

## PARLOUR SHOW MANUAL

This booklet is meant as a guide to help members enter the Parlour Show with confidence!

A simple event with a focus on participation, there are usually seven judged shows with Open Un-judged Categories and two un-judged shows in the year.

The two un-judged shows have two prizes for the People's Choice, awarded in lieu of points. Prizes are awarded for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners at each judged show as well as a People's Choice prize.

Points are awarded, often with helpful comments from our judge friends, from Vancouver Island Horticultural Judges Group. Points range from the highest of 'four' to the lowest of 'one'. Each entry gets a score of no less than one.

In October, points are added up and the three highest point earners receive a prize at the November meeting.

Please note you may enter up to twenty entries per show and multiple entries in a category, but they must be different varieties.

Judged shows require entries to be in by 6:30 and un-judged shows by 6:40. A helpful reminder listing the upcoming categories is included in the email sent out to members before each meeting and the full schedule is listed on our website.

# PREPARATION

## **A week before the show**

To make the Parlour Show an enjoyable and stress-free experience it is helpful to start doing a little preparation a week or so beforehand. Walk around your garden and patio making a note of what you have for the various classes which would be worth showing. Some tips are to remove dead flower blooms, periodically giving a little extra watering with some added liquid fertilizer; adjusting support ties to be ready for inclement weather and snipping out defects with scissors in time for the scar to heal and become less obvious. The same applies to damaged or diseased leaves. Remove damaged petals and rearrange the remaining petals to fill any gaps.

It is important if you are not a regular participant to choose just a few items at first to enter, having an extra entry in case of emergencies. Each time you walk around your garden update your list and check to see if you have the full names of the items you are going to show.

Remember that more than one entry may be made in a class providing they are different cultivars.

## **The day of the show**

- In order to give yourself sufficient time to properly present your entries there are some tasks that can be done early.
- Check the schedule carefully to make sure you include the correct number of blooms, fruit or vegetables required and that they are entered in the correct class.
- When you cut flowers, put them in two or three inches of warm water in containers that are one third the height of the plants. Cut down milk cartons work well for smaller flowers. The stems of some flowers, for example, roses, mums and dahlias, are best cut at an angle to increase the area for water absorption. Lower leaves should be removed to keep the water cleaner. Think about using a florists' flower preservative which would last for many blooms. After collecting, flowers should be kept in a cool place.
- Containers for all entries to be judged should be appropriate in size and form and complement the display.

# JUDGING

## Detailed Tips and Hints

### FLOWERS

The judges will be looking for these qualities in all the exhibits:

- Form (uniformity, proper maturity, freshness, shape, and petalage)
- Stem and foliage (uniformity, strength and/or straightness, foliage quality, size and proportion)
- Colour (uniformity, intensity, clarity, brilliance)
- Size (uniformity, proper size for variety)
- Condition (uniformity, substance, freedom from bruise and blemish)

A **Perennial** is defined as a plant that survives for three or more seasons. It can be a tree, bush, herbaceous plant, bulb or rhizome. There can be several classes in which perennials can be exhibited. The judges will be looking for uniform blooms in placement, development, and freshness. Each flower should have its own foliage. A collection of perennials could include grasses in flower.

A **Biennial** is defined as a plant that germinates and produces foliage and roots during its first growing season, then blooms, produces seed, and dies during its second growing season. Familiar biennials include common Foxglove, Hollyhock and Canterbury Bell.

An **Annual** is defined as a plant that completes its life cycle in one year or less. An annual should be displayed with **its** own foliage. Sometimes, given our climate, annuals behave like biennials, not dying down if protected from frost and flowering again the following year. These plants can still be shown as annuals. Examples are Nasturtiums.

### AFRICAN VIOLETS

African Violets may be an item for the "Potted Plant in Bloom" section. Single crowns are preferred. Number of flowers and leaf symmetry are what the judges and spectators alike are looking for. It helps to always water from the base so that water does not touch the leaves. A regular fertilizing schedule is also recommended.

### ARBOREAL BRANCHES

Included in this class are flowering branches and berried branches. The apex of the branch should be free from pruning scars and be symmetrical in form if possible.

One example is Sarcococca which flowers early in the year. Other examples are Viburnum, Winter Camellia, Witch Hazel and Forsythia. Berried branches should be colourful and clear of pests and disease.

