



Burley Model Allotments Association

Annual Vegetable and Flower Show

Disclaimer: these edited extracts are provided purely to be helpful, and without liability:

- a. Don't forget that the judges are volunteers, and so may use their own, different, criteria to choose the winners
- b. The following Hints and Tips may mention classes of produce which are not included in the Burley Model Allotments schedule this year – please check the schedule when you're deciding what to exhibit.

Hints and Tips for Showing Flowers

PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF ALL PRODUCE AT SHOWS

All, exhibits should be staged as attractively as possible in accordance with the rules and schedule. In close competition points for arrangement may be the deciding factor, and in any case a judge cannot fail to be favourably influenced by good presentation. Always take a few extra specimens in case of accident, and before leaving the show bench check that the correct numbers have been staged so that your exhibit can not be marked, not according to schedule.

PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF FLOWERS

Preparation before cutting

Starting two or three weeks before the show, keep the soil moist by giving generous quantities of water at each application, especially if the weather is hot and dry. In many cases the removal of unwanted weak side-shoots or buds will aid development of the central or main flowers. If possible, and permissible under the schedule, protect blooms such as asters, chrysanthemums, dahlias, gladioli, lilies and pansies, to prevent spotting caused by heavy rain, hail damage or splashing from the soil. If light conditions are not good, make sure pot plants have sufficient space in which to develop and turn the pots frequently to avoid lop-sided growth. Pot plants such as calceolarias and cineraria's should be lightly shaded otherwise there are a risk of the flowers fading in colour or scorching.

Cutting

Before cutting and exhibiting, carefully study the show schedule and note the requirements for each class you intend to enter. Cut for a show in the evening or early morning when the flowers and foliage are cool and not affected by heat. Flower stems should be cut as long as possible. Make a slanting cut at the end of the stalk as this will assist the uptake of water. Certain flowers, e.g. some cultivars (varieties) of chrysanthemums and penstemons, are particularly reluctant to absorb water and in these cases slitting the cut stems 75mm upwards from the base or dipping the severed ends in boiling water will improve matters. Other plants, notably poppies, do not seal easily after cutting and should have their stalk ends seared in a naked flame to prevent wilting.

As cutting proceeds, carefully label each item, for mistakes easily occur which can affect your chances in competition and cause disappointment. Avoid handling show material any more than is necessary. Carry the cut stems with blooms facing downwards, keeping the plants away from draughts or bright sunshine as much as possible. Try to cut sufficient material to allow some latitude when final selection is made at the time the exhibit is staged.



Burley Model Allotments

Burley Model Allotments Association The Cardigan Centre 145-149 Cardigan Road Leeds LS6 1LJ

Hints and Tips for Showing Flowers

When cutting is completed, remove undeveloped side-shoots, unopened buds and some of the lower leaves as these will often divert water from the stems and open flowers to be exhibited. The cut stems should be plunged upright up to their necks in deep containers of clean water.

It is a considerable advantage to do this overnight, placing the containers in a cool position from which light is mostly excluded because stems are drawn towards the light and consequently they can become curved or bent.

If this is not possible, wrap a sheet of newspaper round the material and tie at the top to exclude light. Take care to see the covering paper is tied well above the uppermost flowers and that it does not absorb any water from the container.

Flowers treated in this way will be encouraged to expand before a show begins. Pot plants should receive enough water so they are fresh at the time of showing.

Where the show schedule permits, stems of plants in this section are neatly tied, using individual supports which should be made as inconspicuous as possible.

Staging exhibits at a show

Remove any damaged flowers together with discoloured or broken leaves which may have occurred prior to staging. Cut a portion from the base of all flower stems to assist the uptake of water, making sure that the length of stalk retained is appropriate for the size of vase or container you propose to use. Check that all containers are filled with water otherwise plants in your exhibit may wilt during the show. Strive to produce exhibits of good balance with flowers of even size and quality which are accommodated in containers of suitable proportions.