

## CHAPTER FIVE

# JUDGES AND JUDGING

## EXHIBITORS' AND JUDGES' SCHOOLS

The Exhibitors' and Judges' School of The Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, Inc. (OAGC) offers a comprehensive program including much material on both horticulture and artistic design. The school is a source of enrichment for exhibitors and flower show judges alike. It is the path one takes to become an OAGC accredited flower show judge. For active judges, the school offers a way to maintain accreditation. For exhibitors, the school is the place to learn how to be a better exhibitor.

Teaching is done by OAGC accredited judges and people who are knowledgeable in their field of interest. A study list is sent to judges and prospective judges before each judging school. Questions based on study material from the current *OAGC Exhibitors' and Judges' Handbook* will make up the examinations for each school.

Schools will emphasize cut specimen judging of round, spray and spike forms. To assist with flower form judging, all school attendees are encouraged to bring horticulture specimens to each school. These specimens should be properly labeled and displayed using clear containers. A drawing will be held of those who bring specimens with one winner receiving a refund of one day's registration.

The journey for becoming an accredited judge of The Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, Inc. begins with submitting an application and attending the Exhibitors' and Judges' School which runs on a cycle of four 2-day judging schools over a span of two years. The schools are conveniently held in the central part of the state.

A minimum passing grade of 70% must be achieved on each horticultural and artistic subject test. Any subject failed must be repeated. To speed up this process a student judge can request a make-up test for any failed subject. Make-up tests will be approved and administered by the Exhibitors' and Judges' chair. The Plant Identification make-up test will be given through the use of a PowerPoint presentation.

At the conclusion of the series of four schools and following an apprentice judge period, the Exhibitors' & Judges' department chair will forward a recommendation to the executive committee for approval. If all the requirements have been met, a certificate of accreditation is issued for two years.

The following requirements and information may be changed at the discretion and approval of the executive committee or a committee appointed by The Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, Inc.

# POTENTIAL SCHOOL CYCLE CURRICULUM

## School #1

Day 1: Oriental Design, Plant Identification, Plant Horticulture, Cut Specimens (round, spray, spike forms). Evening sessions: Student oral judging, design workshop, plant horticulture

Day 2: Period Design, Flower Show Protocol and Judging (covering chapters 1-5 of the *E&J Handbook*)

## School #2

Day 1: Basic Traditional Design (including mechanics, miniature and floor arrangements), Plant Identification, Plant Horticulture, Cut Specimens (round, spray, spike forms). Evening sessions: Student oral judging, design workshop, plant horticulture

Day 2: Color Theory (as it relates to both traditional and creative floral designs), Container Grown Plants - Flowering and Foliage (includes hanging baskets, ferns, ivies, violets, cacti, etc.)

## School #3

Day 1: Creative Designs (including mechanics, miniature and floor arrangements), Plant Identification, Plant Horticulture, Cut Specimens (round, spray, spike forms). Evening sessions: Student oral judging, design workshop, plant horticulture

Day 2: Table Settings, Educational Exhibits, Cut Leaf Specimens (including hosta, caladiums, grasses, branches)

## School #4

Day 1: Advanced Creative Design, Plant Identification, Plant Horticulture, Small Gardens (including dish gardens, terrariums, etc). Evening session: Student oral judging, design workshop, plant horticulture

Day 2: Design (covering *E&J Handbook* chapter 6 (winter & holiday shows) and chapter 44 (special classes-niches, still life, botanical, plaques, vignettes)), Cut Specimens (round, spray, spike forms)

## **PROSPECTIVE STUDENT JUDGE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Must be an active member of an OAGC garden club
2. Should be an experienced exhibitor and be familiar with flower show procedures
3. Shall have earned at least five (5) ribbons in horticulture and five (5) ribbons in artistic designs, from flower shows judged by an OAGC accredited judge. Prospective student judges should have exhibited in at least five (5) flower shows.
4. Shall have served on a minimum of three (3) different flower show committees at a minimum of three (3) different flower shows. Experience should include schedule writing, entry and classification, placement, clerk, staging, educational exhibits or awards. Each of these shows are to have had a schedule and have been judged by an OAGC accredited judge.
5. Submit the Student Judge application (available from the Exhibitors' and Judges' department chair) with proof of required information & qualifications to the E&J chair.

