

Exhibiting Vegetables, Fruits, Herbs & Field Crops



**This publication has been prepared by the Baxter
County Master Gardeners as a guide in selecting and
preparing horticultural exhibits for display at the
Baxter County Fair.**



**MASTER
GARDENER**

UofA UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
Cooperative Extension Service

Exhibiting Vegetables, Fruits, Herbs & Field Crops

Events such as county fairs offer awards to gardeners who enjoy growing and exhibiting horticultural crops.

Horticultural exhibits should be educational. They should show what can be produced when improved cultural methods are used, when insects and diseases are controlled, and when good seed and plant selection are used. If possible, list the variety of the exhibit on tags for the benefit of others viewing the display.

System of Judging

The Baxter County Fair utilizes the dual-merit system (also known as the Danish system) for judging horticultural entries. Each exhibit is evaluated against standards for the class, as opposed to being judged against or compared to other exhibits. Thus there can be multiple awards – Blue Ribbon (1st Place), Red Ribbon (2nd Place), and White Ribbon (3rd Place) - within each class.

Blue Ribbon winners receive cash premiums paid by the Baxter County Fair Association. A Blue Ribbon award for an exhibit earns a set number of points; the point value of exhibits varies by class and is indicated in the Fair Book. The cash value for points is established each year by the Baxter County Fair Board.

Best of Show is selected from Blue Ribbon winners. The Best of Show award pays an additional cash premium as indicated in the Fair Book.

General Rules of The Baxter County Fair

The Baxter County Fair Book lists rules and regulations to be followed by exhibitors. This booklet is a supplement to the Fair Book. Fair Books are available at the Baxter County Cooperative Extension Service, 216 East 6th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653 (870) 425-2335

Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements - Division J

See Fair Book for information on the proper number of specimens required for each class. An insufficient number of specimens will disqualify the entry.

All entries to be exhibited must have been grown by the exhibitor.

Exhibits must be free of insects or disease that may infect or damage other exhibits. All exhibits must be inspected during the exhibit registration process.

No artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray, oiling, or wiring is allowed.

Cut Herbs must be displayed in a clean, clear container with a narrow neck to support the stem.

Cut Herb exhibits must have all foliage below the water level of the display container removed.

All Cut Herb entries must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

See *Exhibiting Tips* section in this booklet for specific guidelines for exhibiting crops.

Selecting and Preparing Specimens for Exhibit

Crops are produced over a long period of time and often must be started at the correct time to be mature when the Fair occurs. It is wise to have several planting dates to insure that mature specimens will be ready at fair time.

Exhibitors should keep the following factors in mind when selecting and preparing specimens for exhibit.

Quality and Condition

- 1) Specimens of food crops should be of edible maturity, not overripe, shriveled or wilting.
- 2) Specimens should be free of injury from disease, insects or mechanical means.
- 3) Color should be uniform and typical for the product.
- 4) Specimen shape should be typical of the variety.

Size

When selecting items for display, remember that “bigger is not necessarily better.” Too large may indicate coarseness and poor quality in some specimens. Medium to slightly above medium is desired. Specimens should be of marketable size - typical of the variety.

Type

Specimens selected should be typical of the variety. This may be indicated by size, shape and color.

Uniformity

One of the most obvious aspects of a display is uniformity. Uniformity is very important in “blue ribbon” quality exhibits. Specimens should be uniform in size, shape and color as well as in their texture, quality and degree of maturity.

Size – All specimens in one exhibit should be uniform in size. Specimens should also be of a size typical for the variety – not too large or too small.

Shape - Select the typical shape for which the variety is known. If possible, provide the specimen variety name. If an unusual variety is exhibited, it is recommended that a note describing the variety be placed on the exhibit tag.

Color - Color should be uniform for all specimens. Color should be typical for the variety. Specimens with more intense or deeper color usually are preferred.

Maturity - Specimens should be at similar stages of maturity. Prime maturity is when the specimen is at the best stage for eating or storing, as the case may be.

Presentation - Specimens should be presented uniformly. For example, all beans should be lined up in a uniform manner - stems on one end.

Condition

The condition is a measure of how the crop has been handled.

Freshness - Specimens should be harvested and prepared as close to the exhibiting date as possible to prevent wilting and shriveling.

Cleanliness - Refer to the *Exhibiting Tips* section of this booklet for cleaning recommendations for each type of crop. Specimens should be free from soil, dust, and spray residues as well as other foreign matter, including oils or waxes used as polishing agents. Many vegetables and fruits lose quality if washed. Do not wash specimens for exhibit unless absolutely necessary. Use a very soft cloth or brush to lightly remove any soil. Washing may remove the desirable waxy “bloom” on some specimens (see below). Washing gives an unnatural “scrubbed” appearance on some specimens. Avoid skinning and bruising specimens when cleaning them. Any dried flowers or blossoms should be removed. Closely follow the individual cleaning instructions listed in the *Exhibiting Tips* section of this booklet.

