

Grooming and Showing Tips

1. Read the schedule! Read the Schedule! Read the Schedule!
2. Take a walk in your garden. Select plants you might want to show based on the schedule. Cut specimen early in the morning and place them directly in cool water. Cutting at a slant encourages the uptake of water.
3. Cut blooms at the peak of maturity. For exhibit purposes that means when a bloom is 3/4s open.
4. A poorly groomed specimen will never win the blue ribbon. Examine your specimen using a flashlight and a magnifying glass. Groom it, step away and then
5. Look again! No insects, dirt (especially on fuzzy stems), spent blooms, buds or dead stems on specimens.
6. Be sure your entry is well conditioned and well hydrated! Cut specimens longer than required by the show schedule so you can recut stem before placing in the bottle this will encourage water absorption.
7. Is the size of the container appropriate for your specimen? Be sure your container is clean and free of labels.
8. Is your wedging material appropriate and in place? Be sure no pieces of your wedging have fallen into the bottle. Wedging material should be used to hold the exhibit upright and in the best position for viewing. Cotton balls or saran wrap are frequently used for wedging. Twigs and bubble wrap can be used also. No boxwood may be used.
9. You want to show of your exhibit's best side. Wedge so your bloom or entry has a pleasing pose and will face the judges nicely. Remember to place a white dot or chalk mark on the back of your container so those doing the hort placement know how to place your entry on the bench for the best view.
10. The specimen should be well conditioned and well hydrated. Be sure the stem is visibly in the water.
11. Only one stem may be exhibited in each container.
12. There should be no foliage below the water line.
13. If showing a potted plant, make certain that the container is clean and free of mineral deposits. Make sure the dimensions of the pot are in accordance with the schedule. If you are double potting be sure the inner pot is not visible.

14. Top dressing should not float. Soil with perlite should not be used.
15. Be sure to properly identify your exhibit and use binomial nomenclature on the entry card. Don't guess though. If you are not sure of the cultivar you may omit that information. Seek help! Often there is a help desk as shows with knowledgeable plants people that will know your plant.
16. Key cards can be a great opportunity to show off your creativity. A beautifully executed key card really contributes to an entry. You may use a photo, or a drawing as a key card.