### **CHRYSANTHEMUMS**

There are many varieties of chrysanthemums but the ones usually seen in the Parlour show are the small multi bloom kinds known as a spray. Individual blooms ranging from ones fully developed to buds are included in sprays. Freshness is the most important characteristic. For the single varieties shape and form are important. the length of the stem allowed is usually up to fifteen to eighteen inches. Supports are not usually permitted in this category.

### **DAHLIA**

There are many varieties to enter such as cactus, pompon and single or double peony. A single colour dahlia should be bright, clean, vibrant and lustrous in colour, evenly distributed from the tip to the base of the flower and appealing in appearance. In multiple-coloured flowers there should be good contrast with clean and sharp colour separation. The bloom is best if it is at the peak of development with its centre symmetrical, circular and in good proportion, sitting exactly over the stem. Petals should look crisp, firm and uniform from the front and back. A strong straight stem is also favoured. There should be no buds and the earlier the stem is disbudded the better. A pair of leaves attached to the stem should be fresh and uniform and in proportion without blemishes.

### **FOLIAGE (DECORATIVE)**

Foliage can be many forms, sizes and growth habits. Clean, cut and water your exhibit of one to five specimens to ensure stamina in a warm show room. It is helpful to remove any evidence of insect or other pest activity. Examples of foliage might be: Hosta, ferns, New Zealand flax, Bishop's weed, maples, ginkgo, flowering cherry and plum.

### **GRASSES**

Grasses are usually exhibited for their leaf structure, colour of foliage and/or seed heads. Cut stems should have all leaf blades intact and be as long as possible. Examples might include: Bamboo, Cattails, Mondo Grass, Sedges.

### **HERBS**

Herbs are defined as generally small plants with leaves, seeds or flowers which are used for flavouring food, as a medicine, or as a perfume. They are usually exhibited as collections with five different varieties. The collection should be tied in compact bunches and shown in small pots or containers. Herbs should show growth consistent with the time of the year. Leaves should be thoroughly cleaned. Labels should indicate either edible, medicinal or both categories for judging. Notes on herb uses might be of interest and educational to others. Botanical names are preferred. Keep herbs cool until judged.

## **HOSTA**

To keep the hosta leaves fresh it is helpful to water well prior to cutting the leaves and then to keep them submerged in cold water, especially the tip of the stem, until you bring them to the show. Patterned colour for some varieties is normal. Mottling and streaking are most attractive if uniform. Bloom should be disturbed as little as possible. This refers to the same 'bloom' seen on grapes and plums, not the flower. Ribbing, puckering and smooth surface vary depending on the variety. A stiff leaf is at its prime.

## **HYACINTHS**

They should be fresh looking without any faded or dead blooms. Fragrance is expected. Shape is cylindrical with a slight taper towards the top. It is preferred if individual florets are evenly placed. Blending of colours is not an asset. The judges look for a straight stem with a size in keeping with the flower head which is supported in an upright position.

## **IRIS**

The Bearded Iris, also known as German Iris, grows from a rootstock called a rhizome. The flower heads come from the main stem with even separation. Usually there are three or more. Look for specimens which may have five flower heads with a clear brilliant colour. One with some fragrance is quite desirable. Bulbous Iris may be called English, Spanish or Dutch depending on where they were hybridized. It is best to show them when only one bloom has appeared on the stalk. The stalk should be straight and up to about 24 inches in length.

## **NARCISSUS**

Flowers should be in their prime, fresh, fully developed, but not overdeveloped or showing signs of age. Naming the variety helps the judge as perfection does vary from variety to variety. Colour should be pure and clean in both the perianth and the trumpet or cup. The stem should be straight and the flower upright and facing forward. Where more than one bloom is shown, blooms should be as nearly equal in size as possible.

## **POTTED PLANTS**

Potted plants may be grown primarily indoors but may be taken outdoors during the warm summer months. Flowering potted plants are ones which are usually grown for their blooms; foliage potted plants are grown for their foliage.

