

Notes for Exhibitors

Read the schedule carefully. Ensure (and double check!) that the correct number of items are exhibited of the correct size/pot size within the allocated space if specified. Place your exhibit in the space allocated for that class, with your entry card face down underneath (or as close to it as possible). If finding space for your exhibit is a problem, contact a steward. Please do not touch/move other exhibitors' items.

Section 1 Plants & Flowers

All plants must have been grown by the exhibitor from seed/cutting or picked from the exhibitor's garden or allotment. If plants have been purchased eg. as plug plants for planting up classes 143-148 or as house plants, they must have been in the care of the exhibitor for at least 2 months.

Exhibit all cut flowers **in water** and display for best effect (see tips below for various classes). Ensure potted plants are well watered (without flooding the Show bench). The marquee can become very hot, so precautions should be taken to prevent exhibits from wilting.

Hardy herbaceous perennial: a plant which should stand up to the average low winter temperature and come up each year for several years eg rudbeckia (perennial varieties), monbretia, phlox, delphinium, day lilies, sea holly, yarrow, penstemon, echinops

Flowering shrub: a perennial woody plant which arises from many bases from the ground, noted primarily for its flowers eg. hydrangea, buddlia, viburnum, hibiscus, plumbago, spirea

Annual: a plant which grows for one season and then dies off eg marigold, zinnia, sunflower, antirrhinum, cosmos, cornflower, calendula, rudbeckia (annual varieties)

Classes 117 (pansies and violas) display flower heads flat on a board or box with holes through which the flower stems can be poked into individual pots of water below. Begonias (class 119) may be displayed in a similar manner or in small individual pots/vases of water.



Classes 108 and 147 can be the work of 1 or more individuals. All other classes must be the work of one exhibitor. Classes 143-148 must have been planted up by the exhibitor, not purchased directly from a nursery. The box and basket in class 147 should be planted up as a matching pair.



Note that class 144 is for a hanging basket of **mixed** plants and flowers (up to 300mm diameter). It can contain foliage plants in addition to a variety of flowering plants. Class 145 is for a hanging basket of flowers. This can be just a single flower type or a variety (up to 400mm diameter).



For the dahlia classes 122-126, classification can be rather confusing for the exhibitor. Prior to judging, the judges may ask the steward to move an exhibit into a different class if they feel it has been incorrectly entered.

For vases of cut flowers, but **sweet pea classes** in particular (classes 139-142 and 149), it is important to set the stalks in the vase with the flowers facing in the desired orientation.

Since the use of green oasis has been outlawed by the RHS, alternative materials must be used (brown oasis, chicken wire, brown paper). Points are gained for sweet peas with the longest stems with highest number of flowers per stem. Sweet pea foliage (not attached to the stems) may be added to the bowl in class 139 to enhance the overall effect.



Any pot up to 40cm in diameter can be entered into the **Patio Pot Competition**, provided it has been planted up and cared for by the exhibitor. Entry into this class can be made via the online entry form, but contacting the Entries Secretary will help us with the allocation of space in the marquee



Floral Art

Exhibits must not exceed the allocated space/size. For the small scale exhibit, flowers and foliage should be chosen which are in proportion to the overall size of the exhibit (ie small flower heads and foliage leaves). Floral arrangements can make use of unusual containers and effective arrangements can be made using a relatively small number of flowers. Use brown, not green oasis.



Section 2 Cacti and Succulents

For classification of cacti and succulents and the rules for exhibiting and judging of this section, please see the British Cactus and Succulent Society Handbook 11th Edition (2021) – a copy is held by the SPW&F Horticultural Society's Chief Steward.



Section 3 Fruit and Vegetables

Choose specimens which are of similar size and shape, without blemish, ripe, but not over-ripe and and free from any pest damage. All exhibits should be displayed to best effect on a plate or board or on backing material or as specified for that class in the schedule. See page 7 of the schedule for the number/weight required for each item, together with its relative point value. Please note, the number required per class for our Show may differ from that specified in the RHS handbook. Where possible, label the exhibit with the name of the cultivar.

Collections: In classes 301, 302, 306, 307 and 330, exhibits will be judged according to the quality of each component in the collection and also their point value. For example; potatoes, large onions and long pointed carrots have a point value of 20, so would score more highly (if in good condition) than beetroot, dwarf beans and peppers which have a point value of 15. Ideally collections 301, 306 and 330 should contain the same number of each item as for individual classes (eg 5 potatoes, 3 carrots, nine beans etc. etc. for class 306), but it is at the judge's discretion. All other classes must contain the quantities as specified in the schedule.



Class 330- is for a collection of salad items, not more than 5 kinds. These can be anything you might find in a salad: lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, celery, peppers, baby beetroot, baby potatoes, spring onions, radish etc. (note the different point value for each item). See left hand photograph below.