Bloom - Some specimens have a natural waxy coating on the surface. Clean this produce carefully so that the bloom is not removed.

Trimming - Specimens should be neatly and properly trimmed. Refer to the *Exhibiting Tips* section of this booklet for trimming recommendations for each type of crop; closely follow the individual trimming recommendations listed. At time of harvest, stems and tops should be trimmed longer than recommended; this allows for shrinkage and shriveling. The exhibitor should delay trimming to the recommended length until just before transporting the specimens to the Fair for exhibit. Use a sharp knife or kitchen shears to trim.

General Tips

Refer to the *Exhibiting Tips* section of this booklet for individual recommendations for each type of crop.

It is wise to harvest and bring extra specimens to registration in case of damage during preparation or transport. Exhibits must have the proper number of fruits or vegetables to be accepted; an insufficient number of specimens will disqualify the entry.

Do not place specimens in a ziplock or plastic bag as this causes the produce to sweat inside the bag, losing moisture.

Do not leave specimens in a hot car for any period of time.

Handle specimens carefully to avoid mechanical injury. A common source of mechanical damage is fingernail punctures to the ripe skin during picking or handling.

When harvesting fruits and vegetables, do not twist the fruit or vegetable off of the plant as this damages the stem. Instead, use a sharp knife or scissors to cut the stem of the fruit or vegetable. Cut the stem longer than is specified in the schedule

Plates and bowls are provided for displaying exhibits; this is done so that all exhibits are consistently displayed. During the exhibit registration process, exhibitors arrange their specimens on a plate or bowl in the way that they wish to have them displayed. Decorative, non-fair supplied plates and bowls may not be used in exhibits.

Selecting and Preparing Cut Herbs for Exhibit

Selecting Herbs

Select specimens free of damage from insect, disease or mechanical means. Select specimens typical of the variety. Select specimens as nearly alike in all respects as possible. The specimens should be similar in size, color, form, stage of development or maturity, foliage, and bloom if present

Herbs may be exhibited in bloom. If any of the specimens are in bloom, all specimens should be in bloom. If blooming herbs are selected, select herbs with flowers in prime condition having no wilted, faded or brown-tipped petals.

Some herbs such as sage and basil, bruise easily. Handle carefully to avoid bruising.

Select herbs that will hold up well in a hot room.

Cutting Herbs

Cut herbs the evening before registration day to allow time for proper conditioning. If unable to cut herbs the evening before, cut early in the morning on registration day.

Cut stems with a sharp knife or shears. Cut stems on a slant to enable stems to absorb more water. Cut stems longer than required for exhibit. Cut extra stems in case of damage.

Stand herbs in a bucket of cool water as they are cut from the garden; place indoors in a cool, dark place. Re-cut stems indoors at a 45-degree angle. Cut stems under water to prevent air from entering the stem and interfering with water uptake. Place only an inch or so of the stem under the water to cut it.

Conditioning Herbs

Conditioning is an important factor in successfully exhibiting cut plant materials. The purpose of conditioning is to allow the cut plant material to absorb as much water as possible. Plant material that is not conditioned prior to exhibition appears dried out or wilted; the exhibit may fail or collapse before it is ever judged. Proper conditioning will also prolong the life of the exhibit.

Stand cut specimens in lukewarm water to a depth of half their length overnight in a cool, dark place. This allows the stem, leaves, and blossoms (if present) to absorb water to enable them to retain optimum beauty.

Some cut plant materials will benefit from complete submersion in water, while others may discolor if submerged in water. Experiment with different approaches to conditioning the herbs to be displayed to determine the best method. This will also help determine which herbs are well-suited for exhibit.

Some plants with fleshy fibrous stems will last longer if about ½ inch of their cut ends are dipped in boiling water before being placed in a container. Woody stems should be peeled back and split to allow the stem to absorb more water. Plants that exude a milky substance should be sealed by searing the cut end, using a flame or by dipping it into powdered alum.

Preparing Herbs

Refer to the *Exhibiting Tips* section of this booklet for individual recommendations for each type of herb.

Specimens should be clean & free of spray, dust, or soil residue. If necessary, gently wash foliage and/or flowers (if present) to remove dust, rain splatters, spray residue, and insects.

Specimens must be free of artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray, oiling, or wiring. Specimens should be free of disease, insect or mechanical damage.

The morning of registration day, cut stems again under water at a 45-degree angle. Stem length should be long enough to support and show off the herb above the container. Remove all foliage below the water level of exhibition container; submerged foliage decays, creating foul water.

