

Flower 'Showing' Tips



Conditioning

Conditioning involves preparing cut plant material to make the flowers last longer. To maximize water absorption and water maintenance, the best time to cut flowers is early morning or late in the evening when the flowers have the maximum amount of water in their stems. Cut the stems as long as possible. Place the flowers in warm water and leave them for several hours or overnight to absorb as much water as possible. Re-cut stems before placing the flowers in arrangements.

Criteria that will be helpful when preparing flowers to enter a flower show.

Roses

Types of Roses

- *Hybrid Tea* – usually have one flower to a stem with side buds (for showing, side buds must be removed)
- *Floribunda* – usually have a spray of bloom at the end of a cane.
- *Grandiflora* – are between and the hybrid tea and the floribunda in bloom

Hybrid Tea Roses

Form – A rose should be at the most beautiful stage of its development which is usually when it is about $\frac{2}{3}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ open. The petals should be symmetrically arranged within a circular outline around a pointed centre. (25 points)

Colour - should be bright and clear (20 points)

Substance - petals should be firm, thick, crisp, velvety and fresh. There should be no signs of aging. (15 points)

Stem and foliage – stem should be in good proportion to the size of the flower. It should be straight and strong enough to support the bloom. Leaves should be healthy, undamaged and well-groomed. It should have at least one five-leaflet leaf. (20 points)

Balance, Proportion and Size (20 points)

Faults: faded or muddy colour, spots or blemishes caused by rain or insects, confused bloom, bloom not open enough, or too open.

Floribunda Sprays

A floribunda spray is a group of blooms, with or without buds, on one main or lateral stem. At least 3 blooms must be open blooms. Sprays may exhibit all stages of development from green buds to fully open. The most important factor in form in a spray is the shape. It should be symmetrical when view from the top; and rectangular when viewed from the side. There should be no florets protruding above the main body and none below it.

Miniature roses – use the same criteria as hybrid tea roses.

Pansies

- If it has a face, it is a pansy. Flowers should be large, fresh, clean, circular in outline with smooth thick velvety petals without serrations laying evenly on each other. Blotches should be large, round and clearly defined; eye a bright yellow, circular and well defined.
- Other considerations, condition, form and texture, size, colour, blotch and eye.

Begonia

- The blooms may be single or double, or be quite different in form. Blooms should have good depth with individual petals at least 2” wide and 3” across. Plants have male and female blooms, but the male bloom is larger and showier.

Clematis

- Should be a healthy, fresh *single* bloom with its own foliage.

Delphinium Form

- Spikes should be long and straight. Good shape and form is more important than mere length

Flower Spike Symmetry

- Spike should be uniformly tapered from base to tip, or uniformly columnar in shape. It should be almost as broad and rounded at the tip as at the base.
- Laterals may or may not be present.

Flower Placement:

- On the spike, florets should be uniformly placed and spaced so there are not gaps

Flower Substance

- Florets must not be loose on the stem.

Flower Size and Substance

- Florets should be large and circular in outline with broad sepals of good substance.
- All florets should be open from base to tip with no faded or fallen sepals.
- Tiny seed pods should be carefully removed from the base.

Foliage

- There should be some foliage left on lower part of the spike.

Color

- It should be clean, pure or brilliant.

Geranium (Pelargonium)

- Flower heads should be clear of foliage to give a balanced effect to the plant.
- The plant should be proportionate to the size of the pot with flowers and leaves proportionate to the size of the plant.

Lilium

- The spike or stem should be well balanced and of good proportion; generally it is in best condition when the lowest flowers are open, but not faded and the upper ones are still in bud.
- The larger the number of flowers open, the better. Flowers should be fresh, open (except for top buds) and of bright clear colours or a harmonious blend of colours, unstained by pollen and free from blemishes. (50 points)

Vigor

- Refers to length and strength of the stem, number and size of the flowers size and attractiveness of foliage (20 points)

Placement

- Refers to arrangement of flowers on stem. Separation spirally on the stem vertically, rather than crowded, is preferred. They should be spaced in such a way that individual flowers do not interfere with each other. (20 points)

Substance

- Refers to the thickness, firmness and crispness of the petal and keeping quality (10 points)

Sweet William (Dianthus)

- Trusses forming the flower head should be large and generally rounded in outline.
- Stout stems and large well-formed pips
- Colour should be bright and clear
- Flower heads should be uniform in size and overall shape.

Shasta Daisies

Form

- Daisies should be circular in outline; an oval shape is a serious fault
- *In Singles* – the petals should stand out stiffly at right angles to the stem with a bright, clean center disc.
- *In Doubles* -- the petals may stand out straight or be partly or fully reflexed
- *In Doubles* – the center disc should not be visible but there should be a pale, light-green colour to the inner row of petals.

Colours

- should be bright, clear and clean

Stems

- should be stiff, straight and in proportion to the size of the flower head, which must be held stiffly upright

Foliage

- should be clean, bright green in colour and evenly spaced along the stem.

Submitted by, **Judy Runzer**

Source: *BC Council of Garden Clubs Judging Standards for Non-Specialized Shows*. Revised Edition 2008