



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Exhibit Guidelines for 4-H



VEGETABLES, FRUITS, FLOWERS and PLANTS

Compiled by Carroll County Cooperative Extension

Revised 2001 for Merrimack County

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4-H Key Gardening Leader



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4-H VEGETABLE EXHIBIT GUIDELINES

SELECTION

For your exhibit, you want high quality. All specimens should be in first class condition. Harvest with care. Be sure your exhibits are as fresh and clean as possible. Avoid bruising when cleaning. All exhibit specimens should be typical of the type and variety exhibited. They should be at prime maturity, best for eating and storing. They should also be at the marketable size. It is not always the largest specimens that are the best. Most overgrown vegetables are not as good for eating, such vegetables are apt to be coarse in texture and lacking in flavor. So, do not exhibit oversized vegetables unless there is a class for the largest vegetable.

Be certain your vegetables are free from any injury caused by insects, disease, machines, tools and weather. Uniformity is very important! All specimens should be uniform in:

- size
- color
- shape
- maturity
- type

Be sure all specimens are as similar as possible for every requirement. You will have to harvest several times more than you intend to exhibit, then select the best and use the most uniform.

Exhibit the AMOUNT STATED in the FAIR HANDBOOK.

CLEANING AND PREPARATION

Exhibit clean vegetables. Use a soft damp cloth. Brushes on some vegetables, such as eggplant, tomatoes or watermelon, could leave brush marks, so use a soft damp cloth. On root crops, use water and your hands. Do not wash lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli or brussel sprouts; just trim soiled leaves (but do not remove them unless guidelines state to). Trim vegetables, such as Root Crops, as directed. Be sure to pack your vegetables carefully. Many times in transporting them, they become damaged. Wrap them individually, then carefully set them in a strong container. If storing vegetables overnight, keep root crops, leafy vegetables, corn and peas in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Label every exhibit with your name, age, address, club name, project level (beginner, intermediate or advanced) class, division, kind and variety on the appropriate fair exhibit card.



4-H CLUB EXHIBIT

AWARD

Blue _____ Red _____ White _____ Green _____

Age _____ # years in 4-H _____ # of years in project _____

Class _____ Division _____ Article Exhibited _____

Goal for Project _____

Circle choice(s) ONLY if you are exhibiting in the category of **crafts, clothing, heritage arts, knitting/crocheting, leisure education and/or woodworking.**

Materials Used: New Used Recycled

Hours (start to finish) 2-4 5-10 10 or more

Instructional Materials/Design:

Kit Pattern Only * Enhanced Pattern * Original

Judges Comments * *(Describe details on reverse)*

Town _____

Name _____

Club _____

Name _____

Club _____

Class _____ Division _____

AWARD

Blue _____ Red _____ White _____ Green _____

*** OPTIONAL:**
For projects requiring 3"x 5" card provide information below

What would you like the judges to know about your project?

4-H VEGETABLE JUDGING

The following is an example of consideration in vegetable judging. This information is simply indicative of factors that are looked for in judging vegetables.

EXCELLENT

Clean
Free from any disease
Uniform in size, shape and color, no noticeable variation (not more than 10%)
At best market size
Best quality
True to variety type

Beets 1 ½ - 2 ½ inches in diameter
Carrots ¾ - 2 inches in diameter
Onions over 2 inches in diameter
Tomatoes 2 ½ - 3 inches in diameter

FAIR

Fairly clean
Free from serious damage (not over 10% by weight or appearance)
Not uniform in size, shape and color (not over 50% variation between the two extreme specimens)
Fairly true to variety
Fair market size

Beets over 1 inch, under 3 ½ inch in diameter
Carrots 1 - 3 inches in diameter
Onions over 1 ½ inches in diameter
Tomatoes over 1 ¾ inches in diameter

GOOD

Clean
Free from damage (5% of vegetable waste)
Fairly uniform, not more than 25% variation
At good market size and quality
Fairly true to variety

Beets over 1 ½, under 3 inches in diameter
Carrots ¾ - 1 ½ inches in diameter
Onions over 1 ¾ inches in diameter
Tomatoes 2 - 3 ½ inches in diameter

POOR

Dirty
Seriously damaged
Extreme differences in size, shape and color (over 50% variation)
Poor market size
Distinctly off type

One, or a combination, of the above points will make an exhibit poor.

