of good colour.
- No outward sign of seeds.
- Dwarf—tenderness paramount.
- Runner—slender and long.

### Beetroots

- Good even colour, size according to type.
- Small tap roots and smooth clear skins.
- Leaves removed, leaving approximately 7.5 cm (3 inches) leaf stalk.
- One beetroot should be cut in half from each entry, in order to check the colour of the flesh which should be rich and dark without pronounced white rings.

*Cylindrical:* Not more than 150 mm long.

Well proportioned with a tap root.

*Globe:* Approximately 50 – 70 mm in diameter

*Globe:* Other than uniform red

*Spherical:* Not more than tennis ball size.

*Long:* Broad well shaped roots, evenly tapered.

Clean shoulders and without side roots.

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## FRUIT

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Remember, over-ripeness is a defect in any fruit.

All fruit should be ripe, with the exception of apples and pears, which may be shown in an unripe condition, unless the schedule specifically demands otherwise. (In most horticultural shows the date is too early for many cultivars of apples and pears to achieve ripeness)

### Apples

- Handle with care so that the 'bloom' is retained (do not polish).
- Eyes and stalks intact.
- Skins clear and unblemished with colour characteristic of the cultivar.
- **Cooking apples:** large, shapely, solid fruits.
- **Dessert apples:** optimum sized and shapely.



### Berries

*(Blackberries, raspberries and strawberries)*

- Large ripe fruit of good colour.
- Fresh and free from blemishes.
- In good condition with green stalks and calyx intact.

### Currants

- Strigs with full complement of berries.
- Berries large, ripe and of uniform brilliant colour.
- Stalks fresh and intact.

### Pears

- Handle with care so that the 'bloom' is retained (do not polish).
- Large and shapely with eyes and stalks intact.
- Skins clear, unblemished and the colour of the particular cultivar.

### Plums

*(Cooking and dessert. Also damsons)*

- Large, firm, ripe fruits.
- Good colour, carrying perfect bloom.
- Stalks intact.



## Courgettes

- Tender, young, shapely fruits, 100 – 200 mm in length or if round cultivars approximately 75 mm in diameter, with flower still adhering.
- Any colour but well matched.

## Cucumbers

- Fresh, young, dark green, tender fruits.
- Straight and of uniform thickness.
- Blossom still attached and short handles.



## Herbs

- Fresh, healthy clean leaves.
- No signs of disease, yellowing or age.
- Usually presented in a neat bunch, in water, sufficient to fill a vase 15cm (6 inches) in height.

## Leeks

Blanch, Intermediate or Pot

- Good length of straight, blanched stem without any bulbous base.
- Solid, thick and tight, collared with clean spotless skins.
- Not excessively stripped.

*Note:* Refer to **RHS Handbook** for rules on specialist leek classes.

## Lettuce

- Firm, tender, well formed hearts showing no bolting.
  - Good colour with crisp outer leaves free from pest damage.
- Many schedules ask for 50 – 75 mm of stalk to be left on to avoid the use of 'shop' produce.

## Marrows

- Young and not over-ripe.
  - Not to exceed 375 mm in length or 550 mm in circumference.
  - Uniform, well shaped and tender.
  - Any colour.
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### Brussels sprouts

- Fresh, solid, tightly closed.



### Cabbages

- Well shaped, fresh, solid hearts with surrounding leaves perfect.  
(A few discoloured outer leaves may be removed.)
- Size according to cultivar.  
Many schedules ask for 50 – 75 mm of stalk to be left on to avoid the use of 'shop' produce.

### Carrots

- Good uniform shape, typical of cultivar.
- Tender roots free from side roots.
- Skins clear and colour bright.

*Long* Fresh long roots of good shape and colour. Size to exceed 300mm from the crown to the point where the root measures 5 mm in diameter.

*Other than long* Fresh roots of colour and shape according to cultivar, with a decided stump root, and with the taproot intact.

### Cauliflowers

- Leaves trimmed back to be almost level with head
- Symmetrical heads with close, solid white curds.
- Free from stain or frothiness.  
Many schedules ask for 50 – 75 mm of stalk to be left on to avoid the use of 'shop' produce.

### Celery

- Blanched or trench.
  - Self-blanching or green
  - Large, firm, crisp and stringless head with fresh healthy leaves.
  - Clean and free from slugs and worms.
  - No flowering stem.
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## Shallots

- Firm, well ripened bulbs of good colour, with thin necks.

*Exhibition:* Large, firm, well-ripened shapely bulbs, good form with thin neck and of good size and colour. Tied with natural material.

*Pickling:* Round, solid well ripened bulbs of good form and colour.

Bulbs must not exceed 30 mm in diameter or as the schedule requires. Tied with natural material

## Tomatoes

- Medium sized, five to six fruits to the 450 grams.
- Ripe but firm.
- Rich in colour with fresh calyx and stalk intact.

Note: Schedule makers are advised to provide separate classes for tomatoes 'small fruited and cherry cultivar-type' tomatoes and 'large-fruited beefsteak-type' tomatoes.

*Large:* Fruits with a minimum diameter of 75 mm

*Medium:* Fruits approximately 65 mm diameter

*Small:* Size appropriate to cultivar but not exceeding 35 mm diameter



## **Onions**

- Uniform bulbs. firm, well ripened and of good colour.
- No thickness or softness in necks.
- Excessive removal of outer skins to be avoided.
- All dressed onions should have tops neatly tied with natural material and roots neatly trimmed (unless otherwise specified).
- Onions shown as grown
- They should have their roots cleaned and lumps of soil and decaying leaves removed. Usually tied round the necks with raffia in 3, 5 or 6 according to schedule.

*Exhibition:* Onions over 250 grams

*Onions:* 250 grams and under

*Onions pickling:* Small form well-ripened uniform bulbs which should not exceed 30 mm in diameter.

## **Potatoes**

- Medium-sized 200 - 220 grams per tuber, of good shape.
- Skins clean and free from blemishes.
- Eyes few in number and shallow.
- Skins should never be scrubbed.

## **Rhubarb**

- Stalks fresh, straight, long and tender.
- Well developed red colouring.
- Leaves trimmed to approximately 7.5cm (3 inches).

## **Salad vegetables**

- Schedules should state specific kinds required or refer to RHS definition.
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