## **ACTIVE STUDENT JUDGE REQUIREMENTS**

After a student has begun Exhibitors' and Judges' School, the following requirements must be met during the two year period prior to the completion of the series of four schools:

1. Maintain active membership in an OAGC garden club
2. Continue to exhibit in OAGC judged flower shows earning ten (10) ribbons each in both artistic and horticulture divisions (for a total of 20 ribbons)
3. Serve as a flower show chair and schedule writing chair for a club, county or regional show at least once during the school series. Continue to serve on the other show committees as well
4. Enter the OAGC convention flower show artistic and horticulture divisions at least once during the school series
5. Serve as a clerk at the OAGC convention flower show at least once during the school series
6. Students are encouraged to make an effort to enter the Ohio State Fair flower show competition or design a noncompetitive niche at least once during the school series
7. Submit all entry tags (signed by the flower show judge or flower show chair), show schedules and proof of activities yearly at the close of the fall school, to the E&J chair for inclusion in the student's "Record of Candidate for Judge" file
8. Pass all tests with a score of 70% or above

9. A collection of thirty (30) labeled plant specimens will be displayed for Plant Identification teaching at each school. A random selection of twenty (20) of those specimens will be selected for the Plant Identification test. Both botanical name and common names are required to be learned. The scoring value will be two (2) points each for correct botanical and common names with a ½ point scoring value for each correct botanical and common name spelling. Oral judging is also stressed at each school.
9. After successfully passing the series of judging schools, the student judge must apprentice judge four (4) flower shows, each with a different OAGC accredited flower show judge, assisting in both horticultural and artistic sections. The student judges' decisions must be cleared with the accredited judge before ribbons are placed. If the show is being orally judged, the prospective judge should also be encouraged to judge orally. A report on the performance of the student judge will be sent by the accompanying judge to the E&J chair.
10. Apprentice judging must be completed within the 2 years following completion of the fourth school. During that time student judges must attend at least 2 days of schools over those 2 years.

## ACCREDITED JUDGE REQUIREMENTS

1. Must be an active member of an OAGC garden club
2. Judges must renew their accreditation by attending at least four (4) out of the eight (8) days of schools of each series. Punch cards will be utilized for verification of attendance. Judges will be issued certificates every two (2) years. Renewal of their certificates will be by attendance and dated the year of School #4. If the attendance requirements are not met, accreditation will be lost and the series of four (4) schools will have to be repeated. Individual exceptions, submitted in writing, will be reviewed by the executive committee, with appropriate action taken.
3. Judges are required to secure appropriate flower show scorecards prior to judging any flower show. The completed scorecards must be submitted to the state Flower Show department chair within thirty (30) days of judging a show. (A scorecard **must** be submitted regardless of whether the flower show is being entered in the Flower Show contest competition.) In shows that require multiple judges, each judge is to submit their own flower show scorecard to the state Flower Show department chair, scoring the flower show sections pertinent to the sections they judged. Scorecards may be found in the current *OAGC Handbook for Garden Clubs*, on the OAGC web site ([www.oagc.org](http://www.oagc.org)) or obtained from the state E&J chair or the state Flower Show chair. When judging non-OAGC

flowers shows, submission of scorecards not required however judge should still report judging activity to the state Flower Show chair.

