



Burley Model Allotments

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

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 Vegetables

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 VEGETABLES

All vegetables should be properly prepared for showing. Root vegetables should be carefully washed to remove soil but in no circumstances should oils or similar substances be applied in an attempt to enhance their appearance. Wash with a soft cloth and plenty of water; brushing will damage the skin and spoil the appearance of the exhibit. On other kinds retain the natural "bloom" wherever possible. Most vegetables should be given a thorough watering well before harvesting for the show and should be handled carefully during preparations.

Vegetables should be staged as attractively as possible on plates or direct on to the table.

Exhibitors should be aware that certain root vegetables might be cut to determine internal quality.

Beans and peas should be carefully cut off the vine with scissors leaving some stalk attached.

Parsnips and carrots should have the soil or growing media soaked at the time of lifting to minimise damage to the root.

Asparagus Peas, Mangetout and Snap Peas

Select fresh pods of good colour, that snap easily, and of a size appropriate for the cultivar.

Artichokes, globe

Disbud the lateral heads leaving only the large main head. Stage heads on a plate, stalks to the centre.

Aubergines

Cut the fruit carefully and stage on a plate, taking care to retain the natural skin condition.

Beans, Broad, French and Runner

Exhibit fresh pods of uniform colour. Stage a uniform-sized exhibit with pods arranged on a plate or directly on the bench; stars at one end, tails at the other. With all beans it is advisable to check one or two spare pods to assess the condition and interior freshness. Cut all pods from the vine with scissors, ensuring that each pod has a portion of stalk.



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Beans, Broad, French and Runner (Cont.)

It is often impossible to distinguish climbing from dwarf French beans and they are considered as one kind for exhibition purposes.

Beetroot

Select roots of even size. Avoid specimens with poor skin colour at the base of the root or which do not have a single small tap root. Small side roots should be removed. Take care in washing as all marks will show up clearly after a few hours.

Brussels Sprouts

Cut from the main stem with a knife, all stalks to be nearly the same length. Choose tightly-closed sprouts of uniform size. Do not remove too many outer leaves, otherwise depth of colour is reduced.

Cabbages

Choose solid heads of equal size, clean and with good waxy bloom. Care should be taken not to mark the bloom. Reject split specimens and any damaged by pests. Remove only a minimum of outer discoloured leaves.

Carrots

Avoid pale-coloured specimens or those which have turned green at the top. Select uniform roots of good colour.

Cauliflowers, Calabrese and Broccoli

Reject pest-damaged, discoloured, split, loose or uneven-sized heads. Just prior to staging, trim back leaves so that they match the level of the outside of the curd. Cover white curds with clean paper or cloth to exclude light, but remove immediately before the start of judging.

Celery

Choose only heads that have no diseased or pest-damaged foliage and that have not been damaged by slugs. Reject specimens with heart rot or with flower heads forming. Place a tie round the base of the leaves to prevent breaking and clean by a continuous flushing with water; ensure all pests are removed. Before staging, neatly trim off the roots, leaving a pointed butt end.

Courgettes

Select young, tender, shapely and uniform fruits, in any colour. Stage flat, with or without, flowers still adhering.

Cucumbers

Fruits should be completely matched and of a good, fresh green colour with flowers still attached and waxy bloom unmarked. The flower end should be completely developed, the barrel well shaped and with a short handle. Display specimens flat on the show bench.

Garlic

Clean off all soil fragments, dry completely. Reduce the dried stem to about 25mm. Stage bulbs as complete specimens; do not divide into cloves.

Leeks

Ensure that stem (barrel), leaves (flags) and roots (beard) are flushed clean with tap water which should not be allowed to run between the leaves leaving unsightly soil particles. Avoid soft, discoloured specimens; or evidence in the stem and leaves of rust disease.

Specimens should be uniform in length, in good condition and solid (i.e. firm and compact throughout the length of the barrel) and a good, uniform blanch without bulbousness at the base. Excessive stripping of outer leaves should be avoided, otherwise unsightly ribbing is exposed. In dish classes, preferably stage the leeks to lie flat on the bench with the roots to the front, neatly teased out and well cleaned.



