

**Parsley** Show only by itself as a herb. It may be used as a garnish for a collection of vegetables, but should receive no points in this case except under the heading of 'arrangement'.

**Parsnips** Roots should be straight and of good length, evenly tapered and well developed. Great care should be taken in lifting the roots, as bruising by fingers and scratching by soil particles will show later. Parsnips should have the soil or growing medium soaked at the time of lifting to minimise damage to the root. Wash thoroughly with clean water. Cut off the foliage to approximately 75mm. Lay side by side in a triangular formation with the root end facing the front.

**Peas** Pods should be uniform in length and in good condition. Judges will open and check pods during their examination. When cutting from the vine retain the waxy bloom intact without finger marks. 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. Arrange on a plate or directly on the bench, in a line with the tail ends facing the front.

**Peppers, sweet and hot (chilli)** Select fruit of the right shape, size and colour for the cultivar. The exhibit should be uniform in colour. Fruit may be shown immature but fully formed, usually green, or at the mature or coloured stage. Mature specimens are to be preferred.

**Potatoes** Select medium-sized specimens, generally between 200g and 250g. Choose equally matched tubers with shallow eyes. Freedom from skin blemishes that may be caused by pests, diseases or careless handling is important. Very carefully wash the tubers in clean water with a soft sponge – do not use a coarse cloth or brush. Stage on plates with the rose end outwards; cover with a cloth to exclude light until judging commences.

**Pumpkins** Show a well-formed specimen, mature and of good colour.

**Radishes, small salad** The body of the radish should be fresh, firm, medium-sized, young, tender and brightly coloured. It should be free from blemishes and with foliage trimmed to approximately 30mm. Dig at the last possible moment to retain maximum turgidity. Cut spare specimens to check internal condition.

**Rhubarb** Stalks should be fresh, straight, long and tender with well-developed colouring. Cut off top foliage of natural rhubarb leaving approximately 75mm from start of leaf stalks. Do not cut off foliage of forced rhubarb. Wipe stalks clean and trim off any bud scales at the bottom.

**Salsify and scorzonera** Roots should be clean and straight and with approximately 75mm of leaf stalk remaining.

**Shallots** Stage as separate bulbs and not as clusters. Bulbs should be thoroughly dried, free from staining and loose skins. Cut off roots to the basal plate and tie the tops neatly. Stage on dry sand or similar material which should (preferably) be of a contrasting colour and piled on the plate slightly to raise the centre. Shallots for pickling

must not exceed 30mm in diameter.

**Spinach, spinach beet, chard (including white and coloured cultivars)**

Use large, very fresh, thick, undamaged, well-coloured leaves and stalks. Mixed colours of leaves and stems will be permitted if from a mixed variety. 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.

Display for effect in a vase, with water. Careful handling is essential.

**Squash, summer** Select young, tender, shapely and uniform fruits, normally not more than five days after flowering. Cut fruit from the vine, taking care not to mark the tender flesh. Stage as for courgettes.

**Squash, winter** Select fully coloured, mature fruit, with few blemishes, and of a size according to cultivar. Retain the stalk.

**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. The best cobs are filled to the tip with straight rows of tender grains. The grains should be well-filled, not shrivelled. The stalks should be trimmed.

**Tomatoes** Select fruit of the right shape, size and colour for the cultivar. Fruit should not be overripe or with hard 'green back' colouring around the calyx. Aim for a uniform firm set of ripe fruits with firm, fresh calyces. Stage on a plate, calyx uppermost.

**Tomatoes, truss** Cut the truss from the plant carefully, as near the main stem as possible. Both mature and immature fruits may be shown but at least one third of the fruits should be fully ripe, displaying the natural colour for the cultivar.

**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 taproot. Wash carefully, remove dead foliage. Cut a spare root to check inside for disease and condition.

## 20 The preparation and presentation of flowers (See also *The preparation and presentation of produce at shows*, p43)

• **Cutting** The ideal time to cut flowers is in the evening (or early morning if that is not possible). Flowers should be cut with as much stem as possible, making a slanting cut to assist the uptake of water. Sometimes flowers (such as chrysanthemums and penstemons) may not absorb water easily and the stems can be slit upwards (approximately 75mm) under water to assist. After cutting, remove sideshoots, unwanted buds and lower leaves and place the flowers upright in a container of clean deep water. It is better for this to be done overnight if possible, and then the container of flowers should be placed in a cool dark room. To save time at the show, labels showing the name of the cultivar can be written in advance, using cards or paper.

• **Transit to a show** Many exhibitors carry their exhibits in vases in 'milk crates', making sure that packing prevents excessive movement