Place specimens in a clean, clear container with a narrow opening to support the stem. Select a container that is stable and will not fall over with the exhibit; glass is preferred due to its stability. Bottles such as 1 pint vinegar bottles or 1 pint cranberry juice bottles with the labels and the glue removed make good display containers.

If necessary, stems may be supported by an inconspicuous prop in the container's neck to enable the specimens to stand straight. A small strip of clear bubble wrap or saran wrap works well, but it must be inconspicuous. A clear floral preservative may be added to the water to extend the freshness of the exhibit.

Cut Herb entries must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

Final Check Before Registration

The Fair Book should be checked for any special rules concerning horticultural exhibits. Also, check the *Exhibiting Tips* in this publication.

After arriving at the Fair, examine exhibits, wiping to remove dust collected during transportation. Carefully look over the exhibit for any unnoticed blemishes, defective or undesirable specimens. Count to make sure the proper number of specimens are present per show rules and that all regulations have been met. (It is wise to bring extra specimens to the Fair.)

What the Judges Will Be Looking For

In general, the following factors are considered by most horticultural judges when evaluating exhibits. Sometimes this is called a "scorecard" and the judge assigns points to each factor or does this mentally as he/she evaluates the specimens. These factors are listed from the most important to the least important - in the judge's mind.

Condition: Free from insect, disease or mechanical damage or other forms of damage including dirt or stains. Properly trimmed and cleaned. (30%)

Quality: Exhibits that are at their "peak of perfection" for eating or harvesting. Specimens should be crisp, firm and mature but not overripe. (25%)

Uniformity: Uniform in size, shape and color. Attractiveness of an exhibit is enhanced by all specimens being uniform. (20%)

Typical of Variety: Specimens should be typical of the type and variety. Labels indicating kinds and variety are desirable but not mandatory. When exhibiting unusual or non-typical types, it is recommended that the entry be labeled and described. (15%)

Size: Size of specimens should conform to market demands. In general, very large specimens may be undesirable since they are not as tender or flavorful as more medium sized specimens. Don't select specimens on the basis of size alone. (10%)

Exhibiting Tips

The following pages provide specific guidelines for individual vegetables, fruits, herbs and field crops. Included in these guidelines are:

- ◆ Number of Specimens to be Exhibited
- ◆ Desirable Traits
- ◆ Tips for Harvesting, Preparing and Keeping Fresh
- ◆ Undesirable Traits

Glossary

A glossary of horticulture related terms is included on pages 17, 18 and 19.

EXHIBITING TIPS

VEGETABLES

| Vegetable: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping produce fresh. | Undesirable |
|---|---|--|--|
| Beans (5) Bush Snap Bush Wax Pole Snap | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and stage of maturity. Seed should be 1/4 to 1/8 inch in diameter. All pods either straight or curved. | May be wiped clean but should not be washed. 1/4 inch of stem should be displayed. All arranged in the same direction. | Overly large seeds. Broken ends, blemishes. Stringy and/or tough indicating bean is too old. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Beets (3) | Dark red or yellow, smooth, symmetrical, uniform roots. Mature but not overgrown. Free of side roots, cracks and blemishes. Firm, crisp flesh. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Dig roots to avoid mechanical damage. Tops should be uniformly trimmed 1.5 to 2 inches above crown. Taproot must be intact while side roots should be carefully removed. Beets are easily skinned and should be soaked in water for a short time to avoid skinning and bruising while cleaning. Wash carefully but do not scrub. Root crops can be stored in a loose plastic bag or sprinkled daily with fresh water and kept in the vegetable crisper. To remove sweat caused by refrigeration bring beet to room temperature and wipe dry. | Pithy or coarsely textured roots. Blocky or angular roots, rough skin, missing taproot. Over-mature specimens. |
| Cantaloupe (1) | Size, shape, color and netting typical of variety. Smooth separation scar. | Harvest when vine separates from stem easily (full slip stage). Stem scar dry and free from decay. Rich, sweet aroma. Let soil dry and then brush clean. Exhibit without stem. | Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Soft or cracked, discolored, or immature. Sunscald. Lack of netting if netted type. |
| Carrots (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Symmetrical with bright, deep-orange color and smooth skin. Firm and crisp flesh. | Dig to avoid damage. Taproot must be present. Side roots should be carefully trimmed. Tops should be uniformly trimmed 1 - 1.5 inches above crown. Wash carefully but do not scrub and damage the outer skin. | Forked or misshapen roots, purple or green color (green shoulders). Side roots or root hairs. Cracks. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Cucumbers (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Firm and crisp. Picklers should be about 1.5 - 2.5 inches in diameter and 5-6 inches long. Slicers should be about 2-3 inches in diameter and 6-9 inches long, though longer types should be typical of variety. | Cut from vine leaving 1/4 to 1/2 inch stem. Wipe gently to clean and remove spines. Wash only if necessary. Remove dried blossoms. Do not wax or oil. | Yellowing indicates over-ripeness. Dull, oversized, pointed, misshapen or crooked specimen. Unevenness in diameter. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Eggplant (1) | Uniform solid color typical of variety. Bright green calyx or cap. Blossom scar as small as possible. Shape typical of variety. | Trim stems to 1 1/2 inches on show day. Calyx should be clean and free of brown edges or patches. Wipe clean, but do not wash. Eggplant bruises easily. Handle gently. Do not oil to increase shine. Polish lightly with a soft cloth. | Immature or over-mature, bronzing or greening, soft, dull appearance, dark spots indicative of bruises or decay. Overly large specimens. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

