



Burley Model Allotments

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

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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 Fruit

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 to the show 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 FRUIT

Preparation

Initial preparation should begin well beforehand. Protect against frost and cold winds in the spring. Both may destroy, mar or blemish all kinds of fruit. Where a heavy set has been obtained, thinning must be considered. Apples, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, figs, grapes, gooseberries and strawberries all benefit from thinning. Thin in stages, especially those kinds of fruit which shed some of their fruitlets naturally, e.g. apples and pears, bearing in mind that early thinning has the most beneficial effect on size. Remove the small, blemished and misshapen fruits first. With many apple cultivars the "king fruit" or centrally placed apple in the cluster is misshapen.

The fruits that require plenty of sunshine to bring out their characteristic colours should not be over-shaded. As they begin to ripen, they should be exposed gradually to more sunshine by the judicious removal of leaves and the tying back of overhanging foliage. There is the risk of sun scald on glasshouse-grown fruits, grapes and figs in particular must have the protection of their foliage. The aim should be to obtain sufficient uniformly ripened specimens for the class or classes to be entered.

Protect against birds well before the fruits ripen. Some growers protect individual fruits, in muslin or perforated, clear polythene bags and often the skin finish can be improved in this way. Some fruits are liable to split when almost ripe and others may be spoilt by heavy rains.

Picking

Pick as near to show time as practicable. Currants, Jostaberries, Worcesterberries and Blueberries should be picked with the strigs intact choosing the longest strigs with the largest fruits. Grapes should be picked as a complete bunch. Apples, pears, plums and allied fruits, cherries, apricots, quinces, figs, medlars, blackberries and allied fruits, gooseberries, raspberries and allied fruits, loganberries and strawberries must be picked with the stalks intact. Handle the fruits as little and as gently as possible and by their stalks so that the natural bloom where present, e.g. on grapes, plums and some apples, is not spoilt. Use scissors rather than fingers to remove soft fruits.



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Selection

The fruits should be fresh, uniform, free from blemish and characteristic in shape and colour. Refer to the show schedule to see what is required, but pick more than is necessary so that reserves are available when staging. Do not use over-ripe fruits. Under-ripe fruits should also be avoided, except where allowed in certain classes.

Packing

Pack carefully. Wood wool, cotton wool, tissue paper and newspapers are all suitable materials to use. Soft fruits may be damaged by their own weight; avoid packing too many in one container. Hard fruits are best wrapped individually in soft tissue. Keep in a cool place.

Presentation and staging

Aim for a neat attractive presentation, symmetrical if possible. Do not polish the fruits.

Berries look most attractive if placed in lines so that they can be easily counted. The stalks and calyces should look green and fresh and all point one way. Reject malformed and damaged fruits.

Currants, Jostaberries, Worcesterberries and Blueberries the strigs should be intact and laid roughly parallel, Mound the fruit in the centre.

Grapes may be shown on plates.

pears, pear-shaped quinces and figs are best arranged around a plate.

Plums, cherries are best laid out in lines across a plate. It is important that the bloom is not disturbed and the stalks are intact.

Finally, before leaving the table, clear up any surplus packing material and debris, and check that the entry strictly conforms to the show schedule, is looking its best and is labelled.