Clean up of pots and plants can be started well ahead of time. Spent blooms are removed and the soil surface tidied up. A mulch or top dressing appropriate to the kind of plant may be added. Pebbles or gravel suit cacti or succulents whereas bark suits azaleas. Foil or paper should rarely be used to cover the pots. If used at all it should be appropriate in texture and colour. It is better to use a slightly larger container to put the original container in. Plants should be at the centre of the pot and supporting stems should be straight. Plants should look healthy and well cared for. Before the show, all dead damaged and diseased material should be removed from the plant and soil. Leaves should be bright and clean with any pruning being done well ahead of time to allow time for healing and the plant to recover. Dust leaves but do not polish. In this

category greenhouse grown plants are included. Preference might be given to a well grown plant that is rare or unusual. The exhibited plant should be 'in character' that is close to its normal growth style, in a pot that is suitable in colour and size is best if it is bright, vivid and clear of blemishes. Examples of potted plants are African violets, orchid, succulents, cactus, plant grown for its foliage, collection of house plants in one container.

### **RHODODENDRONS and AZALEAS**

A truss is a flower cluster coming from a single bud. A spray is a branch with a number of trusses. There are penalties for spent, faded or imperfect florets and for evidence that individual florets have been removed. A small proportion of unopened floret buds are permitted. A single leaf whorl of foliage must be present except for deciduous azaleas. A limited number of damaged leaves may be removed.

### **ROSES**

Hybrid tea roses are shown with one flower per stem whereas floribunda roses have a spray of blooms per stem. The most beautiful stage is when the rose is two thirds to three quarters open. Judges look for a pointed centre with petals evenly distributed around the flower, with good balance and no gaps. The petals should be bright in colour and velvety and free of white, green or other blemishes caused by rain or insects. The same applies to the straight stem and leaves which should be in proportion to the flower. Side buds should have been removed at some stage, the earlier the better. The foliage should have at least three leaves, five is preferable. A collection of roses could be shown in the Open Category class. A reluctant hybrid tea rose can be coaxed into opening just a little by warming it in the hand and blowing on it in the centre at the last moment. With a spray of blooms, careful removal of the blooms in the centre will enable other blooms to have room to open.

### **SNOWDROPS**

Check for the green markings on the petals to ensure that all three flowers have the exact same pattern. It is also important to select specimens in which the flower casing is still supple but not dried. Do not show any leaves and remember that uniformity is the goal. Bring a small mirror if desired for judges to view the blooms of a drooping flower.

### **TULIPS**

The blooms should be fresh and open. They will open a bit more in the environment of a warm room. To keep them from opening up too much, insert a straight pin into the stem just below the bloom and remove it before judging. Choose flowers that are matching in size, making sure that pollen does not get on the bloom as it will stain it. Foliage is optional but if shown it should be clean, fresh and disease free.

## FRUITS

Although from a botanical point of view fruit is an expanded ovary, from the trade point of view it is something usually used as a dessert, thus tomatoes and pumpkins etc, are put with the vegetables or as a separate class. Most fruits are shown when ripe but some, like apples, pears and gooseberries, may be shown when not fully ripened. Check the ripening of fruit that you will be showing. If it is ripening too quickly pick and store in the fridge until show time. Colour is particularly important on most fruits, especially on some varieties of apples such as Russet.

**Apples, pears and plums** are shown with the stems on. Apples should be uniform in size and colour appropriate for the variety. Colour is important and should be even or softly graduated on the apple. It should not have a leaf outline on the skin that has caused colouration or patterns on the apple. Plums are not polished so that the bloom is left on.

**Grapes** should have at least 2 inches of stem attached to each bunch. Damaged fruit is removed but the bloom is left on.

**Raspberries and strawberries** could have a few leaves placed on the plate under the fruit to give an improved effect. For the latter, stem and husk are left on.

## VEGETABLES

**Beans** should be shown with the stems on. Pods should be straight, uniform in size and shape, fresh and crisp. If the beans are not uniform, place on the plate in a graded manner.

**Beets** should have no sun scald. Ideal size should be 2 ½ to 3 inches across. One half inch of stem above the crown should be left. Cut off a long dangling tap root.

**Brussels Sprouts** should be neatly trimmed and larger outer leaves removed but not to excess. They should be uniform in colour, large, and firm.

**Cabbage** should be firm, solid, and heavy with a minimal stem. The outer leaves should be trimmed.

**Carrots** should be free of sunburn (green areas) distortion, side shoots and pest damage. One inch of leaf stems should be left above the crown. The tip should be shortened if very long and root hairs removed.

**Lettuce** leaves and roots should be cleaned. Roots are left on as part of the plant. Display in water.

**Onions** should be dry. Only the dry loose outer skin should be removed. Roots should be trimmed flush with the base. Neck should be folded down and fastened with tape or elastic band.

