

HANDY HINTS FOR PAVILION EXHIBITORS

To help and encourage exhibitors, handy hints are offered at the beginning of some of the classes. The list of suggestions is not exhaustive in any class, but some clues are given on how to prepare exhibits and to catch the approval eye of the Judge.

The hints have been compiled from suggestions by Show Judges including Land CWA Judges and successful exhibitors over many years in Show and CWA competitions.

- The most important handy hint to pass onto all exhibitors at Shows is to read carefully and adhere to the instructions at the head of each class and also the general regulations.
- It is important to ensure that your entry matches the description of the relevant section in which you are entering in a specific class.
- GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!!

HANDY HINTS - DECORATIVE - CLASS HF

- Some successful exhibitors in decorative class suggest that you read the schedule 3 or 4 times and then put it aside for a while and “sleep on it” and the inspiration will come!
- Decorative class sections are in titles, they are an art form, and the title suggests the style. The finished article is a whole picture being a blend of shape, size colour of container and contents.
- The first element is the container, and it must suit the style. “Bold and Beautiful” would not suggest a shapely, slender container.
- The next important element is the line material, on non-plant material that provides the background, the emphasis be on “line”.
- A “no-no” is for any needle aid to be visible. Arrange foliage to hide it.

HANDY HINTS – FLOWERS – HORTICULTURE CLASS H

- It’s advisable to pick most show entries on judging morning – very early, or late on the evening before and put straight into water up to their necks, then take inside for sorting into individual jars. It is a good idea to select one entry at a time from your list as this is much better than picking everything, taking it inside and then trying to choose what will go in each section.
- There are some exceptions to this rule as pansies are better picked when totally dry, as early in the morning the dew can stain the petals.
- Iceland poppies can be picked early as long as they aren’t too advanced. In warm weather they are best picked as buds and they will be open for showing one to two days on.
- Carnations open up more attractively if picked early a day or two out then allowed to open indoors.
- Some cuts may be better if “conditioned”. For example, one very successful exhibitor scalds the stems of poppies and dahlias by pouring boiling water on them for 60 seconds to prevent them dropping.
- Don’t add anything to the water. As long as the flowers have a good drink when they are picked, most will last without additives.
- The stage of the bloom at cutting time is critical. The flowers should be fully out at judging, but JUST! Judges look at different things with flowers and it is not always size. Symmetry is very important – an even shape, the same on both sides and blemish free blooms.

- Geraniums are judged on the shape of the head, which should be a true round shape, dense with flowers and showing some foliage.
- In a section such as that for a cut of a flowering shrub, it is the length of the flowering head that is important, relative to others of the same variety.
- For individual flowers such as gerbera, size is an important consideration.

HANDY HINTS – COOKING - CLASS F

Cooking has enough handy hints for showing, that a full book would be required. Just a sample is shown below. The main judging points observed are the overall appearance, the cut cake, the smell and the taste.

Overall Appearance

- Above all, the exhibit must look delicious – after all a vital aspect is edibility!
- To be a top exhibit it should look perfect.
- The size of the mix must match the tin size eg.. a minimum of two inches thick (5cm) for butter cakes.
- Wire rack marks on a cake to not enhance its appearance.
- Ensure the cake cooks flat on top by concaving the centre before cooking ie.. have the outside of the cake higher than the centre which rises more during cooking. The cake may taste delicious but could fail on appearance.
- Greasing, lining and flouring of the tin is crucial to the look of the cake which must be exhibited as it comes out of the tin, untrimmed.
- If iced (and do not ice unless it is specified in the schedule), then make it a neat even thickness, with no drops down the sides.
- Small cakes, biscuits and slices should be dainty – a common fault is making too large, especially lamingtons (4cm cubes is the ideal size) and slices (3cm x 5cm).

The Cut Cake

Judging includes how it cuts (preferably without the use of a bandsaw), and its appearance when cut.