VEGETABLES (Continued)

| Vegetable: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping produce fresh. | Undesirable |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Garlic (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color. Plump bulbs with dry necks. Symmetrical. | Trim necks to 1 inch. Trim roots to 1/2 inch. Remove outer sheaths if loose, broken or discolored. Cure in warm, airy, dark place. Do not wash. | Double bulbs. Loose, broken or discolored outer sheaths. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Gourds Large (1) Small (3) | Mature with hard, firm rinds, Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Neatly cut stems. Wipe clean but do not wax. Remove leaves. | Scratches, scabs, blemishes and soft skin. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Kohlrabi (3) | Solid, crisp, well-shaped and tender. Should be 2-3 inches in diameter. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Remove all but the top 2-5 leaves and trim these evenly 2-3 inches long. Trim roots 1/2 inch below ball. Rinse or wipe gently to clean. | Large, tough, dull-skinned, woody specimens. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Leeks (3) | Long, thick, firm with well-blanching stems. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and length. | Trim tops to overall length of 12-18 inches. Trim roots to 1/4 inch. | Overly peeled stems. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Lima Beans (5) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape color and stage of maturity. Full size, dark green pods that are tender and fresh. Seeds should be well developed. | Wipe clean with a soft cloth, do not wash. Stems should be 1/4 to 1/2 inch long. All arranged in the same direction. | Misshapen or poorly filled pods. Yellow, dried or rusted. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Okra (3) Green Other | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color, diameter and length. | Trim stems to 1/2 inch. Gently brush clean. Do not wash pods. | Large, over-mature, leathery or woody pods. Discoloration. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Onions (3) Red White Yellow | Solid bulbs. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color (bright). At least one clean, tight, dry outer scale. Small neck (1/2 inch or less) | Cure well in warm, airy, dark place. Smell onion to make sure no rot is present. Trim dried, twisted stem to 1 inch. Intact basal roots trimmed uniformly to 1/2 inch. Do not wash. Remove outer scales if loose, broken or discolored. | Slick, over-peeled appearance. Soft necks. Sprouts or bruises. Double bulbs. Loose outer dry skins. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Onions Green (3) | Dark green leaves with long, straight, slender, white shanks with no developed bulb. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and diameter. | Trim green tops to 3-4 inches. Trim roots to 1/2 inch. Diameter 1/2 - 3/4 inch. Remove outer wrapper skin to expose white shank. | Cracked or discolored shanks. Dry or yellow leaves. Poorly colored stems. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Parsnips (3) | Clean, medium to large sized, straight, smooth, well-shaped roots with light, even-colored skin and firm flesh. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Trim stem to 1 - 1.5 inches above crown. May be carefully washed, but do not scrub which may injure outer skin. Taproot should be left intact. | Soft or woody roots. Green shoulder. Discoloration. Side roots. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

VEGETABLES (Continued)