ROOT CROPS

Free from deformities, uniform in size, shape and color. No growth cracks, splitting, rot or decay, or rootlets. No insect or disease injury, no sunburned specimens. True to variety, size, shape and color. Remove tops 1-2 inches above the root.

BEETS

1 ½ to 2 ½ inches in diameter.

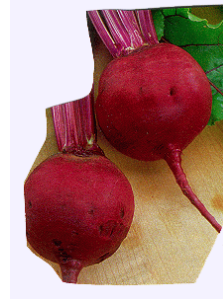
The main tap root should remain.

Specimen should be blocky, not angular and neck should be narrow, shoulder smooth. Trim tops to 1 ½ inches.

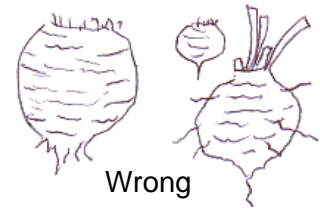
Flesh should be firm, crisp and fine grained.

White rings in cut flesh lower quality score.

Medium to small sized preferred.



Right



Wrong

CARROTS

An average diameter of ¾ to 2 inches for ideal carrots.

Choose carrots that are straight, fresh and deep orange, free from side roots and root hairs and without any green on top.

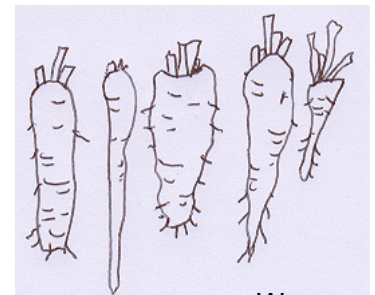
Trim tops to 1 inch.

Do to remove the tip of the carrot.

Flesh should be firm and crisp.



Right



Wrong

PARSNIPS

the diameter should be between 1 ½ to 2 inches.

Trim tops to 1 inch. Do not remove tip of root.

Specimen should be straight with uniform tapering and color light cream.

Remove all side roots.



Right

Wrong

TURNIPS AND RUTABAGAS

Turnip specimens should be about 2 ½ to 3 inches in diameter.

Rutabagas (large - commonly called turnip) should be about 3 - 5 inches in diameter. Trim tops to 1 - 2 inches.

Do not remove the tap root.

They should not be blocky or angular.

Neck should be narrow and shoulder smooth.



Turnip



Rutabaga



RADISHES

¾ to 1 ½ inches in diameter
do not remove the tap root
They should not be blocky or angular
Neck should be narrow and shoulder smooth
Flesh should be firm, crisp and fine grained.



LEGUMES

Uniform size, shape and color according to variety. They must be at the proper stage for eating. Must be free from disease.

BEANS



Snap beans (either green or wax) and shell
Well formed and matched, firm, tender and well filled but not over ripe.
All specimens in the plate must be of the same variety.
Leave ¼ to ½ inch of the stem on the bean.
Line up beans with all stem ends in one direction for exhibit.

LIMA

Both small and large seeded lima beans should be dark green, well filled out but not over-ripe
Stems should be ¼ to ½ inch long.

PEAS

Pods bright green, long and straight, fully filled with tender medium peas.
Uniform in size, shape, and free from blemishes.
Pods should have ¼ inch stem.



DRIED BEANS

Any variety of snap, shell or soy beans, dried peas.
Color and size true to variety.
Free from insects and disease
Uniform in size, shape and color
Jars should be full with no sign of moisture

SALAD CROPS

Show mature but not over-ripe specimens. Make certain that all exhibited specimens are free from blemishes and dirt, true to type of variety. Leaf lettuce does not make a good exhibit.

CELERY

Show firm, clean, crisp bunches with closely set and blemish free outer stalks, with heart well developed.
Trim off roots at the base, then shape the butt, tapering it to a point.



LETTUCE

Show firm, fresh, mature heads. Square off the butt or stem with a sharp knife. **Do not** remove the outside leaves; only a few if they are blemished. Heads of BIBB type lettuce must be symmetrical, full and clean. Sever the loose head from the root system just above the ground line.