Points to consider:

- Texture – this should be fine, even and consistent throughout with no air bubbles. Cooking time is crucial to gain the best look when cut.
- Cakes with fruits and nuts won't cut easily if the pieces are too large – cut your nuts, dates etc small and evenly.
- Fruit cakes won't look even throughout if the fruit sinks to the bottom during their long cooking time. Fruit must be totally dry when added to the mixture, even if it has been soaked. Dry and coat with flour (use flour from the recipe, not any extra).
- Colour intensity must be matched in marble and rainbow cakes. If the chocolate is dark, the pink should be dark. If you use a pale delicate pink, then the chocolate should also be light.

Smell and Taste

- Taste is the main decider in the judges books.
- An extra point for sponges is the sponginess, another sponge point – sandwich thinly with jam or mock cream where stated.

Cleats

What are cleats? Cleats are classified as the feed under the baseboard of a decorated cake. Firstly, it must be pointed out that there are no hard and fast rules for the use of cleats. The following information has been accumulated over a number of years and comes to you as a suggestion not as a regulation.

What are the main reasons for putting cleats onto a base board?

- To strengthen and stabilise the board which usually carries the heaviest weight
- To create a space between the board and the bench or table, allowing easier lifting of the cake.

Why should cleats be as neat and inconspicuous as possible?

- Whether the cake is a show piece or an order, presentation is of the utmost importance therefore:
 - If the cleats are untidy, a showpiece will lose points
 - An order could lose return business or referral business
- The use of “bottle tops”, half or whole cotton reels or any similar item are generally untidy therefore unsuitable.

Cleats that can be used with confidence are:

- A covered board the same shape but smaller which is glued to the underside of the base board.
- Strips of wood neatly nailed or glued to the underside, and then either covered the same as the baseboard itself or painted in a similar colour.

HANDY HINTS – PRESERVES - CLASS F1

- Read the schedule carefully and note the requested size of jars.
- Take more care with keeping lids clean. They must be plain, without handwriting OR commercial printing eg.. paint the tops or use contact.
- Examine tops of exhibits for signs of mould.
- Jars should be filled to just above the neck to the lid line so there is no gap showing between the lid and the contents, **BUT DO NOT OVERFILL THE JARS.**
- All jars or bottles should have a label on it with a list of ingredients used.
- Jars and bottles should have a date that it was made on it and also marked if it is hot or spicy.
- No old jams, jellies and chutneys are to be entered for judging.
- Flavour can vary markedly between batches of stone fruit and varieties and the fruit quality controls the jam quality. **FLAVOUR** is the most important element of all jams and preserves. Always taste test your own before exhibiting.
- **If you wouldn't eat it, then why exhibit it!**

DEFINITIONS

Preserves – may be sweet (like a jam or marmalade), or savoury (chutneys, relishes or pickles). Antibacterial spices such as mustard, garlic and cinnamon are often used in savoury preserves.

Butters, Cheese and Curds – For a fruit butter cheese and curds, the fruit is usually cooked with egg yolks, sugar and sometimes butter to produce a flavoured, smooth spread.

Chutney – is made with fruit and/or vegetable and cooked with vinegar, sugar and usually spices. Chutneys may be either sweet or hot. A good chutney, whatever the ingredients, should be reasonably smooth and have a mellow flavour. The basic ingredients, such as apples and onions are minced or chopped finely. Chutneys are best left for at least a month to mellow and mature.

Conserves – are similar to jams, except that large pieces, or whole fruits are used and cooked in such a way that the fruit maintains its shape. The fruit may be layered with sugar and left to stand before cooking, which toughens it so that it will not break down during boiling. The syrup that surrounds the fruit should be clear and bright in colour.

Jams – are usually made from fresh fruit (excluding citrus), though fruit pulp preserved in season can be also used. The fruit is chopped or crushed with sugar until set and is fairly smooth.

Marmalades - are made from citrus fruits and can be based on a single variety or a combination of two or three fruits. The most popular being oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit and cumquats. Marmalades may also contain other ingredients such as vegetables or spirits such as whisky.