| Vegetable: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping produce fresh. | Undesirable |
|--|--|--|--|
| Peas (5) Purple Hull Black-eyed Black-eyed Crowder Cream Cream Crowder | Unshelled and dried. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Pick pods carefully and handle as little as possible to avoid removing the waxy coating or "bloom". Stems trimmed evenly to 1/4 inch. Do not wash. | Over-maturity as indicated by yellowing of the pods or toughness and bitterness in the peas. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Peas (5) English Green | Large, plump, bright green pods well filled with seeds at the eating stage. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Pick pods carefully and handle as little as possible to avoid removing the waxy coating or "bloom". Stems trimmed evenly to 1/4 inch. Do not wash. | Over-maturity as indicated by yellowing of the pods or toughness and bitterness in the peas. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Peppers (3) Anaheim Banana, Hot Banana, Sweet Bell Cayenne Cherry Habanero Jalapeno Ornamental Pimento Poblano Serrano Tabasco Other | Fresh, firm and symmetrical. Bright in appearance. Deep in color, glossy. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Most peppers ripen from one color to another and are usable in either stage - choose one solid color. | Cut from plant with long stems left on pepper. Leave stems untrimmed until last minute to slow moisture loss. Then cut stem squarely and uniformly to 1/2 -1 inch long. Wipe clean with a soft cloth - do not wash. Do not wax or oil. Exhibit blocky type with stem end up. | Soft, pliable, shriveled, dull or pale. Misshapen (though some hot peppers are naturally wrinkled or bent). Traces of contrasting color. Blemishes, cracks, scabbiness or sunscald. Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Potatoes (3) Red, White Other | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Smooth. Eyes shallow. Medium size preferred. Skin should be firm, well cured, free of soil and not peeling. | Remove vine 2 weeks before harvest. Dig tubers carefully to avoid cuts and bruises. Brush or wipe with a soft cloth after the tubers are dry. Do not wash or scrub. Store in a cool, dark place. | Greening or sunburned. Growth cracks, second-growth bumps. Enlarged white lenticels (breathing pores) from poorly drained soil. Knobby irregularities. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Potatoes Sweet (3) | Medium size, well shaped roots. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Dig roots early to cure well before exhibiting. Skin must be firm, well cured and clean. Clean by brushing or wipe with a soft, dry cloth when the soil has dried. Leave stems untrimmed until last minute to avoid moisture loss. On the day of the fair, trim leaving a short stem and about 1 inch of taproot. Remove all "hair" roots. | Crooked or showing corky patches. Very slender roots. Broken stems. "Tail" roots back into the main flesh. Sprouts, bruises. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

VEGETABLES (Continued)

| Vegetable: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping produce fresh. | Undesirable |
|--|--|---|---|
| Pumpkin Field (1) Giant (1) Pie (1) | Mature with a rich color characteristic of variety. Symmetrical. Thick flesh. Hard rind with smooth, evenly grooved surfaces. Stands upright. Field types: Larger than 12 inches in diameter and weigh 10 pounds or more. Pie types: About 7 inches in diameter. Giant types: As large and heavy as possible. | Harvest when a deep solid color. Select symmetrical round or oval fruits without a distinct flat side. If light for size or flat on one side, flesh is probably too thin. Cut stem carefully to 4-5 inches. Stems attached and neatly trimmed at point where attached to vine. Do not carry by stem. Wipe clean but do not wash or polish away natural wax on the surface. Harvest giant pumpkins as late as possible to obtain large specimen. | Thin flesh. Scratches, scabs, blemishes or soft skin. A distinctly flat side. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Radishes (3) | Smooth, firm, bright-colored, free of blemishes. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and diameter. | Should be washed. Trim tops evenly to 1 inch above crown. Remove any yellowed leaves. Leave the taproot intact. Refrigerate until ready to exhibit. | Spongy, wilted or poorly colored. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Squash - Summer Cushaw (1) Scallop (3) Patty-Pan (3) Yellow (3) Zucchini (3) | Small to medium-sized, uniform and typical of variety in shape and color. Cushaw (a small species of pumpkin listed and exhibited as a squash) should have hard skin and prominent white and green (or orange depending on variety) streaking. | Harvest close to time of exhibit and hold in refrigeration. Select small to medium size fruits when rind is soft and easily punctured with the thumbnail. Wipe clean - avoid washing. Trim stem to 1/2 inch on day of show. Remove leaves. | Large size, over-mature, missing stems and blemishes. Tough or hard rind. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Fingernail puncture marks. |
| Squash -Winter Acorn (1) Butternut (1) Hubbard (1) Spaghetti (1) | Mature medium-sized with hard, firm rind difficult to pierce with thumbnail. Typical of variety in size, shape and color. Acorn: Dark skin with deep yellow ground spot. Butternut: Smooth dark tan skin with thick neck in proportion to bulb end. Hubbard: Large round to oval with neck at stem end, ribbed. Spaghetti: Light tan to golden yellow. | Stem attached and trimmed to 1-3 inches. Harvest Hubbard with stem brown and corky. | Soft immature specimen. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Sweet Corn (3) | Husks should be fresh and green, fitting firmly around the ear. Ears should be plump, well-filled to the tip. Uniform and typical of variety in size, color, and shape. Kernels should be tightly packed in prime, young milk stage. | Harvest as close to exhibiting as possible. Remove loose outer husk. Strip husks on one side to expose kernels. Trim brown silks back to 1 inch from tip of husk. Trim excess shank at base of ear evenly to 1 inch. Sprinkle with water occasionally before showing to preserve freshness. | Poorly filled ears. Yellow husks. Immature, watery kernels. Over-mature, doughy, mealy kernels. Worm, bird or insect damage. Disease or mechanical damage. Insect frass (debris or excrement). Soil, dust or spray residue. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