4. Judges may not judge any section (horticulture or artistic) of a flower show in which they have entered.
5. Educate with constructive comments. Be positive at all times.
6. Judges must abide by the requirements and procedures. Any infractions such as: lateness or lack of returning flower show scorecards, not showing up to judge a show, or any violation of the OAGC qualifications, will immediately be brought before the executive committee. Notice of the infraction must be submitted in writing by the club(s) involved, by the flower show chair or the E&J chair. Upon the decision of the executive committee and upon written confirmation of the infraction and a proper investigation, the judge may be suspended from all judging for a period of ninety (90) days. More serious infractions may result in permanent loss of certification.

## **JUDGE EMERITUS**

Judges who are currently accredited but feel they are no longer able to maintain their status due to age and/or physical conditions, may request the designation of "OAGC Judge Emeritus". The judge must be a member of an OAGC garden club and hold a current judging certificate. The request must be presented in writing to the Exhibitors' & Judges' School chair who will forward it to the executive committee for approval. Once approved, in order to maintain Judge Emeritus status, a Judge Emeritus must continue to be a member of OAGC.

With this title, a Judge Emeritus is being recognized for their years of service. However, they shall not judge any flower shows, regardless of whether or not the shows are entered for state competition. In the event a Judge Emeritus wishes to become an active judge again, they may reinstate to active status by adhering to the same requirements as current active flower show judges. No additional testing shall be required.

## **JUDGING PROCEDURES**

1. Accept or decline an invitation to judge a show promptly. Agree on the judging fee and mileage ahead of time. If an emergency prevents you from judging a show, notify the chair of the flower show immediately.
2. You may suggest another judge, but never arrange for a substitute

- without the authority of the chair of the flower show.
3. Study the schedule of the flower show and be reasonably certain of what is called for in each class. Read the rules and regulations of the flower show. If you do not feel qualified to judge any portion of the show, do not accept the assignment.
  4. Always be on time and ready to start judging at the specified time. The flower show chair has a deadline to meet in opening the show for viewing and no delay should be caused by a tardy judge.
  5. Upon arriving at the flower show, report to the chair of the flower show. Ask for explanations on any point that is not clear. It is far better to clarify a vague term before you start to judge.
  6. Take any and all equipment necessary to judge, such as the *OAGC Exhibitors' and Judges' Handbook*, plant society literature, measuring ring/ruler, etc.
  7. Be friendly but remember the business at hand. Social conversation before judging is improper. Most discussion is harmless, but there is always one exhibitor who is bubbling over with enthusiasm and mentions a specific entry. This places an unnecessary burden upon you as a judge and may create some unpleasant feelings among other exhibitors.
  8. Ask for a secretary, clerk or extra help if necessary.
  9. Look over the entire show briefly and get a general idea of the quality. This should be a short, once-around the room look and not an extensive study of each class. That comes later when you are actually judging.
  10. Never judge a show that is going to be entered in the state competition in which you are an exhibitor.
  11. Follow established procedure in judging classes. After an impartial appraisal of each entry, dismiss from consideration all those which are definitely inferior, then compare those items rating the highest number of points in the scorecard. Point scoring should be done if there is any doubt in the judge's mind as to the winner. No judge should try to point score every entry. Do not be too hasty in making decisions, but on the other hand, a slow judge is by no means the best one.
  12. Adhere to the schedule; this is your ultimate guideline. The schedule is the LAW of the flower show.
  13. Offer constructive suggestions to the show committee and exhibitors to aid in improving future shows. Always commend those features of a show which are outstanding. A negative approach, without mentioning the positive aspects, can only have a discouraging effect. Be kind to exhibitors and to fellow judges.