Relish – like a chutney consists of chopped vegetables and/or fruit and is usually used as a condiment and can be sweet, tangy or spiced. It often has a chunkier or crispier texture than chutney.

HANDY HINTS - GRAINS, SEEDS & HAY – AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE CLASS E1

- Don't be deterred from exhibiting in a less than optimum season. This is taken into account by the Judge as all exhibits should have been exposed to the same adverse conditions.
- The Judge is looking for a quality product which will fulfil its market eg.. hay is designed for fodder so the most important points for the Judge are attractiveness and palatability to stock – smell should be sweet, fresh and untainted. It should be soft and obviously look good enough to eat!
- Your entry should be of an even size and quality.
- Produce should not be tampered with, but “as grown” eg.. don't remove leaves, heads, roots or pick out any foreign weeds or seeds in the sample. In classes for a sample of grain, it should be presented for judging as harvested. Judges expect a certain degree of contamination and imperfection in the seed, and as long as the sample is within board requirements it will not be penalised. A judge knows what “as harvested” looks like and may even frown upon a sample which looks picked over.
- In sections for growing crop samples, height is not as important a consideration as some may think. The main criteria is always yield potential.
- Pasture samples are judged on composition, density, pureness to type and yield as far as dry matter goes.
- Freedom from disease is vital in Show classes.
- Presentation is very important. Label samples neatly on a small piece of cardboard for example giving the crop name and variety. The spirit of showing is providing an exhibition for the public, many of whom may not know wheat from barley or triticale.

HANDY HINTS – NEEDLEWORK – CLASS M & MJ

- Evenness of stitching and tension through the garment is the main judging criteria. Top knitters will not leave any sign of needs marks where they leave off. Choosing the right needle size for your wool ply is very important in getting the tension right.

- The inside of the garment must be as neatly finished as the outside. There should be NO loose threads, NO knots and the seams must be neatly finished in the same yarn as the garment and not bulky. The single worst fault with most knitting is that the inside finish is not neat enough.
- ALL garments should be worked in one fibre eg.. for a woollen jumper, seams and all finishing must be in woollen yarn, including buttons (don't sew on with cotton). In cotton crochet, all finishing should be in cotton.
- The more difficult patterns do not necessarily win more prizes. Tricky patterns can be easy to mess up and errors will glare at Judges. With a simple all over stitch eg.. stocking stitch, it can be more difficult to obtain a perfect look and they may be looked upon more favourably by Judges.
- Fine crochet must lie flat with no puckering or buckling. It must have even tension throughout with no "leggy" or loose stitches.
- Machine work must be straight and parallel and finished neatly. Seam finish is very important as are hems – all must be exactly straight, and the seams must intersect in exactly the same spot.
- Use safety pins rather than ordinary sewing pins to attach tickets to your garment. This prevents pulling threads with loose pin ends.

HANDY HINTS – FRUIT & VEGETABLES

- An important tip is the time of picking, do not allow them to over mature in aiming to go for size.
- Density and richness of colour are the number one judging points, with size next, separating otherwise equal exhibits.
- Most vegetables are best picked on the day of judging to ensure that crisp, extra fresh look and touch.
- Collection of the one fruit or vegetable should be even in size and shape, choose your selection as close to the one size as possible as a small sample of the same size will score better than a lot of uneven produce.
- Heads, such as cabbage and lettuce, must be dense and firm-hearted and cauliflowers should be white and with no spread in the florets.
- Root vegetables must be crisp and bright with no wood in the centre.
- Peas & beans must be very young and crisp, they should be a bright green and have a denseness of colour.
- Rhubarb should also be crisp with no sponginess or porosity in the stalks.
- Citrus Fruit– do not be surprised by seeing a smaller exhibit win– the main judging points are after the fruit is cut– the juiciness and skin depth.
- Externally the fruit (citrus) should be smooth skinned and blemish free and again your sample should be even sized, perfectly round and bright coloured.