VEGETABLES (Continued)

| Vegetable: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping produce fresh. | Undesirable |
|---|---|--|--|
| Tomato - Cherry (3) Grape (3) | Mature. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Free from blemishes. | Remove stems. Wipe gently. Display stem end down. | Immature or overripe. Blemishes or cracking. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Tomato - Large Pink (3) Red (3) Yellow (3) | Firm and evenly colored. Mature. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Remove stems, wipe gently and display stem side down. Blossom scar varies by variety - generally smaller size is preferred. | Poor color, sunscald, cracks, blemishes, over-mature. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Tomato Pear (3) Plum (3) | Mature. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Free of blemishes. | Remove stems. Wipe gently. | Poor color, blemishes, cracks, misshapen fruit. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Turnips (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size and shape with matched color patterns. Smooth, well-formed and tender-fleshed. | Trim tops to 1 - 1.5 inches above crown. Carefully remove small side roots but leave taproot intact. May be carefully washed but do not scrub and injure outer skin. | Soft, spongy roots. Overgrown, pithy or coarsely textured roots. Irregularly shaped or forked. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Watermelon Large (1) Icebox (1) | Size, shape and color typical of variety. Symmetrical. Dry curl on stem next to fruit. Yellowish ground spot. Firm rind. Large watermelons should weigh over 10 pounds. Icebox watermelons should weigh under 10 pounds. | Yellowish ground spot indicates ripeness. Wipe with soft cloth to clean. Do not remove waxy cover. Large watermelons - trim stem to 1.5 - 3 inches. Icebox watermelons - trim stem to 1-2 inches. | Misshapen. Sunburn or blemishes. Over or under-mature. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

FRUITS

| Fruit: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Apples Arkansas Black (3) | Dark red with a natural waxy shine. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and coloring. Natural length of stems may vary. | Raise the fruit to one side with your fingers and twist with your wrist; if ripe, the fruit will release easily. Do not shake the fruit from the tree – the spur may come off with the fruit. The stem may pull off the fruit, breaking the skin and opening it up for rot. Do not polish or remove the natural bloom. | Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Leaves or foliage attached. Fruit spurs adhering to stems. Broken stems. Lipped stems. Overmature. |
| Apples Golden Delicious (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and coloring. In Arkansas, the fruit may not mature to golden or yellow color. The skin of many selections may be marked with a russetting. | (See Arkansas Black) | (See Arkansas Black) |

EXHIBITING TIPS

FRUITS (continued)

| Fruit: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|--|--|--|---|
| Apples Jonathan (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and coloring. | (See Arkansas Black) | (See Arkansas Black) |
| Apples Red Delicious (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. In Arkansas this variety is subject to corking, lacks typical conic shape and has poor washed-out color development. | (See Arkansas Black) | (See Arkansas Black) |
| Apples Winesap (3) | Dark red color. Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | (See Arkansas Black) | (See Arkansas Black) |
| Apples Other (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | (See Arkansas Black) | (See Arkansas Black) |
| Grapes (3 bunches) | Firm, compact and uniformly ripened. Bunches uniform in size and color. Deep color indicates good quality and sugar content. All grapes must be firmly attached to the stem. Plump, fresh-looking fruit. | Preserve as much of the natural bloom as possible. Handle gently to avoid skin breaks. Rinse quickly to remove dust. Do not soak as fruits may split from absorbing water. Stems may be cut to uniform length. | Broken skins. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Figs (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and maturity. | Handle carefully to prevent bruising. Stems should be attached. | Broken skins. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Peaches (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and maturity. Yellow skin blushed with red. Diameter should be 2.5 to 3.5 inches. | Handle carefully to prevent bruising. Stems should be removed. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Overripe or green. |
| Pears (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape, color and maturity. | Handle carefully to prevent bruising. Stems should be attached. Natural length of stems may vary. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Plums (3) | Uniform in size, shape, color and maturity. Typical of variety. Plump, fresh-looking fruit. | Handle carefully to prevent bruising. Stems should be attached. Natural length of stems may vary. Preserve as much of the natural bloom as possible. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Overripe or green. |
| Raspberries Black or Red (20 on Plate) | Uniform in size, shape, color and ripeness. | Clean, but do not wash. Remove dust with soft brush. | Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Overripe or underripe. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

