



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Exhibiting and Judging Club Horticulture



Preface

The following guidelines are provided to help all the clubs who exhibit general horticulture at their meetings and wish to have some standards in place. Guidelines mean you are free to choose which pieces of this to use in your clubs, they are not GCV requirements. To be clear, the only requirements for GCV Flower Show horticulture are those established by the American Daffodil Society, The American Rose Society, and the American Lily Society at their respective shows. The GCV Flower Show Committee is in charge of those shows, but the national societies who sanction them provide the staging and classification requirements and the judging for horticulture at their respective shows. The exhibition requirements for these shows will be listed at the end of this handout for your convenience, and can also be found in the GCV online Flower Show Handbook under Entering a Flower Show. While no club can duplicate the state show set up, many clubs may find it useful to abide by these standards to the extent possible, so members will feel comfortable entering the GCV flower shows.

The main point of these guidelines is to introduce the standards for displaying and judging general horticulture used by the two largest national organizations, the Garden Club of America and the National Council of State Garden Clubs. Their handbooks and their judges who have spoken at the GCV Horticulture workshops are the source of the information given. Both organizations exhibit general horticulture at their shows, so were deemed to be the best source of information on this subject. Their manuals include guidelines and point scoring sheets for almost 40 species, but they also include the more general guidelines included in this handout. The hope is that this will all be useful for clubs who judge their own horticulture and who asked for this guidance; and for the clubs who are able to find judges from the above organizations, but wish to standardize or improve their own club horticulture schedules. Your club horticulture schedules will be the exhibit standard that your members agree to follow. The judging criteria and point scoring sheets will help your members learn how to show their horticulture to its best advantage. Improving the process for all will make it a better and more enjoyable learning experience, which is why we all exhibit.

Exhibiting Horticulture Successfully

Selecting Plant Material

1. Select plants from your garden for cutting early in the morning, and place them directly into cool water.
2. Cut at the peak of maturity-for show purposes, that means when the main bloom is $\frac{3}{4}$ open.
3. Cutting on a slant encourages the uptake of more water for hydration.
4. The plant must have been grown in your garden for at least 3 months.

Grooming

1. Do not show plants with damaged or spent flowers.
 - a. They should be removed as inconspicuously as possible-or trimmed if removal would destroy symmetry. Trimming should follow natural line of the leaf.
 - b. A small blemish should not take an otherwise perfect specimen out of contention.
2. There should be no dust, dirt, pollen or spray on leaves.
3. The specimen should be free of evidence of pests and disease.
4. No leaf polish may be used.
5. If a container plant is being exhibited, the container should be clean.

Exhibiting

1. Wedging material should be used to hold plant upright and in the best position for viewing. Cotton has been used frequently in the past, but it is preferable to use a clear material such as saran wrap or bubble wrap. Boxwood should be used only to stage daffodils.
2. The bottles should be uniform for fairness in judging. They must be clear glass so that the stem is visible. In the past, some clubs prefer green or brown tinted bottles, but we encourage you to make the change. (A lot of beer comes in clear glass).
3. The plant should be well hydrated, preferably conditioned for several hours.
4. The stem must be visibly submerged in water.
5. Only one stem may be exhibited in each container.
6. There should be no foliage below the water line.
7. The plant must be properly and legibly labeled. Genus and species preferred, but common name is acceptable at club meetings.

Suggestions for Judging Horticulture at Club Meetings

Judging Horticulture can be challenging, particularly if undertaken by “untrained” members, but it is a skill that can be learned. The GCV Horticulture Committee offers occasional workshops, and this manual can be used as a supplement. It is easiest to begin the judging with an overall consideration of general qualities, and use point scoring as a last resort. There are point scoring standards for every species of plant, but for our purposes, we will consider more general guidelines, with a few specific exceptions.