Preparation of fruit and vegetables

Berries, such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, blueberries and hybrid berries/currants should be displayed with their stalks intact (by cutting the berries from the plants through the stalk above the fruit).

Currants (red/black/white) should be displayed as strigs (stalks with berries intact), with maximum points being given to the longest strigs with the highest number/ largest berries.

Apples, pears, plums and damsons should be of uniform shape and size, clean and free from blemishes, but not “polished”. Apples should be displayed “upside down” on the plate with stalks touching the plate. All fruit should be handled with care to avoid losing the natural “bloom”. This is particularly important for fruits such as grapes, plums and damsons.



Rhubarb – these should be crisp, uniform stalks with leaves trimmed to approx. 75mm above the top of the stalk. Display the 3 stalks with leaves pointing in alternate directions (see photograph). Since rhubarb is a stem, not a fruit, it is classified as a vegetable.



Cucumbers– two required; a well-matched pair in length and diameter, well developed right to the flower which may be attached. Long, smooth, straight specimens score most highly (max 18 points). Outdoor (ridge) cucumbers tend to be shorter with a rough (ridged) skin (max 15 points).



Tomatoes – select fruit that are ripe, but not over-ripe of uniform shape and size. Ensure you have the correct number (5 ordinary or nine small-fruited) each with calyx intact.



Peas and Beans – should be of similar size, shape and stage of development with stalks intact. The judge will open a pod (peas and broad beans) to check the number and quality of the peas/beans within (no maggots). The judge will break a runner bean or dwarf bean from an exhibit to check how young and crisp it is. Black backing material can be used to enhance the appearance of the exhibit. When displayed in lines, the tail of each bean should face the same direction.



Onions – choose ripe onions with narrow necks. Ensure they are entered in the correct class for their weight. Outer layers should be removed until a complete unbroken layer is reached (do not over-peel). Roots may be trimmed. The tops should be trimmed and tied down with raffia (or elastic if raffia not available). Onions can be displayed on rings or on a plate/dish of sand (especially suitable for small onions and shallots).



Potatoes – select tubers of similar size and shape, with shallow eyes, clear skin and no pest damage. Carefully wash to remove compost/soil, but do not scrub. Potatoes with even a small amount of colouration eg Kestrel are classified as coloured. Potatoes should be protected from light prior to judging to avoid greening.



Carrots and beetroot – choose firm, well-shaped specimens, free from pest damage and not green around the top (carrots). They should be washed to remove soil, but not scrubbed. Leaves should be trimmed to approx 75mm and can be bound if particularly bushy. Long pointed carrots score more highly (up to 20 points if in good condition) than other varieties eg. stump-rooted; 18 points.



Courgettes – should be young and tender of good uniform shape and colour (green or other). The ideal size is approx 150mm in length and 25-35mm diameter. Round varieties should be approx 75mm in diameter and well-matched.



Cabbage, Cauliflower and Lettuce -should be displayed with roots intact, but roots should be washed to remove excess soil. For lettuce, the root ball should be enclosed and sealed within a plastic bag to prevent the lettuce from wilting in the heat of the marquee. Cabbages (and crisp varieties of lettuce) should have a firm head and be free from pest damage. Some outer leaves can be removed, but points will be lost for over-trimming. Handle cabbages with care to avoid spoiling the natural “bloom”. The outer leaves of cauliflowers should be trimmed back level with the top of the curd. Curds should be protected from light prior to judging to prevent greening.



Herbs – should be displayed as a spray, but in a manner which prevents them from wilting during the Show, either in a vase of water or with their stems bound in damp material to keep the herbs hydrated.

Sweetcorn -2 cobs required which should be matched in size and shape, with the husks (leaves) intact. The leaves can be pulled down from the top quarter of the cob to reveal the grain. The judge will pull back the husks completely to check that the cobs are of good length and completely filled with well-developed grains.

Three eggs – these must be produced by the exhibitor’s own hens. They should be well-matched in size, colour and shape and displayed on straw in a bowl or basket. One egg from each exhibit will be broken into a saucer by the judge to check the size and colour of the yolk. Where possible, a label noting the breed of hen which laid the eggs should be displayed alongside the exhibit.



Hand-out fuchsia competition

In late April/ early May members can collect a small fuchsia from the Society in memory of Ray Birt who started a Fuchsia Hand-Out competition. Members are invited to grow the fuchsia on and bring it back on Show day. No pre-entry is required for this competition, just bring the fuchsia back, fill in an entry card (provided on the bench) and place it under the pot. The fuchsia judged to be the best (size, shape, quality, number/ quality of flowers), will win a silver teaspoon (provided by Ray). Please note, the final pot size should not exceed 15cm (6") diameter (you will see from the photograph below we have had a range of pots sizes in previous shows).