COLE CROPS

BROCCOLI

Heads should be uniform in size, shape and color
At the right stage for eating with compact and evenly colored heads
Do not show heads with leaves showing in flower cluster
Do not show wilted broccoli
Keep stem in water before exhibiting
Remove any leaves below the head
Stalk and head should be at least 6 inches long



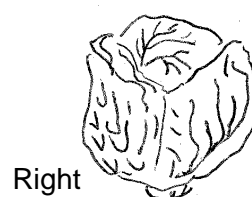
BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Select medium size, firm, heavy green sprouts
Do not show tough, yellowing or injured sprouts
Sprouts should be trimmed and uniform in size, shape and color
Remove loose outer leaves

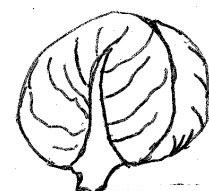


CABBAGE

The heads should be firm and heavy for its size
Remove all but two to four wrapper leaves
Heads should be free from insect and disease damage
The head size, shape and color should be true to variety
Cut the stem not more than 1/2 inch from the lowest leaf



Right



Wrong

CAULIFLOWER

The head should be firm, pure white in color and without small leaves in the head
Leave 4 - 6 protective leaves and trim these to about 1 inch above the head
Cut the stem two inches below the head
Except for color, the same rules apply for Purple Cauliflower



SOLANACEOUS FRUITS (nightshade family)

Exhibit well matched specimens. Firm, free from cracks and blemishes and of bright uniform color typical of the variety.

TOMATOES

Choose smooth firm tomatoes
Uniform in color and size
Ripe tomatoes should have no green or yellow shoulders and no green streaks
Do not show over-ripe specimens
Stems may be taken off or not. Make sure all are the same.



POTATOES

Specimens must be typical of variety
Uniformity in size and shape is very important
Select tubers that are smooth and free from skin disease and insect injury
Potatoes should be dug when they are mature, then dried before removing any soil
Remove soil with cold water and a soft cloth
Avoid bruises and skin breaks when cleaning
The smaller varieties should be at least 6 ounces
The larger ones, not more than 15 ounces

PEPPERS

The specimens should all be deep green in color, fresh, firm and uniform in size and shape
Peppers should possess the same number of lobes.
Leave stems on and trim level with the shoulders
Green peppers should have no trace of red
Red peppers - no trace of green



EGGPLANT

The stems should be attached, about 1 inch long
The color - dark purple and uniform over the entire fruit with no dark spots, blemishes or bronzing
Appearance should be glossy, not dull



VINE CROPS

All specimens must be uniform in size, shape and color and true to variety. Wipe clean with a moist cloth. Do not wash. All specimens must be at their peak of maturity unless otherwise started.

CUCUMBERS

Slicing type should be uniformly dark green, firm, crisp and tender

Fairly straight with blunt ends

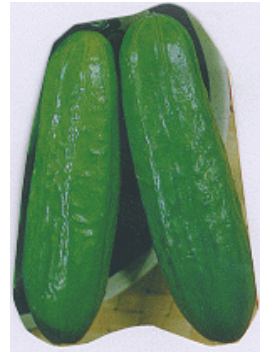
Over 6 inches long with a diameter not more than 2 inches.

Leave ½ inch of stem

Pickling type are short, not more than 4 inches, blocky or stubby, greenish yellow color

Uniformly straight and of even maturity

Exhibit well matched cucumbers



SUMMER SQUASH

There are several varieties of summer squash

Each should be young and tender, which is indicated by tender skin

Ideal length for the long type is 6 - 8 inches

All specimens must be typical of the variety

Uniform in size, shape and color

Trim stem to ½ inch in length



WINTER AND FALL SQUASH

Show only mature hard rind (not easily marked by a fingernail) specimens

Free from blemishes, cracks or splitting

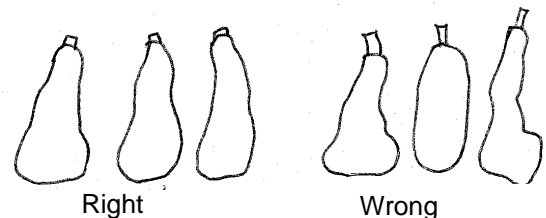
Color and size should be true to variety

Hubbard should be heavily warted, about 10 - 18 inches

Table queen types - 5 to 7 inches

Butternuts - 10 to 12 inches

Stems should be attached (about 1 inch)