## **A FLOWER SHOW JUDGE SHOULD....**

- ✿ Be familiar with flower show terms and their proper use
- ✿ Have a knowledge of design and a sense of color harmony
- ✿ Be able to give a valid reason for every decision
- ✿ Be able and willing to give constructive comments to exhibitors
- ✿ Be impersonal and unbiased
- ✿ Be accurate, fair, observant and unprejudiced
- ✿ Be constructively critical but not antagonistic
- ✿ Be aware and open minded to new or progressive trends
- ✿ Be willing to judge alone. A judge who is not capable of judging alone, is not capable of judging with others.
- ✿ Be neat and tidy in appearance. An untidy appearance makes it difficult to earn respect. A flower show judge is a representative of OAGC and should dress appropriately.
- ✿ Have a deep sense of responsibility and dependability
- ✿ Follow through with commitments
- ✿ Continue to be informed through reading, studying, growing and arranging

Our basis of judging is built on a tried and tested, firm standard system, but we must always be receptive to new ideas and not be complacent and satisfied with the status quo. We must be progressive and willing to learn and to change when things all around us are changing. We must not stand still! If one does not have the time to attend all the required courses and become acquainted with the latest trends in design and latest discoveries in horticulture, then one had better quit now. Knowledge is never complete; success is a continuing journey.

## USEFUL WORDS FOR JUDGES

- Accentuate:** emphasize, stress, underscore  
**Adapt:** conform  
**Advisable:** desirable, fitting, commendable, suitable  
**Aerial:** high, elevated, graceful  
**Alike:** analogous  
**Alter:** modify  
**Ambiguous:** vague, obscure, undefined  
**Amenable:** agreeable  
**Appealing:** attractive, alluring, fascinating, interesting, captivating  
**Appropriate:** proper, suitable, apt, skillful, commendable  
**Arouse:** stir, excite  
**Attained:** achieved, succeeded  
**Attempted:** endeavored, tried  
**Austere:** harsh, stern, severe, strict, hard, rough  
**Balance:** steadiness, stability  
**Beautiful:** handsome, pretty, commendable, suitable, lovely, graceful, elegant, dainty, refined, stunning, dazzling, magnificent, gorgeous, superb, artistic, flawless, becoming, attractive  
**Becoming:** harmonious  
**Bold:** daring, audacious  
**Bright:** brilliant, glistening, luminous, flashy, sparkling  
**Chaste:** pure, sweet  
**Clever:** skillful, talented, adept, gifted  
**Coarse:** rough, harsh textured  
**Compact:** dense, firm  
**Conforming:** typical, sound, rigid  
**Consolidate:** unite, join, confine, merge, incorporate  
**Conspicuous:** prominent, notable, noticeable, outstanding, striking  
**Cumbersome:** unwieldy, clumsy  
**Dazzling:** brilliant, radiant, gleaming, gorgeous  
**Deceiving:** cunning, illusive  
**Deface:** mar, disfigure, maim, mangle  
**Dramatic:** emotional, exciting, vivid  
**Driving:** forceful, vigorous  
**Eligible:** qualified  
**Embellish:** decorate, adorn  
**Enhance:** intensify  
**Excellent:** admirable, splendid, distinguished, incomparable, superior, outstanding, exquisite, magnificent, exceptional, elegant  
**Fragile:** delicate, frail, gossamer  
**Fragrant:** aromatic, spicy  
**Good:** acceptable, adequate, ample, appropriate, proper, skillful, sufficient, pleasant, commendable, complete, correct, satisfactory, suitable  
**Hue:** color, tint, shade, tone, tinge  
**Imaginative:** creative  
**Imposing:** strength, dignity, impressive  
**Impeccable:** errorless, flawless  
**Inspiring:** stimulating, exciting  
**Kempt:** neat, tidy, well groomed  
**Lithe:** flexible, limber, bending  
**Luster:** sheen, finish, polish, shine, gloss  
**Majestic:** noble, stately, imposing  
**Orderly:** tidy, neat, systematic  
**Ornate:** showy, unnatural, excessive  
**Picturesque:** striking, vivid  
**Pleasant:** pleasing, festive, charming  
**Poor:** awkward, disconnected, imperfect, clumsy, confusing, incomplete, inadequate, unrelated, deficient, ill-suited, improper, disturbing, conflicting, displeasing, lacking, weak, insignificant  
**Prestigious:** distinctive, impressive  
**Quality:** trait, characteristic  
**Reminiscent:** suggestive  
**Resplendent:** shining, lustrous, brilliance  
**Robust:** vigorous, healthy, strong, sturdy  
**Showy:** colorful, ornate  
**Small:** tiny, petite, wee, minute, dainty  
**Smart:** stylish, chic, jaunty  
**Suggest:** allude, imply, underscore  
**Surrounding:** encompassing, girdling  
**Turgid:** swollen, expanded  
**Vivid:** striking, picturesque, vibrant

