

OLD BASING AND LYCHPIT VILLAGE SHOW

A Rough guide to showing Vegetables

The basic rules

Rule 1 – Look at what the schedule is asking for.

Rule 2 – Check that the number of items you have put on the bench is what the schedule is asking for, that's the first thing a judge will do – check to see if all entries in that class have the right number of items entered per schedule.

Rule 2 – If the schedule says any amount up to a maximum of 3 it means just that – it does not mean you have to put in 3. The key is to ensure the items that you put in are matched – it is much more difficult to match 3 than to match a pair and if you can't do that then just enter 1 – 1 good single entry is far more likely to catch the judges eye than an entry with one good item with 1 or 2 not so good companions.

Rule 3 – check your entry for size. This is particularly important where weight is stipulated (e.g. onions not more than 250 grams or pickling shallots where there is a size limit) or if there is a length restriction (courgettes).

Rule 4 – Give yourself plenty of time to a) prepare your entries and b) stage them on the morning of the show. And think about how you are going to display them – just plonking them on the bench is not going to help what could potentially be a winning entry!

Tips on showing

Here are a few tips on showing some vegetables – just remember you will lose points if your entry has blemishes or imperfections and whilst size does matter a smaller more perfect entry will in most cases triumph over a larger more imperfect one. Not every vegetable that is listed in the schedule is mentioned here.

Beans - runner

When picking try to keep the stalks on. You need to select a set of matching beans that are straight and the same size in length. The judge will always select the bean he believes to be the stringiest and break it to prove it is so it is a good idea to try and pick beans that may be smaller but less likely to be stringy.

Beans – French/Dwarf

Again the same rules apply as runner beans but it is easier to produce a matched set in this class so the judge will pay particular attention to sets that are the same size, length and colour.

Beetroot

Gently wash them and remove any dirt, tidy up and remove dead or dying foliage and tie leaf stalks together with raffia about 4 cms from base – remove excess foliage about 3 cms from where you have tied them.

Make sure you keep the roots intact and trim of any hairs.

Carrots and Parsnips

Care needs to be taken when pulling both carrots & parsnips to ensure that the full extent of the root is withdrawn from the ground. The root needs to be gently cleaned with a soft brush under running water. Clean around the base of the leaves and remove any dead or damaged foliage – tie in the same way as beetroots. Additionally, if the root is hairy (i.e. the root has fibrous roots coming off the main root) these should be gently rubbed off.

Just remember that long carrots are exactly the same shape as parsnips (wide shoulders tapering down to nothing) and other carrots have a definite stump (some do taper slightly but not continuously)

Courgettes and Marrows

Marrows normally are entered in the “any other vegetable” class so look back at Rule 2 – it is quite difficult to match a pair of marrows so a single entry is probably your best bet.

Courgettes have their own class and are always displayed as a matched pair and as a consequence care needs to be taken to ensure that your entry not only matches in size but in shape as well – again check back to Rule 3. Displaying with the flower still attached is desirable but not always possible so don’t worry if they fall off – just remember if one comes off remove the flower off the other one!

Cucumbers

There are two types of cucumber – the ridge (outdoor) and the greenhouse variety. As there is only one class you often see both types competing against each other – the greenhouse variety is much harder to grow and will therefore attract more points than an outdoor variety. Whichever one you are entering the cucumbers should be blemish free, a good shape and if more than one is needed then they should match.

Onions

As with all vegetables that are being exhibited onions should be the same size and shape and have a good clean external skin. Care should be taken not to strip back the bulb too much otherwise you run the risk of exposing the fleshy inner layers which will lose you points. To display trim off the dried roots and wipe bulb with a damp cloth, fold the dried neck of the bulb over and neatly tie with raffia, trim off any excess neck. Sit on a slice of plastic piping or something similar.

Potatoes

Clean carefully with a soft brush – your potatoes should be no bigger than the palm of your hand and no smaller than a large egg. Each potato should be blemish free and match its companions in both shape and size. Eyes should be few and shallow. Some

potato varieties are better suited to exhibition than others so this is something you will want to consider at the start of the season.

Radishes

Again, each radish should be clean, blemish (and grub) free and match its companions in both shape and size. The tops should be trimmed to approximately 30mms and the root should be intact. Judges will be looking for young, tender, firm, fresh and well coloured exhibits.

Shallots

The rules for shallots are the same as onions only you need more of them and they are a lot more fiddly to prepare. Shallots have a hard basal plate which should be trimmed back and have less dry layers than onions so be very careful before you start removing the dried outer layers. Again, fold and tie the necks with fine raffia and sit on fine dried sand. Extra care is required for the smaller pickling shallots – these are even more difficult to handle but the preparation is the same as their bigger cousins. This class can easily catch you out for going over size – use a measuring ring to check the diameter as anything else will not give you an accurate reading.

Sweetcorn

Sweetcorn need to be ripe when exhibited so it is important to ensure you display the husk. To do this you need to pull back the layers to expose the husk – the best way to describe this is to imagine a lady's skirt with a long split up the side which reveals much of the leg! – Sorry!

Tomatoes

Always display with the calyx intact (that's the green spidery bit on top) – this also gives the judge an indication of how fresh the tomato is. The calyx should be green with little or no sign of browning.

Each tomato should be blemish free and of equal size and shape. Best displayed on a dish of fine dried sand.

Tomatoes - Cherry

Same instruction as with Tomatoes above. Cherry tomatoes can have a tendency to split when ripe so it is advisable not to pick too far in advance of the show.

And Finally

If the vegetable that you are entering is not listed above and you need advice, or if you need any further information about the vegetables listed above, please contact a committee member.