Subdividing Classes

1. When a judging team approaches the horticulture bench, it is an option to subdivide the categories. This makes judging more equitable, as well as providing a means for awarding more ribbons.
2. Classes may be subdivided by species, cultivar, or color-it is left to the discretion of the judges, but each subdivision should have at least 3 specimens.
3. Judges must not touch the specimens-someone from the club committee must move them as directed.

General Qualities for Judging

1. Distinction is a quality that makes a plant seem better or more perfect than its competition. The specimen must be a standout!
2. Form refers to trueness to type, and also to its maturity - it should not be over- or under-mature. General forms are round, spikes, spray and arboreal forms.
 - a. Examples of round forms: Asters, zinnias, pansies, phlox, poppies, ranunculus, etc.
 - b. Examples of spiked forms: Bells of Ireland, foxglove, larkspur, snapdragon, stock, penstemon, canterbury bells, etc.
 - c. Examples of spray forms: Cosmos, dianthus, columbine, forget-me-nots, petunias, etc.
 - d. Examples of arboreal: flowering, fruiting or foliage branches
3. Color can be difficult, as it may vary according to where it was grown. Look for purity and clarity-no murkiness. Some conditions affect color adversely, and should be penalized - i.e. age, excessive heat or drought, refrigeration, etc.
4. Texture varies by flower species, so you need to look for uniformity, whether it is rough or delicate. It is never acceptable to see “crepeiness”.
5. Size should be judged proportionally - it should be as large as proportion allows. Big is generally better.
6. Substance refers to firmness or rigidity; qualities which allow the bloom to retain its appropriate form. It is good to be turgid (water-filled). Cultural perfection means that the grower did not do anything to disturb the growth of the plant - no under watering or over spraying, etc.
7. Educational value is primarily proper labeling-for anything less, points should be removed from grooming. Consider adding a class for specimens grown with sustainable practices, i.e. no pesticides. Some clubs use a yellow dot on all entries grown without pesticide.

Point Scoring Considerations

There are as many forms for point scoring horticulture as there are species to exhibit. For the purposes of our club meetings, most plants can be loosely grouped into the following forms. The characteristics can be examined, noted and mentally point scored.

Flowering Forms

Round Form

Form - true to variety, well-filled, symmetrical, no splits or irregularities, $\frac{3}{4}$ open

Color-clear, fresh, not faded, true to variety

Substance - turgid, crisp, fresh, no drooping or limpness

Stem and foliage - strong, untwisted stem, lush green foliage, unspotted, clean

Size-as large as possible, not freakish

Condition - intact, undamaged, clean, properly labeled

Spike Form

Color - true to variety, clear, bright, no streaking

Form of florets-symmetrical placement, lower florets open-no fading, $\frac{2}{3}$ up the stem open

Fullness and number of florets – graceful and full, but not crowded, no clumping

Condition and grooming - clean, no disease, free from faded florets

Substance and texture

Size of spikes and florets-true to variety, closely set

Stem and foliage (if present) – side buds and foliage removed

Spray Form

Amount of bloom-more than average number should be open, fewer buds than flowers

Color - brilliant, rich

Form - gracefully branched, airy, not overly long or short or crowded, foliage not too heavy

Substance-crisp-holding up well, no thinning, plump stamens

Size - typical, uniform, larger than expected

Condition and Grooming – undamaged, no dried petals or seed pods

Arboreal Form

Flowering Branches

- Color
- Condition and grooming-clean, no spent blooms
- Form and symmetry of branch
- Flowers - number-at least half open, size typical to large, pleasing spacing

Foliage Branches

- Color - of foliage and stem true to variety
- Condition and grooming - free of insect damage, free of spray or moisture damage
- Foliage - vigorous, abundant, pleasing spacing
- Form - graceful branch and foliage spacing and form

Fruited, Coned or Berried Branches

- Color - true and pure in fruit, stem and leaves
- Condition and grooming-free of insect damage
- Foliage - attractive form and placement
- Quantity and placement of fruit, etc.

When a decision cannot be reached, the generic point scoring forms that follow may be used.