## JUDGING THE HORTICULTURAL DIVISION

Flower show judges should always remember that they are judging the ability of the exhibitor to grow plants. This is the primary reason for judging horticulture classes.

1. Judge cut flower horticultural entries first and roses first among these classes. The rose does not hold its form indefinitely and the exhibitor aims for perfection at the hour set for judging.
2. Carefully examine every entry. Remember that even the poorest exhibit has some good qualities and that someone took the time to grow and enter it.
3. If there is more than one bloom called for in a class, uniformity is important. That is, "three blooms" means three uniform flowers. "Uniform" however, does not necessarily mean "identical".
4. Judge the exhibits as they are at the time of judging, not as they might have been or will be.
5. For a judge to do the best job, all entries must be labeled with the correct variety names. If this has not been done, the judge should suggest that it be done in all future shows. This is an opportunity to educate the exhibitors and the interested public.
6. To fairly judge a horticultural class, a judge must be familiar with varieties. It is unfair to the exhibitors to give ribbons to misnamed varieties. If the schedule states all material must be labeled and an entry is not labeled, it does not meet the requirements of the schedule and should be disqualified. (However, the exhibitor should always remember that a judge is human and bound to make some errors.) As a judge, you should continue to study and learn. You will never run out of material. Make every effort to avoid unnecessary mistakes.
7. Horticultural exhibits may be touched by a judge - but use discretion. Handle, but do not man-handle. Take note of rules. Some plant societies do not allow exhibits to be removed from the container. This does not prevent a judge from lifting the exhibit gently (while still in the container) and observing it thoroughly. **Do not touch the inflorescence.**
8. Again, point score if necessary. Rarely will an entry merit perfection or 100 points. In the case of horticultural exhibits, it is always possible to find some differences which will help determine a winner. Some examples might include: correctness and clearness of labeling, better grooming, and ease or difficulty of growing a particular variety. Of course, a judge must continue their quest in learning in order to note these kinds of differences.

9. It is essential that all judges use the classification list of each plant society in order to judge horticultural classes correctly.
10. OAGC requires a judge to disqualify an entry in the wrong class, however, if an exhibit is found to be in the wrong class, the judge may suggest that it be moved and correctly placed by the flower show chair providing the class has not been judged. We must face the fact that some exhibitors insist on placing entries as they choose, not as the schedule states. In these cases, a judge will disqualify the entry wrongly placed. However, a judge must use large amounts of common sense, discretion and tolerance in disqualifying any entry. Don't forget that a member of the staging committee could have made an error in placing an exhibit. Often a problem presents itself to a judge even though a classification committee was in place. Common sense must guide a judge. No specific suggestions to fit every situation are possible.
11. In horticultural classes, there should be only one first, second and third, although in a class of outstanding quality, one or more Honorable Mention awards may be given. All awards should be made on the basis of worthiness and merit. If there is only one entry in a class, it should receive the award it merits, be it first, second, third, or Honorable Mention. The exhibit should be point scored if necessary to determine the award. In all cases, the decision of the judge is final. It cannot be changed by anyone.
12. **DO NOT** identify plant materials you do not know. Don't bluff.
13. Horticultural classes may be subdivided according to the number of entries **IF** allowed by the flower show schedule. All subdivided classes must contain at least four entries.