HERBS

| Herb: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|---|---|---|---|
| Basil Purple Sweet (3 stems) | Well-developed leaves. Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Color and shape typical of variety. | Cut stems to 6-10 inches. If dirty, gently rinse in cool water - basil bruises easily. Exhibit in container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Bay, Sweet (1 stem Minimum of 3 leaves) | Well-developed leaves. Color and shape typical of variety. | Exhibit one stem with at least 3 leaves. Gently rinse in cool water - Exhibit in container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Chives (3 stems) | Well-developed leaves. Leaves uniform in size and development. Color and shape typical of variety. | Cut stems to 6-8 inches. Gently rinse in cool water. Exhibit in container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Chives, Garlic (3 stems) | Well-developed leaves. Leaves uniform in size and development. Color and shape typical of variety. | Cut stems to 4 inches or more. Gently rinse in cool water. Exhibit in container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Dill (3 stems) | Stems and umbels (seed heads) should be uniform in size, color and maturity. | Dill may be exhibited at either of two stages: (1) green umbels or (2) mature, green/brown or brown umbels. Cut stems to 10-12 inches. Exhibit green (stage 1) specimens in container of water with leaves removed below water line. Exhibit mature (stage 2) specimens on plates with stems tied loosely at base and again near seed head. | Dry, overmature stems, losing seeds. Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Fennel Common Bronze (3 stems) | Stems and umbels (seed heads) should be uniform in size, color and maturity. | (See Dill) | (See Dill) |
| Lavender English/ Common French (3 stems) | Tender green (not woody) stems. Stems and leaves should be uniform in size and development. Color uniform and typical of variety. | Snip stems to 4-6 inches. Gently rinse in cool weather. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves below the water line removed. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Marjoram (3 stems) | Tender (not woody) stems, uniform in size and development. Color and shape uniform and typical of variety. | Snip stems to 3-5 inches. Rinse gently in cool water. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves below the water line removed. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

HERBS (Continued)

| Herb: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|--|--|---|--|
| Mint Peppermint Spearmint Other (3 stems) | Tender (not woody) stems. Leaves and stems uniform in size and development. Blooms may be present but should be uniform in development. Color, shape and texture uniform and typical of variety. | Cut stems to 6-10 inches. Rinse gently in cool water if dirty. Display in a container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Oregano Common/ Greek (3 stems) | Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Color, shape and texture uniform and typical of variety. | Cut stems to 4-8 inches. If needed, rinse gently in cool water. Leaves bruise easily. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Parsley Curly Italian/ Flat Leaf (3 stems) | Tender leaves and straight stems uniform in size and development. Color and shape uniform and typical of variety. | Trim stems evenly to 4-8 inches. If necessary, clean by swishing in water. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Rosemary Common Creeping (3 stems) | Tender green (not woody) stems. Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Color uniform and typical of variety. | Snip stems to 4-6 inches. Rinse gently in cool water. Exhibit in container with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Sage Garden/ Common Golden Purple (3 stems) | Tender (not woody) stems. Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Color and shape uniform and typical of variety. | Cut stems to 6-10 inches. If leaves are dirty, wash gently in cool water. Sage bruises easily. Exhibit in container with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Tarragon (3 stems) | Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Color and shape uniform and typical of variety. | Cut stems to 3-8 inches. If dirty, rinse gently in cool water. Exhibit in container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Thyme Common Lemon (3 stems) | Stems and leaves uniform in size and development. Tender green (not woody) stems. Color uniform and typical of variety. | Snip stems to 3-5 inches. Rinse gently in cool water. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves below the water line removed. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Miscellaneous Herbs (3 stems) | Give the name and or/variety. For herbs grown for seed, see instructions for Dill. | Snip stems to length that will provide a good specimen. Exhibit in a container of water with leaves removed below the water line. | Soil, dust or spray residue. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

FIELD CROPS

| Field Crop: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Grain Sorghum (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Harvest as early as possible to prevent losses from birds, insects, molds and adverse weather conditions. | Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| Popcorn (3 ears) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Pick ears when dried. Shuck the husks at once and hang the ears in a warm room to cure for about a month. If weather is cloudy and wet, cut and stack stalks in a cool, dry place until the corn dries. | Insect, disease, mold or mechanical damage. Missing kernels. |
| Sunflower Tame (1) | Uniform, plump seeds. | Cover head with netting to protect from birds. Cut 2 foot stem and when dry, trim to 6-8 inches depending on tilt of seed head. Leave on cross blossoms and dried leaves around edge. | Missing seeds, insect or bird damage, or cobwebs. |
| Sweet Sorghum (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. | Harvest as close to exhibiting as possible. | Insect, disease or mechanical damage. |
| White Corn (3) Yellow Corn (3) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Half of the husk removed. | Pick ears when dried. Remove outer husks. Pull and tie inner husks back to expose kernels. | Insect, disease, mold or mechanical damage. Missing kernels. |
| Ornamental Corn (3 ears) | Uniform and typical of variety in size, shape and color. Half of the husk removed. | Pick ears when husks begin to dry. Remove outer husks. Pull and tie inner husks back to expose kernels. Hang until dry. | Insect, disease, mold or mechanical damage. Missing kernels. |

EXHIBITING TIPS

PEANUTS

| Peanut: No. to Exhibit | Desirable | Tips for harvesting, preparing and keeping fresh. | Undesirable |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Peanuts 1 – 2 stalks | Mature well formed pods with well developed veins. | Dig plants after they have matured (begun to turn yellow). Remove dry loose soil. Cure by hanging in warm dry place for one week. Remove remaining soil. | Immature pods. Lack of veining on pods. Dirty specimens. Insect, disease, mold or mechanical damage. |

Glossary

Ball

The edible enlarged stem of a vegetable. Example: Kohlrabi.

