

# INFORMATION FOR THE NEW EXHIBITOR

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photos courtesy of Gordon Holmes, 2008 ARS Spring National Convention, Denver



I decline to specify what I believe to be the best exhibition roses. That is because in my experience, I have had more success showing roses that were not at the top of the list. Below are a few recommendations for the new exhibitor.

1. You need to know the differences between classes that call for roses of exhibition form rather than exhibition stage. A rose with exhibition form is a high centered bloom with a pinpoint center and petals radiating outward in a perfect spiral. Because in a rose show the bloom accounts for three-fourths of the score, if a bloom does not have a good center, it will not win a blue ribbon. A bloom at exhibition stage is described as one at its most perfect stage of beauty. Therefore, roses that do not have exhibition form are shown in these classes. Do not try to emulate high enters in exhibition form blooms, these blooms in general look best when the outer petals are near horizontal.
2. All things being equal, the fresher looking rose will win. Therefore, if you are showing a rose(s) with stamens that show fresher, they look better. Even if a bloom is at its color peak and has not begun to lose substance, it will be penalized by the judges. In a high centered exhibition stage, roses where the stamens cannot be seen, the substance of the rose is usually used to determine which rose is freshest.
3. The stem showing above the vase in an exhibition form rose should be approximately six times the height of the rose. However, with some judges, the longer the better (within reason).
4. Do not strip off slightly diseased or damaged leaves to hide their faults. The leaves and foliage only accounts for 10% of the final score. If you remove the leaves, it will most likely not save many, if any, points and will further detract for the balance and proportion score.
5. If your rose is lacking in stem length, try to place it higher in the vase to give it the appearance of being taller.
6. If you have to disbud an entry, wait to just before entries close to remove it. This will limit the amount the cut darkens. A disbudding scar is only penalized if its presence bothers the judge. Be sure to remove the buds as close to the stem as possible.
7. Lace the name tab on the side you want the judge to see first. The placement committee will almost always place the exhibit with the tag to the front, therefore, this will be the angle most judges see first.
8. Bigger is not always better when considering the size of a spray to exhibit. It is best to get a spray with pleasing form. Because the center bloom usually blooms first and is the biggest, removal of an old or spent center bloom usually leaves a big hole in the center. I have found that if you twist tie the specimen and place it in lukewarm water overnight, it may cure the problem. In most sprays, there will be a bloom with stamens showing (remember rule 2—fresh stamens).
9. Fully-open bloom exhibits should be shown with their center clearly visible. The exhibitor may have to

- blow the bloom open or place in the sun to assist this process. If you have to resort to pulling petals, do it in such a way that it is not obvious. Also, any small petaloids near the center of the bloom should be removed. If possible, use roses with brightly colored stamens in this class. Most judges do not know the true color of all stamens and will most likely penalize a rose with naturally dull or dark stamens.
10. Polish the leaves by rubbing them with a nylon. Do not apply any foreign substance to make them shine more.
  11. Old garden roses and exhibition stage roses with lots of petals almost always look their best when fully open.
  12. Read the show schedule.
    - A. All challenge classes are exhibitor placed. Place these exhibits to minimize the faults and accentuate the positives. Remember, a judge is not allowed to touch or move any part of an exhibit.
    - B. Rose bowl classes usually state that the rose be floating. Make sure no part of the rose is touching the bottom.
    - C. If a picture frame does not specify that the foliage has to be the same as that of the rose being exhibited, use better foliage. This should be within reason, if you place hybrid tea foliage around a rugosas bloom, it will be penalized.
    - D. At our District Rose Show, a lot of shrub roses were disqualified for being larger than 2.5 inches as required by the class.
    - E. There may not be a class for all your exhibits. A lateral bloom is not a spray and vice versa.
  13. If you use artificial devices to improve bloom appearance, for example, Q-tips to space the petals in an exhibition form bloom, do not forget to remove them. The best arrangement at the Spring National Convention in San Diego had two Q-tips in one of the roses and was disqualified.
  14. Write down the names of the roses you plan to exhibit. Do not rely on your memory. I have a habit of cutting a lot of roses on the morning before the rose show. Then as I am cleaning them up, I fill out the entry tags. If I do this in advance, I can head back to the garden and figure out the roses I cannot remember. The first time I won Mini-Queen, I was filling out the tags, when I got to this beautiful bright orange mini, whose name escaped me. Luckily, I remembered where I cut the rose and went out and checked the tag. It was the only good bloom of 'Finest Hour' I had ever seen.
  15. In the challenge classes calling for more than one bloom, try to match them in size and shape as closely as possible. For example, if an exhibit requires seven exhibition form blooms all different varieties, you may have to use your second best bloom, because the best one may stand out too much from the rest of the blooms.
  16. In an English box, use as few varieties as possible. When I was judging the National at San Diego, there was one English box that stood out from the rest. Unfortunately, they violated recommendation 12. The rules stated no more than two blooms of any variety and this exhibit had three blooms of two varieties. What makes this story more intriguing is the judges did not follow recommendation 12 either. The challenge classes are voted on by secret ballot with each judge putting his vote in an envelope.
  17. Last and most importantly, do not prejudge your roses. Normally, when preparing roses, we tend to look at faults more than attributes and, therefore, we give too much weight to the faults. Let the judges do their job!

**Remember you are supposed to be having fun!**