PUMPKINS

The specimen should be well matured, firm of good color and true to type, size, shape, regardless of variety

About 8 inches in diameter for small sugar type

Large field type or Jack-O-Lanterns should be 8 inches or more in diameter

Jack-O-Lantern type should have a full, cylindrical shape

Do not show specimens with excessively flattened or discolored “ground sides”

Stem should be attached

WATERMELON

Select mature but not over-ripe, true to variety, type and color

Rind should be firm, smooth and shiny and free from blemishes

Ground spots should have a yellow tinge

Leave a short stem



MUSKMELON

Choose medium sized, firm, evenly ribbed, closely netted, ripe Melons

Remove stem to test ripeness

Muskmelons are ripe when stem separates from fruit easily and flower end is somewhat soft

Do not show diseased or yellow spotted over-ripe melons



BULB CROPS

ONIONS/SHALLOTS, GARLIC

Onions should be well cured before fair day. Dig two weeks before exhibiting. Onions should be dried in a dry spot out of direct sunlight, and in good air circulation. When tops are dry, remove by twisting, leaving the scales tight at the top of the bulb. The necks should be dry and trimmed to one inch. There should be no sprouting

Do not peel

Leave at least one clean dry outer scale on the onion

Trim long roots neatly, close to the base, but do not cut the bulb

Onions should be mature, firm and clean

True to variety, size, shape and color

Choose specimens that are uniform

Avoid deformities, insect or disease injured bulbs



CORN

SWEET, POPCORN, ORNAMENTAL

Ears should be true to variety, uniform in color, length and thickness

Avoid mixture of varieties

Select specimens that are well filled out from the butt to tip

Avoid ears with worms or injuries

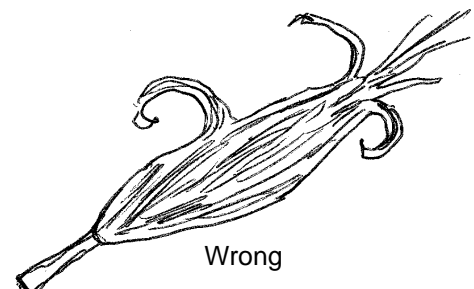
On one side of the ear, strip a width of the husk, 1 - 1 ½ inches from tip to butt and remove this husk only. Leave the rest of the husk on for exhibit. (This should be done on the day of exhibit, not before).

Remove the silk

Neatly trim the stem just below the point where the husks are attached. Cutting too close will cause the husks to fall off.

Sweet corn should not be over-ripe. The kernels should be in the milk stage and in tightly packed straight rows.

Popcorn and ornamental should be exhibited in the flint stage with tight, straight row.



HERBS

POTTED OR FRESH

Keep herbs separated by individual variety

Fresh cut herbs should be uniform in color and length

Potted herbs should be in a clean pot; no foil or covering on container

Fresh herbs should be displayed in individual containers with water or individually wrapped in wet paper towel or newspaper.

FRESH FRUITS

Must have same variety on plate or container; example: apples; pears; berries; peaches; strawberries.

All must be typical of the variety exhibited.

Must be uniform in size, color and ripeness

Must be mature and marketable quality.



Stems must be on most fruits; exception: blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries. Must be no bruises, insect damage, or disease. Do not wash fruit prior to exhibiting. Clean off any dirt with a **very** soft brush if necessary.



HORTICULTURE

FLOWERS; CUT OR DRIED

Should be true to type, i.e.: a snapdragon should have a long tapered flower spike rather than be short and clubby.

Like specimens, should be uniform in size, shape, color, and maturity.

Display may contain more than one variety or specimen.

All specimens must be fully matured.

Display may be cultivated flowers or wildflower specimens, (fresh or dried).

Display must have good balance, scale, color and proportion.

Display must be in a suitable, attractive, clean container. No foil or covering on container.



HOUSEPLANTS; FLOWERING OR FOLIAGE

Must be true to type; size should be suitable to variety.



Must be grown by exhibitor for at least three (3) months.

Must be planted in proper soil mixture; not garden soil.

Must be in a suitable, clean pot in proportion to plant size.

(Generally plant should be twice the size of pot.) No foil or covering on container.

Must have proper shape.

Flowering plants should have an abundance of flowers.