Base

The lower portion of the edible part of a vegetable. Example: The base of an onion is the area from which the roots grow.

Blemish

Bruise, russetting, any injury or malformation that detracts from the appearance of the exhibit. Spots on foliage or blooms are blemishes.

Blotch

Usually a disease characterized by dark spots or irregular markings on the leaves or fruit.

Bud

Immature flowers or leaves. Example: Flower head of broccoli or cauliflower.

Bulb

See Scale.

Calyx (Cap)

The green leaf-like part surrounding the stem where it is attached to the berry. Example: Strawberry.

Class

A group of exhibits conforming to the same specifications in a show.

Color

The hue, clarity, intensity of coloring in relation to the usual for the variety.

Condition

The physical state of the flower, fruit, vegetable or plant at the time of judging. Refers to cleanliness, freedom from blemish, disease, tears, insect damage and/or mechanical damage.

Cultural Perfection

The development of horticulture material to the peak of its potential. "Would I buy this fruit, vegetable or flower at this stage of maturity for my own use?"

Curd

The white edible undeveloped flowering portion of cauliflower.

Disqualify

The removal of an exhibit from competition because of some major defects.

Flesh

The solid enlarged part of a vegetable plant. Example: Beet and carrot roots and kohlrabi ball.

Foliage

The leaves of a plant.

Fruit

Botanically, any seed-bearing part of a plant.

Ground Spot

The area of watermelon that rests on the soil. It is white until maturity when it turns yellow.

Head

The enlarged edible bud of the flowering portion of a vegetable plant borne at the end of the stem. Example: Head of cabbage (composed of overlapping leaves), head of broccoli or cauliflower (composed of hundreds of undeveloped or immature flowers).

Horticulture

The art and science of growing fruits, vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants.

Insect Frass

Debris or excrement of an insect.

Lobes

The more or less distinct divisions rounded at one end that make up certain vegetables. Example: Most blocky or bell-shaped peppers have three or four lobes which are prominent opposite the stem end.

Milk Stage

The immature stage of sweet corn kernels when they are plump and filled with a thin milky juice.

Neck

Area where the leaf or stem is attached to the root or the bulb of a vegetable. Example: The neck of an onion is just above the bulb; the neck of a beet is the small area at the top of the root from which the leaves grow.

Root

As used here, the underground edible part of a vegetable. Example: Carrot or beet.

Russetting

A brownish roughened area on the skin of fruit or vegetables caused by injury.

Scale

A thickened leaf. Example: Bulbs such as onions are made up of many thickened overlapping scales. Several of the outer scales become dry as an onion bulb matures. These protect the bulb from disease, injury and drying out.

Shape

The overall conformation (make-up) and proportions based primarily on trueness to variety.

Shank

Short branch of the main stem. Example: The ear of sweet corn is borne at the end of the shank.

Shell

A hard, tough outer skin of a squash or pumpkin.

Shoulder

Area below the neck or the point of the attachment to the stem. Example: Shoulder of a beet, pepper, carrot.

Size

The dimensions of a plant, flower, fruit or vegetable in relation to the normal for the variety. (A twelve pound sweet potato would be too large while a one pound watermelon would be too small.)

Specimen

A single fruit, vegetable, plant or bloom.

Stalk

As used here - another name for stem. Example: The heads of broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage are borne at the end of the stalk.

Sunscald

A whitish area, usually on the shoulder of a vegetable, caused by direct exposure to the hot sun.

Tuber

Enlarged underground stem. Example: Irish potato.

Type

A classification which may include several varieties of a vegetable similar in at least one major characteristic. Example: Round head, flat head and pointed head cabbage, differing mainly in head shape.

Variety

A classification of plants which are alike in all characteristics. This is a more specific classification than type. Example: Irish Cobble potato, Sioux tomato, Tendergreen bean, Little Marvel pea. (Notice that variety names are always capitalized.)

Vegetable

Herbaceous plant or parts grown for food. May include some that are botanically classed as fruit, such as tomato.

Wrapper Leaves

The loose outer leaves of the head of a vegetable that serve to protect the tightly packed inner leaves. Example: A head of cabbage has several wrapper leaves.

For more information, contact:

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