

1 The schedule Read the schedule very carefully, including all the rules. If anything is not clear contact the show secretary immediately. Where possible, the solution of problems should not be left until the show day.

2 Dates and times The dates and times given in the schedule should be carefully noted and adhered to, particularly:

- the deadline for making an entry;
- staging times
- when the show closes, and the time by which exhibitors must have removed their property.

3 Entry form Ensure your completed entry form is submitted to the right person by the deadline at the latest, but earlier if possible.

4 Selection of cultivars Some cultivars are naturally better for horticultural-show purposes than others. Exhibitors are advised to visit other shows and to make a note of those cultivars that are successful. Other useful sources of information are experienced exhibitors and national plant societies.

5 Avoid making too many entries Only put in an entry for classes if you are reasonably sure that you will be able to stage an exhibit in it. Failing to produce the exhibits or late cancellations make it very difficult to layout the staging appropriately, and mean that in some classes the exhibits are crowded and elsewhere there are vacant spaces.

6 Encourage beginners If you know someone who successfully grows a particular flower, fruit or vegetable for which there is a class, do your best to persuade them to enter.

Experienced exhibitors are encouraged to help new exhibitors where possible, for example by pointing out if they have inadvertently made a mistake (such as staging the wrong number of specimens or omitting to put labels or entry cards in position), help them to put it right or ask the steward to help.

7 Allow ample time for staging Allow plenty of time for staging exhibits, aiming to finish well ahead of the scheduled time for the completion of staging. Avoid a last-minute rush as this is when mistakes are likely to occur.

8 Labels and entry cards If you have multiple exhibits it may be prudent to prepare labels in advance in order to save time on the show day. Labels should give the names of the cultivars to be exhibited in block capitals. On arrival at the venue, get your entry cards from the secretary or steward. Place both labels and entry cards by the exhibits in good time, ensuring that they correspond to the

exhibits. Entry cards should be placed face down.

9 'Should' and 'must' As many schedule-makers inadvertently put 'should' when they mean 'must', if the schedule says 'should' it is wise for an exhibitor to act, if possible, as if the word were 'must'.

10 The number of specimens required Pay particular attention to the number of specimens for which the schedule asks, as an exhibit consisting of either more or less will be liable to disqualification (NAS: 'not according to schedule').

11 Uniformity of specimens constituting an exhibit In any competitive exhibit uniformity of all the characteristics of the specimens constituting the exhibit is important. It is unwise to mix, for example, large specimens with others that are smaller as this will weaken the exhibit.

12 Leave the hall for judging All exhibitors must leave the show venue before judging commences, and must not return until the time fixed for re-admission.

13 The judges' decision The judges' decision is final and should be accepted with good grace.

14 Protests If you feel sure that a mistake has been made, a protest should be made in writing to the secretary in accordance with the terms of the show schedule. The final decision should be accepted without question.

If the deadline for the receipt of protests has passed, the judges' decision should be accepted without comment and no action taken.

15 Liability for loss The organisers usually stipulate in the schedule that exhibits and other property of exhibitors will at all times be at the risk of the exhibitors. It is impossible for the organisers to ensure the safety of exhibitors' property especially when exhibits are being removed at the close of a show. Make arrangements to remove your exhibits during the clearance period, which is usually immediately after the show closes

16 The preparation and presentation of produce at shows All exhibits should be staged as attractively as possible in accordance with the rules and schedule. In close competition, arrangement may be the deciding factor as this will favourably influence the judges. Always take a few extra specimens to the show in case of accident, and when you have finished staging, check the exhibit is well finished, conforms to the show schedule and is labelled.