



The Rose Society of NSW Inc.

## Some tips on exhibiting roses for the beginning exhibitor



## Why Exhibit Roses

Sometimes one wonders whilst taking time and trouble to collect the roses that fit the schedule, making sure they are the freshest and unmarked, storing them in readiness for transportation, then preparing them for staging in the early hours of the morning – Why do this? It's a common feeling.

Why exhibit then?

- It's a way of connecting with other people with a common interest, and making it fun at the same time.
- It's a way we can show the roses we love in our garden that few will see in their moment of glory.
- It's a way of showing roses to the public and enthusing them to grow roses that may appeal to them from the show bench.
- It's a great learning experience, a new skill and one can be so proud and thrilled if there is a place card or ribbon beside your exhibit.
- Even if there is no place card, there is the thrill of a member of the public liking your rose and wanting to get one similar for their garden.
- It's a positive contribution to the community in an area of interest anyone can be a part of.
- It teaches us how to congratulate the winner and appreciate their rose when it is judged better than one's own on the show bench.
- Each exhibit adds to the whole, making the display a kaleidoscope of colour – enhancing the show in whatever region we exhibit.

## How do I start?

- Find out which roses are well suited to exhibition so that you are able to use them at rose shows.
- Plant those roses in good soil and nurture them, ensuring that they are given the food and water they need, and that they are kept as disease and pest free as far as possible.
- Check with the Rose Consultants and information material about growing good roses. It's advisable to have a few bushes of some roses so there is choice of blooms with some classes such as bunch or bud to full bloom. e.g. 3 of Cardinal, 4 of Brass Band, 3 of City of Newcastle and other good roses.
- Make sure you know the different classification of roses, and those that you have in your garden – hybrid tea, floribunda, shrub, miniature, miniflora etc. so that you are entering the appropriate rose to the section.
- Learn from other exhibitors, either at the monthly show bench in your region, by going to rose shows and perhaps watching an exhibitor prepare their roses, but without interrupting; it can be stressful trying to get the exhibits ready on time. Go to an exhibitor's workshop to learn the skills. Read the Judge's Handbook; also read the schedules that are prepared for the various regional shows so that you become familiar with the various classes for exhibition.
- Practise with show bench at your regional meetings, and take the plunge by going to some of the local Agricultural Shows where there are rose exhibits, and put your roses in those shows.
- Then try a couple of classes at the Regional Rose Shows, and before long you will be into it.
- Don't try to enter too many exhibits but learn to pace yourself, entering into a few classes to begin with.

## Resources needed for exhibiting

### Tool Box

Buy one of those plastic style tool boxes from the hardware store. Put into the tool box the following items:

- Small secateurs for cutting off unwanted leaves, coat hangers etc.
- Small camel hair paint brush for brushing off insects
- De-thorner – to help you remove the prickles on the rose
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Foam squares, cotton wool, cotton buds, etc. for pelleting roses
- Water sprayer – to spray the roses before placing on the show bench
- Ball point biro for writing the names of the roses on labels
- Paper clips for placing labels on vases
- Paper or cards for use as labels
- Schedule for the Rose Show.
- Coloured dots for vases with 4-6 stems and/or cuts
- Australian stickers for vases with Australian bred roses

As well as the materials in the tool box

- Bottle of water e.g. 3 litre milk bottle for filling vases
- A couple of towels to wipe down the bench
- Oasis and paper towel for staging the roses. It is better to prepare the oasis beforehand.
- Buckets, tubs or whatever methods best suited for you to transport your roses. You need to keep them sufficiently separated so they do not crush or tear leaves or petals.

## Preparing Oasis

Oasis is the green coloured floral foam which is placed inside the vase to hold the roses.

Main points about the use of floral foam:

- Wet it by placing in a tub so that it draws the water up.
- Writing on floral foam needs to face upwards.
- Cut it to fit in the container – the foam should not protrude above the top of the vase except for bowl arrangements.
- Don't reuse floral foam as it contains bacteria from previous uses, air pockets form where it had been spiked, and foam that has dried out should not be used.
- Cut the end of the rose stem on a slant to help it pierce the foam more easily and to create a greater surface area for drawing up moisture.
- Use tap water or condition the water against bacteria by use of a small amount of an antiseptic such as Listerine.

For further information on the use of floral foam go to The American Rose Society website:

<http://www.rose.org/rose-care-articles/best-kept-secrets-of-floral-foam/>

Also, one of the best places to buy oasis in NSW is through Koch as it is of better quality and less expensive than through the \$2 shops

[www.koch.com.au](http://www.koch.com.au)

## One Month before the Rose Show

- Collect the schedules for the various rose shows you may attend. It is important to check the schedule carefully and then look at the

roses in your garden to see which ones are showing promise for exhibition in some of the classes.