**Parsnip** preparation involves choosing one with a good length and a gradual taper from crown to tip. There should be no side shoots or a split tip. The tops should be trimmed to one half inch and root tip may be shortened.

**Potatoes** should be clean but not washed.

**Rhubarb** is usually classed as a vegetable, although eaten usually as a dessert. The stems should be about ¾" - 1½" in diameter and up to 24" long. They should be uniform in size, shape and colour. Tops should be cut off in an arc leaving 1 inch to two

inches of leaf. Root ends should not be cut completely off but remove the dark skin-sheath.

**Squash, pumpkins, zucchini etc.** They should be even in colour with minimal pale areas and have a typical flattened globular shape. The stem should be two inches in length. Periodically when growing turn squash, pumpkins and zucchini to ensure uniform colouring. Pumpkins may be subdivided **into** several classes depending on the number.

**Tomatoes.** They should be uniform in size and shape with no blemishes or soft spots. The cut surface should show a thin skin with numerous thick fleshy sections. Seeds should be small and limited in number. The stems should be attached. Tomatoes can be red, yellow, orange, black or green. Removing leaves from tomatoes will speed up ripening by allowing more light to reach the fruit.

## GLOSSARY

**Collection.** This is an assembly, usually not less than five kinds of and/or various varieties of flowers in one exhibit. There may be more than one of some or all varieties. Sometimes a collection may not fit into a class in which case it might be shown in an Open Category.

**Cultivar.** The term preferred for 'variety'. It may be a wild type brought into cultivation and reproduced over several generations under cultivation or a new plant as a result of hybridization. An example of a hybrid would be a cross between two butterfly bush species *B. davidii* and *B. globosa*.

**Cut.** A branch from the main stem. It may include buds, leaves and flowers.

**Floret.** A tiny flower especially when part of a dense florescence such as allium, heather and buddleia.

**Flowers.** Also known as blooms or blossoms and are the reproductive structures of a plant. These are what attract us, as well as insects and birds. The main parts are the sepals, the outermost whorl, usually green, the petals are in the next whorl. Then come the stamens which produce pollen and in the centre is the stigma to which the pollen sticks. Examination of all of these gives some idea of how mature a bloom is. A mid-range of maturity is considered optimal by the judges.

**Foliage.** The leaves of any plant or any stem bearing leaves.

**Head.** A short dense cluster of flowers at the end of a stem.

**Inflorescence** (may be used interchangeably with **floret**). This pertains to a collection of individual flowers close together on a stem. An example is rhododendron or pelargonium (also known as geranium). There are some situations where the flower naturally hangs down such as snowdrops and fuchsia. -

**Perianth.** Is a collective term for the floral envelope consisting of both the calyx and or the corolla.

**Scape.** This is a leafless stem rising from the ground, may bear scales or bracts but no foliage and there will be one or more flowers. Daylily is an example.

**Spike.** This is an unbranched inflorescence with an elongated axis bearing stalkless or stalked flowers, such as gladiolus, delphinium and foxglove.

**Spray.** This refers to a collection of individual flowers on a branching stem. Examples might be roses or dahlias which have not been disbudded or a hellebore stem with flowers of differing size or chrysanthemums.

**Stem.** The *stem* is the main leaf bearing and flower bearing axis of a plant. A favourable stem includes strength, erectness, evenness, and good proportion in length to the bloom or foliage. An unfavourable stem might be faulty disbudding, being hooked at the junction with the bloom, and not being square to the bloom.

**Truss.** This is a relatively compact cluster of flowers (or fruit) on one stem such as pelargonium, rhododendron (or tomatoes). Several clusters of flowers each at the end of the branches of a branching stem are permitted unless the phrase, "one stem", is used in the category designation.

The 'Botanical and Horticultural Definitions' glossary that has been used for this document has been taken from the 'BC Council of Garden Clubs Judging Standards', 2017 edition. If more information is desired, it is available from the Garden Club Lending Library.

This booklet was created in 2015 by the Gordon Head Garden Club for their members by Delcie McLellan and Peter Coy. The information has been edited, with their permission, for the View Royal Garden Club by Carol Ann Elliott and re-edited for use as a Parlour Manual to assist Peninsula Garden club members in identifying plants for judging and non-judging purposes.