

Take Me To The Show

By Bill Kozemchak

Why exhibit? It's fun, you meet interesting people, you get to share your roses with other people, you can support your local society, and some enjoy the competition.

Growing good roses is the most important part of exhibiting, but they have to be cut and brought to the show.

Membership is not a requirement to exhibit, but roses must be grown outdoors by the exhibitor and correctly named.

If possible obtain a show schedule before the show and read it. It will give you an idea what classes you can exhibit your roses in, and what is and is not allowed for that particular show.

Cut your roses the morning of the show or night before. If a basement or dark air-conditioned room is available you can cut a day or two earlier. If bad weather is forecast before the show, a refrigerator can keep them even longer.

Cut adequate length stems and do not strip the leaves. Cut minis around 6" and large roses 12-20" depending on the size of the bloom or spray. Old Garden Roses may not have stems that long, cut what you can. If you have a beautiful bloom with a very short stem, there are classes for a rose in a bowl or picture frame in most shows.

Roses can be transported in 5 gallon buckets, large cups, milk cartons, vases, or coolers. Damaging the blooms and foliage should be avoided. Use the method that works best for you.

Get to the show early! The time to accept entries will be in the show schedule or newsletter. Usually this starts between 6:00 - 7:30 am, and closes between 10:00 -11:00 am.

Fill out the whole entry tag! Name, address, variety name and class should be filled out on **both** halves of the entry tag. Mail return address labels work well for your name and address. Some shows use section numbers or letters and some don't, check the show schedule.

Some shows have mandatory exhibitor numbers, others don't. Check the schedule or ask when you arrive. The numbers are used for record keeping and tabulations. If required be sure to put them on the entry tag.

Check the show schedule or ask what wedging material is allowed. Some shows specify clear plastic, leaves, oasis or sahara. Some do not specify, so any can be used, but keep it below the top of the vase or tube. Make sure there is enough stem so the specimen doesn't run out of water.

If you are not sure of a variety, how it's classified, or how to display it, ask questions. We all started as beginners, and that's how we learned. The best time for questions is early during entries, and not the last hour or so when people start rushing and the pressure is on to finish entering their roses.

Classifications, color classes, and date of introduction if needed, are listed in the ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses, ARS Approved Exhibition Names, Combined Rose List, Modern Roses, and the newest registrations in the American Rose.

Only one entry of a variety is allowed in a specimen class. If you have others, they may be exhibited in collections or challenge classes.

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You can take away from specimens, but cannot add to them. Petals and leaves may be trimmed to remove damage, tears, holes, or discoloration. Leaves may be polished with a dry or wet cloth to bring out the sheen in the leaves. No foreign substances can be applied to the specimen such as oil, extra petals, or cotton balls to open the bloom.

A bud is not a bloom. The cycle of bloom class is the only place to exhibit a bud.

One exhibition bloom classes (hybrid tea, grandiflora, floribunda, miniature and mini-flora) must have side buds removed. An exhibition bloom is generally one-half to two-thirds open, symmetrically arranged in a circular outline, and tends to have a high center.

A single bloom has 4-8 petals and a semi-double has 9-16. Both are fully open at exhibition stage.

Spray classes (two or more blooms) for the above classes do not have to be disbudded.

Climbers, depending on the show schedule, can be show as one bloom (disbud) or a spray.

Shrub and Old Garden Roses can be exhibited as one bloom or sprays, and do not have to be disbudded.

Some shows have fragrance classes. They are usually the public's favorite.

Collections and Challenge classes may require a single container or separate containers depending on the schedule. The container may be supplied by the show or may have to be supplied by the exhibitor.

70% of the judging score is for the bloom. Form-25 points, Color-20 points, Substance-15 points, and size-10 points. Stem and Foliage is 20 points and Balance and Proportion is 10 points.

Balance and proportion is the relationship between bloom size and stem and foliage. Most people can judge what looks pleasing to them. This is where wedging the stem up or cutting it down comes into play. The tallest rose is not always the winner. A very large hybrid tea with a 20" stem may look beautiful, but a bloom ½ or 2/3 its size would look ridiculous on the same height stem.

A small tool box or tackle box is useful for carrying grooming supplies for the show. It may include pens, pencils, address labels, ARS Handbook For Selecting Roses, CRL, AEN, small trimming scissors, deckle edge scissors, pruners, tweezers, leaf polishing cloths (hankies, nylons, mitts), rubber bands, wedging materials (plastic wrap, oasis, sahara, knife for cutting them), Q-tips and cotton balls. A list of all your roses may be helpful if you forget a variety.

After your entries are in watch some of the more experienced exhibitors work and try to pick up some tips. Volunteering to clerk will help the show committee and give you a chance to see what the judges are looking for. After judging is done and the show opens ask a judge or fellow exhibitor questions if you don't understand why your rose was judged the way it was.

The important thing is bring your roses to the show and share them with others. Roses are a labor of love and should be shared with as many people as possible.