- As the roses are growing, thumb prune (disbudding) the side buds that may be on exhibition roses, so that the single rose will be larger, with a long strong stem and not have energy taken by the side buds. This needs to be done early in the piece so that there is no sign on the stem of the left-overs of the buds. With the floribunda roses, the larger first bud is removed and the side buds come up to fill the space. The larger bloom would have finished blooming by the time of the show.
- Water your bushes regularly and keep up the spraying program.
- 10 days before the show saturate your bushes.
- Roses may need to be pruned 45-60 days before a show as they bloom on a cycle depending on number of petals and the weather.  
<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/prune-roses-specific-bloom-date-47703.html>

## One Week before the Rose Show

- Watch the blooms that are preparing to open, and have potential. Keep them protected from winds, insects and any heavy dew.
- Look again at the schedule and note the day and time by which you must phone in your entries to the Show Secretary. Write down the potential entries on the schedule to assist your planning.
- Some roses could be cut even at this stage and refrigerated in a frost free refrigerator, such as a drink refrigerator in a bucket or vase, with a frost cloth over them sealed at the bottom to prevent their drying out. The fridge (*best at Temp 4-6 degrees C*) slows down the opening of the rose. Not all roses, especially red roses are amenable to refrigeration as they mark around the edges.

## Two to three days before the Show

- Water the roses well during these few days before the show to keep them well hydrated and fresh.
- This is where decisions are made as to when to cut the roses. It will depend on the weather – rain, heat or wind, as well as the number of petals on the bloom. The fewer the number of petals the quicker the rose opens. Roses should be cut either early in the morning or very late afternoon.
- For full bloom roses they need to have clean fresh stamens that have not been touched by the bees. There could be some time for them to open more fully whilst standing for a day or so after picking.
- Choose the roses you are wishing to cut, do them one at a time so they are placed immediately into water and are not going to damage each other if bunched together. Fill two buckets, one filled to the top with tepid water, and the other with cold water about 6 inches of water to which is added a conditioner or a flower preservative mixture. Ensure the secateurs are clean and sharp, and cut the rose on the 7:1 ratio, seven times longer than the size of the bloom so that there is sufficient stem left to cut when staging the rose.
- As the roses are brought in, place them up to just below the bloom in the tepid water, recutting the stem underwater. This allows the air-pockets to dissipate and the rose to absorb the water. After an hour or so place the roses into the cold water and then into a cool dark room. Do not allow leaves to be left in the water in the cold water bucket as they contaminate the water. The water could be changed after a day or so, to ensure freshness.
- During these days some time could be spent ensuring the leaves are clean of any spray and torn leaves or coat-hangers are

removed. Exhibition roses can be pelleted in readiness for staging so that they open up to a more rounded form.

- Don't forget to phone the Show Secretary to nominate your entries – check the deadline date and time on the schedule.

## Day/Night before the Show

- Sort out your roses so that you are ready, knowing what classes each of the roses are to be staged for.
- Prepare the roses ready for transportation to the show. Have prepared your tool box, labels, spray bottle and towel, and ensure your schedule is in your tool box.
- Make sure you know the directions to the show and how long to get there. Check the time the doors open for exhibitors.

## Morning of the Show

- Rise early so that you will get to the show on time, preferably at the earliest time available to give you more time to stage your roses and reduce stress.
- See the Show Chief Steward who will let you know which table you can use for staging your roses. Also see the Show Secretary who will give you the cards to place with each of your exhibits. These cards have a number, which is your designated number and the number of the class that is on the schedule for each of your entries.
- Take a deep breath, stay as calm and focussed as you can, sort out the vases, large for the larger number of roses and small for single stems, and the smaller glass vases for miniature roses. Fill the vases as you need them with water and place in your oasis to hold the roses. The towels can come in handy here as it can get a little wet.
- Stage the entries which require more time, such as the floribunda, bud-to-full bloom and bunch classes, before moving on to the single stem entries, which are a little easier and take less time.