## **JUDGING THE ARTISTIC DIVISION**

Constructive comments by a respected judge give encouragement and help to direct creative ability.

1. **Do not touch or move any part of a design.** Sometimes the temptation to correct a leaning flower is almost impossible to resist, but resist you must! You must assume that each element is exactly as the exhibitor desired it to be. It is possible that the whole design might fall over causing a disaster.
2. Do not allow anyone to offer suggestions as to decisions. Most clerks and exhibitors do not do this deliberately. The alert judge must stop a conversation quickly.
3. Disqualify any entry not meeting the requirements of the schedule

that the classification and entry committee may have overlooked. Be sure to check with these committees and then ask for a ruling from the flower show chair.

4. Eliminate those entries meeting the class requirements but not worthy of consideration. Note the difference between “disqualify” and “eliminate”.
5. Do not stand too close to a design. Four feet is close enough, except for miniature and small designs.
6. Do not peer at the sides of the design for hidden props or mechanics. You know they are there.
7. Reward worthy exhibits but refuse to place unearned awards. Do not magnify slight imperfections and stubbornly withhold awards.
8. Do not judge the first show of a club harshly.
9. Be kind and encouraging to juniors.
10. In close competitions, point score exhibits.
11. Remember our primary concern is good design. It is more important than cute, clever interpretation.
12. Employ appropriate descriptive terms for the type of design being judged. Use correct grammar.

## REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF ENTRIES

Judges have the discretion to disqualify flower show entries.

Disqualification reasons may include:

- ✿ Failure to meet the requirements and specifications of the flower show schedule
- ✿ Improper count, where a definite number is specified
- ✿ Side buds left on exhibits to be shown as individual disbudded blooms
- ✿ Use of plant materials, accessories, containers, etc., other than those specified in the flower show schedule
- ✿ Horticultural exhibits misnamed, misclassified or mislabeled
- ✿ Visible insect infestation such as aphids, whitefly, ants, etc.
- ✿ Foreign substances such as plant shine, oil, etc.
- ✿ Artificial coloring of **FRESH** plant material is never acceptable. Use of artificially colored preserved plant material may be acceptable if the flower show schedule allows. (Examples: holiday shows and special classes)

## SUGGESTIONS FOR ORAL JUDGING

All judges should be able and willing to do oral judging. Each year more flower show committees are requesting that their flower show be judged orally. It makes for better understanding between exhibitor and judge. The discussion of entries is more satisfactory than written comments to be read later. The judge should have an opportunity to look over the show quickly before oral judging begins.

Judge as many shows as possible, large or small. Wise decisions come from experience. A judge must progress or retire. Remember that a judge should be thoughtful, gracious, tolerant, polite and considerate of others.

1. Oral judging requires thinking on your feet. Develop a good vocabulary of descriptive words to help you out of difficult situations. (See page 40.) This also makes what you are saying more interesting.
2. Insist that the space around classes being judged be cleared of all people except those who are assisting.
3. Remember you are to judge the exhibits as they are at the time of judging.
4. Do not give awards to unworthy exhibits.
5. Be tactful, mention the good points, then move on to areas where change would improve the design or horticultural exhibit.
6. Do not express opinions unless you are willing to back them up.
7. Permit exhibitors to ask questions after the show is open. Be available.
8. If leaving written comments at the request of the committee, write your own brief, succinct notes, being as concise as possible. Long written commentary could delay judging and the opening of the show. Read the notes as written. Would you understand it if you were an inexperienced exhibitor?
9. Make logical, reasonable statements and be able to thoroughly explain and justify every decision. If an exhibit receives no award because the exhibitor did not conform to the schedule, (example: if the exhibit was not disbudded as required in the schedule), explain what the term "disbudded" means, why it should be done, when it should be done and how.
10. Be specific, not vague. Use good constructive comments and share your knowledge. There may be quite a gap between your experience and the exhibitor's experience.