

NAILBOURNE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
HINTS AND TIPS FOR EXHIBITORS

- **Read your Schedule** thoroughly and check the exhibit number of your entries
- **Name your exhibit** where possible - eg Dahlia, Potato Variety
- **Uniformity and Freshness** - These are more important than size alone
- **Beetroot, Carrots & Turnips** - These should have the leaves removed, leaving about 3 inch leaf stalk
- **Cabbages** - The generally accepted method of exhibiting a head of cabbage is to leave a short stalk at the base of the head
- **Lettuces** - These should be shown with the roots on, having been washed clean of soil - the reason being they keep fresher with the root on
- **Fruit** - They should not be polished but shown with their natural bloom
- **Raspberries, Blackberries etc** - Any hybrid berries should be shown with the plug and an inch or so of stem attached
- **Foliage** - Diseased or pest damaged foliage can detract from otherwise good blooms
- **Onions** - Never peel too severely

Additional Tips for Exhibiting (taken from the East Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies)

Just a tad more attention to detail can often mean the difference between receiving a prize sticker or not. Judging exhibits of similar merit puts a judge on his or her mettle, having to search for the minute detail that will be the deciding factor. Remember, you want your exhibit to catch the judge's eye. So, it is more than worthwhile to ask yourself these questions:

- Is my exhibit as fresh as possible? *Caution – never sacrifice freshness for size.*
- Have I discreetly removed any damage leaves or faded blooms?
- Have I ensured that pots/saucers and containers are thoroughly clean?
- Have I trimmed carrots, beetroot and similar vegetables to the accepted length and with a sharp knife?
- Have I used silver sand for showing my shallots and, have I made sure I haven't scattered some on the show bench *thus risking upsetting the Show Secretary?*
- Have I taken the trouble to find some curtain rings of suitable size (or similar) to keep my onions, tomatoes and similar, in place?
- Have I provided black plates or boards that will show beans, peas and tomatoes and the like to advantage?
- Have I used raffia or garden string for ties? *Baler twine or flex? Dear me no!*
- If an exhibit asks for several components eg three parsnips, are they as uniform in size and quality as possible and as beautifully cleaned, trimmed and tied as possible?
- Are display trays or similar display items I have used immaculate?
- Have I written a neat card telling the judge (and visitors) the name of the variety/cultivar of the exhibit?
- Have I left the show bench perfectly clean and my entrant's card neatly placed with my exhibit?
- Have I provided plain white plates or dishes for my cookery exhibits?
- Have I included doyleys where appropriate?
- Have I made sure my jar of preserves is clean and shining?
- Have I made sure the jar is correctly labelled and has the correct cover or lid?
- Have I made sure that I have the correct number of components as stated in the schedule? *A trap for the unwary, this one!*

All exhibitors are warmly recommended to provide themselves with a **show tool kit**. This can be the simplest plastic box of modest size containing some aids to exhibiting. The following could usefully be included:

- A small 1½ inch paintbrush – ideal for tidying up the show bench
- A soft camel hair artist's brush for removing debris from delicate blooms
- A few cotton wool balls – handy for rose exhibits and leaf cleaning
- A small towel for hand wiping
- A couple of damp J cloths or similar in a plastic bag
- A pack of labels measuring about 1" x 3" and butcher's pins, for labelling exhibits
- A waterproof pen and a pencil
- A skewer – useful when using moss in a show vase
- A pair of small secateurs and/or scissors
- A small sharp knife
- A small pack of tissues
- Some spare lengths of raffia and string.

Advance preparation can reduce stress levels on the day, believe me! And most importantly, do remember your schedule – well thumbed, I trust!