- Before you take your roses in, have another look to see that you have the correct number of stems, that none of the stems have sunk down to change the number in a cluster of roses, and that any tired looking roses in a floribunda are removed. Ensure the number of required blooms are in the vase. Remove any torn leaves and that the roses are staged in an attractive way as far as possible. Ensure pellets are removed; that judges can see the stems to count them; that the oasis is not above the vase; remove any insects with the brush.
- Take each exhibit to place on the appropriate place on the show bench, having sprayed before leaving the staging table, and place the name of the rose on the vase, and the exhibiting card upside down with the vase.
- Do not touch any other exhibitor's vase as this is not permitted.
- Once you have finished, clean up your work space, take back unused vases and mop up any water.
- Go then and enjoy a cup of coffee with a Rosarian friend whilst the judging takes place.
- After judging and the opening of the exhibition, see how your roses have achieved, congratulate other winners and speak with the judges if you wish to learn more about how your rose exhibit could be improved.

*For further information go to:*

- <https://www.rose.org/rose-care-articles/rose-exhibiting-for-beginners/>
- <http://scvrs.homestead.com/NoviceExhibitor.html>
- <http://www.haylingislandhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/pdf/showguide/flowers/Exhibiting>
- <http://www.roseshow.com/resources/good-articles-on->
- Judges' Handbook – National Rose Society of Australia 2013

Some definitions –

Bloom- A bud is considered a bloom when one or more of the petals has begun to unfurl.

NND- Not necessarily distinct – this means there can be the same cultivar or a combination of cultivars can be used.

Distinct – To be of a different cultivar

Exhibition – These are the roses that are a single bloom usually hybrid tea (Refer to Judge's handbook)

Decorative Class- Many of these are roses that are hybrid tea but have fewer petals such as Duet, Gold Medal etc. They are allowed to have side buds, and a variety of stages of the rose blooms make the exhibit more attractive.

Floribunda Roses – These have clusters of roses, and sometimes a single rose on a stem. They are staged with a set number of stems, and a minimum or maximum of blooms. Check the schedule for this.

Florets are the buds that have begun to unfurl or may be completely open.

Full Bloom – These roses should clearly show stamens or centre with fresh pollen and be free from blemish.

Bud to Full Bloom – The four stages of the rose presented –Bud (*showing some colour*), Bunch, Exhibition and Full Bloom of the same cultivar consisting of 4 stems.

**Standard Show Schedules for NSW Appendix E – go to the Members' Site of The Rose Society of NSW website or to any of the Show Schedules of the authorised shows conducted by the Regional Rose Societies.**



## Role of the Chief Steward

1. To keep a time-check on Exhibitors and advise them of the approaching deadline.
2. To know where every class is situated.
3. Give advice (if requested) to all exhibitors, especially the new exhibitors.
4. If not enough room in some classes he/she to create more room, if possible for exhibitors by moving other entries etc.
5. Make sure exhibitors don't cause any misdemeanours e.g. moving other exhibitors' exhibits, spraying flowers on the show bench, changing their position on the show bench from that allocated to them etc.
6. Manage the running of the 'Best Units of the Show' judging etc. and have appropriate cards/ribbons on hand. Ask each Judge to bring to the judging table the unit he/she determines to be the best of the specified standard unit for judging of Championship Unit. (Once all standard units have been selected, from these the Grand Champion is chosen).
7. Make sure there is a steward and runner allocated for each section to be judged well before judging commences.
8. Ensure stewards and runners understand their roles.
9. Make sure judging starts at the time (allocated) stated.
10. Don't give extra time to exhibitors.
11. Advise the public not to touch exhibits before and while judging is still in progress.
12. Make sure all stewards have the appropriate cards for the classes being judged.
13. Chief Steward should be at the show two hours prior to judging and make him/herself known to exhibitors so as to assist if there are any concerns.

## Some examples of Classes in Rose Shows



*Exhibition Rose – Melbourne Town*

*Modern Decorative – Duet*



*As exhibited on the Show bench for A Grade Championship with Elina Bunch of five and Exhibition Roses: Moonstone, Tineke and Melbourne Town*



*Bunch of five-Elina*



*Bunch of three- Tineke*



*Three Full Bloom Kardinal  
(open to show fresh stamens)*



*Floribunda up to 25 blooms  
- Pink Parfait*



*Bud to Full Bloom – Winter Sun and*



*Kardinal*



*Floribunda Dr Bruce Chapman  
Up to 25 blooms*



*Shrub -4-6 stems min 10 blooms  
Love's Gift*





*Bowl Miniatures – Jean Keneally*

*4-6 stems min of 10 blooms Baby Jack*



*Bud to Full Bloom –Irresistible*



*Portrait – Tuscan Sun*

**For criteria used when judging roses – Go to the  
National Rose Society of Australia Inc. (NRSA)**

***Judging Roses - A Handbook for Judges***

***Standards for the various classes of exhibits are described in Pages 10-21***

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