Point Score Evaluation Form
Cut or container grown
Flowering Specimens or Specimens with Colorful Bracts

A specimen of a flowering plant. Must be correctly named according to binomial and cultivar as applicable.
Place point score for each quality in upper right box. Comments MUST be made in each box, telling why points were deducted or allowed.

Qualities	Exhibit #1	Exhibit #2	Exhibit #3
Plant Identification 5 Name as provided on entry card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment on correctness, completeness			
Cultural Perfection 60 Peak of perfection 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quantity 5			
Color 10			
Form 10			
Substance 5			
Texture 5			
Size 5			
Foliage/stem 10			
Condition/grooming/staging 25 Health/Blemishes 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grooming 10			
Staging (Including container) 5			
Distinction 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your Score 100	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master Panel Score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your Point Scoring Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plus 1 bonus point <input type="checkbox"/>
Your Comment Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Master Panel Members:

Point Score Evaluation Form
Cut or Container Grown
Foliage Specimens

Specimen grown primarily for its foliage. Must be correctly identified according to binomial and cultivar as appropriate.
 Place point score for each quality in upper right box. Comments MUST be made in each box telling why points were deducted and/or allowed.

Qualities	Exhibit #1	Exhibit #2	Exhibit #3
<u>Plant Identification</u> 5 Name as provided on entry card Comment on correctness, completeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Cultural Perfection</u> 60 Peak of perfection 10 Foliage 10 Stem 5 Color 10 Form 10 Substance 5 Texture 5 Size 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Condition/grooming/staging</u> 25 Health/Blemishes 10 Grooming 10 Staging 5 (Including container)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Distinction</u> 10 Single specimen exhibit: The degree of superiority in all listed qualities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your Score 100	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master Panel Score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your Point Scoring Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes 1 bonus point <input type="checkbox"/>
Your Comment Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master Panel members:			

Point Scoring Exam
ARBOREALS
 Cut Specimens Only
Foliage/Flowering/Fruited/Coned



A cut branch of a shrub or tree. Must be 30" or less in length, to include an apical tip and several nodes. Must be correctly named according to genus, species, variety/cultivar as appropriate.

Place point score for each quality in upper right box. Comments MUST be made in each box, telling why points were deducted and/or allowed.

Qualities	Exhibit #1	Exhibit #2	Exhibit #3
Plant Identification 5 Name as provided on entry card ----- Comment on correctness, completeness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Perfection 60 Arboreal Specimen (30) Maturity 10 Form 10 Stem 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foliage, Flowers, Fruit, Cones (30) Spacing/positioning 5 Quantity 5 Color 5 Substance 5 Texture 5 Size 5			
Condition, Grooming, Staging 25 Condition 10 Grooming 10 Staging 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distinction 10 Superiority in all respects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your score			
Master Panel Score			
Your Point Scoring Grade			Includes 1 bonus point
Your Comment Grade			
Master Panel Members:			

American Daffodil Society

Scale of points is used in Judging

	Cultivar	Species	Historic
Condition	20	50	40
Form	25	15	15
Substance and Texture	15	10(substance) 5(texture)	10
Color	15	10	15
Pose	15	5	5
Stem	0	5	5
Size	10	0	10
Total	100	100	100

American Rose Society

Scale of points is used in Judging

Form	25
Color	20
Substance	15
Stem & Foliage	20
Balance & Proportion	10
Size	10
	100

The North American Lily Society

Scale of points is used in Judging

Condition	30
Vigor	20
Placement on stem	20
Substance of flowers	10
Form of flowers	10
Color of flowers	10
	100

Sources

Many references and conversations with GCV horticulture chairmen

Hamel, Esther V., The Encyclopedia of Judging and Exhibiting, Ponderosa Publishing, St. Ignatius, Montana, 1976

National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc., Handbook for Flower Shows, St. Louis, Mo., 1992

GCV Horticulture Committee Workshop, October 18, 2010, Kay Shifflett and Dale Henderson

GCV Horticulture Committee Workshop, October 15, 2012, Julia Clevett