Section 5 Home Economics, Wine and Crafts and Arts

All entries into the jams, jellies and preserve classes must be made in plain glass jars (no trademark writing). The size of the jar is immaterial. Preparation must be under "sterile" conditions (see below) to prevent microbial contamination, since all exhibits will be sampled by the judges.

If screw-capped jars are used, eg for chutneys, the lids must new (ie not rusty, stained or with odours of previous contents). All jars should be sterilised and sealed in the following manner:

- Wash jars in hot soapy water, rinse well and place in a cool oven for at least half an hour.
- Pour hot jam/jelly/marmalade into the clean, sterilised, hot dry jars at once, filling to within $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6mm) of the top of the jar.
- Put a circle of waxed paper, waxed side down on the top of the jam or jelly. This helps prevent mould forming during storage.
- Wipe the rim clean with damp paper towel. Cover with tight-fitting lids or cellophane covers secured with elastic bands whilst the jam/jelly/marmalade is still hot. As the cellophane dries out it forms a tight seal on top of the jar.
- Leave to cool, wipe jars clean of any spills and then label with contents and date.

All entries in the baking section must be displayed on a suitable plate/board and covered with cling film or protective mesh since many food items attract wasps and ants. No exhibits may be staged in the marquee on Friday night prior to Show day as they can attract foxes and other wildlife. With the exception of the decorated cake, judges will cut and sample the exhibits to check their internal colour, structure and taste.

Entries into the bread classes are for hand-crafted items, made without the use of a bread maker.

For the "Women only" and "Men only" cake competition (classes 510 and 511), the recipe for the cake is printed in the schedule. The best cake from the two classes will receive the Devening Cup.



Homemade wines, cordials and beers can be exhibited in any size of bottle. Wines should be clear, without sediment. If the bottle has been sealed with a cork, the cork should be loosened ready for judging. All exhibits should bear a label describing the contents and date of bottling. The judge will provide glasses for sampling each exhibit.

The toffee liqueur in the photograph to the right proved very popular with the ants as well as with the judges!



Needlework and Crafts

Please read the schedule carefully to avoid your exhibit being ruled out “Not as Schedule” (NAS). We have changed the wording on two of the classes to read “predominantly of crochet” (class 519) and “predominantly of hand knitting” (class 521), since we previously had beautifully-made items ruled NAS (a crocheted jumper (Class 519) with knitted neckline, cuffs and welt and a colourful knitted blanket (Class 521) finished off with a crocheted edge). Hand-crafted items should be in pristine condition and must not have been worn or washed.

Ideally items of needlework and craft should not be staged in the marquee on Friday night as the marquee is prone to condensation dripping from the roof which could damage them. If items have to be left, they should be placed under a protective cover that can be easily removed the next day.

Where the class asks for “an item”, only one must be entered. If more than one item is entered into a class, the judge will select just one to judge. There is a class (520) for multiple items which make up a collection. Class 525 calls for three individual items, so there should be no more than three. Please note there is a space allocation for class 525 of 600mm which must not be exceeded. There are no space restrictions on any of the other classes.

Marks are frequently lost on the “finish & presentation” of the exhibits. There should be no loose ends. All threads should be sewn in and trimmed off – the back of the article should be as neat as the front!

Once judging is complete, the stewards will use coat hangers and various supports to display the crafts to best effect for public viewing.



In the Art classes there is a size restriction of 600mm x 600mm (including the frame) on all items. The exhibits must be prepared for hanging since they will be attached to a trellis against the marquee following judging. For the first time in 2023 there will be a class specifically for Junior artists (11-16 years).



Section 6 Juniors

The Junior section is divided into three age groups. To make it easy to find all the classes for a particular age group, the four categories : Horticulture, Floral Art, Cookery and Arts and Craft are set out together in the schedule for each age group. Consequently, class numbers do not run consecutively. Please be aware of this when staging the exhibits in the marquee.

It is acknowledged that adult supervision will be necessary when the use of a cooker is required for an exhibit or for assembling the animal models with cocktail sticks (particularly for the youngest children), but other than that, the exhibit should be the work of the child exhibiting.

For the miniature garden in a seed tray (classes 603 and 607), all components should be natural materials eg. grass, moss, wood, stones, shells, flowers, berries and seeds, with no plastic items.

It is advisable to read the schedule well in advance of the Show, since some classes are for plants and vegetables grown from seed by the Junior exhibitor.



Section 7 Photographic Competition

The rules for the competition are set out in the Schedule. Photographs must have been taken by the exhibitor and must not be digitally enhanced or manipulated.

Please do not leave photographs in the marquee overnight prior to the Show (unless in a protective wallet) as the marquee is prone to condensation dripping from the roof which could damage them. All photographs should be labelled on the back with the exhibitor's name and appropriate class number and left with the entry card. Stewards will mount the photographs in the correct class with the corresponding card prior to judging by a member of the Stoke Poges Photographic Society.