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Leeks (Cont.)

Nomenclature used by the National Pot Leek Society:

- Barrel - the shaft or stem of the plant.
- Blanch - that part of the stem which is blanched.
- Beard - the roots.
- Button - the point on the barrel of the plant where the lowest leaf breaks the circumference.
- Flags - the leaves.

Lettuce

Lift with roots intact in the evening or early morning. Fresh heads of uniform and attractive colour are essential. Wash, avoiding soil particles collecting between the leaves. Remove only markedly damaged outside leaves.

Onions

Study the schedule carefully in order to accord with the requirements of the class. Avoid soft, stained specimens with thick, immature necks. Avoid over skinning. Uniform, well-ripened bulbs of good colour are required. Unless otherwise specified by the schedule, the tops should be tied or whipped using uncoloured raffia and the roots neatly trimmed back to the basal plate. Onions are often staged on rings or soft collars.

Parsnips

Roots should be straight and of good length, evenly tapered and well developed. As with carrots, great care should be taken in lifting the roots, as bruising by fingers and scratching by soil particles will show later. Wash thoroughly with clean water.

Peas

Pods should be uniform in length and in good condition. Judges will open and check pods during their examination. Gather by cutting with scissors and with approximately 25mm of stalk, holding the pod at all times by this. Holding pods up to a strong light will detect internal damage and reveal the number of peas in the pod.

Peppers, Sweet and Hot (chili)

Select fruit of the right shape, size and colour for the cultivar. Fruit may be shown immature but fully formed, usually green, or at the mature or coloured stage. The exhibit should be uniform in colour.

Potatoes

Potatoes are of two classes, white and other than white, and of any shape. Select medium-sized specimens for the cultivar. Select equally matched tubers with shallow eyes. Avoid extra-large tubers and those with deep set eyes. Freedom from skin blemishes which may be caused by pests, diseases or careless handling is essential. The tubers should be very carefully washed in ample, clean water with a soft sponge - on no account use a coarse cloth or brush.

Pumpkins

A well-formed specimen, mature and of good colour.

Radish

The body of the radish should be fresh, firm, medium-sized, young, tender and brightly coloured. It should be free from blemishes.

Rhubarb

Stalks should be fresh, straight, long and tender with well-developed colouring. Top foliage of natural rhubarb should be cut off. Wipe stalks clean and trim off any bud scales at the bottom.



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Shallots

Bulbs should be thoroughly dried, free from staining and loose skins. Roots should be cut off to the basal plate and the tops neatly tied or whipped using uncoloured raffia.

Spinach, Spinach Beet, Chards (including white and coloured cultivars)

Large, very fresh, thick undamaged, well-coloured leaves are required. Defer gathering until the last possible moment to retain turgidity and so that there is as little delay as possible before staging. Leaves should be complete with a neatly trimmed stalk. Present in a flat fan shape overlapping the leaves. Careful handling is essential.

Squash

Select fully coloured, mature fruit, with few blemishes, and of a size according to cultivar. The stalk should be retained.

Sweet Corn

Cobs of uniform size with fresh green husks should be displayed with approximately one quarter of the grain exposed by pulling down sharply, from the tip to the base, and removing a number of the husks. The best cobs are filled to the tip with straight rows of tender grains. The stalks should be trimmed.

Tomatoes

Select fruit of the right shape, size and colour for the cultivar. Fruit must not be overripe or with hard "green back" colouring around the calyx. Aim for a uniform firm set of fruit with small eyes and firm, fresh calyces.

Turnips and Swedes

Select fresh, tender, disease-free roots of a size and shape according to cultivar, but not over-large and with a small tap root. Wash carefully, remove dead-foliage. Cut a spare root to check inside for disease and condition.

Staging exhibits at a show

Strive to produce exhibits of good balance within each class and ensure vegetables are of an even size and quality.

Finally

Before leaving the show bench, 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.