

HINTS & TIPS FOR SHOW EXHIBITORS

A GUIDE FOR NEW EXHIBITORS

Produced by
Candelo AH & DF Assn Inc
Online Edition

This booklet contains useful hints
and tips to enable you to prepare
and present your Exhibits
for your local Show

They have been gathered from a
number of sources but as a rule,
are the sorts of things that
Show Judges are looking for
regardless of where the
Show is being held.

CANDELO A.H. & D.F. ASSOCIATION

Produced by the Candelo Show Society

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**CANDELO SHOW – HELD ON THE
THIRD SUNDAY IN JANUARY**

A GREAT TRADITIONAL COUNTRY SHOW

**PROUDLY PART OF THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1883**

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INTRODUCTION

The best way to support you local Show is to exhibit your work or produce. Local Show committees work all year to provide a venue for exhibitors and the success or failure of a Show depends entirely on how well the local community supports it.

The following pages contain hints and tips gathered from experienced Judges and Stewards and are designed to help new exhibitors. They will be of special benefit to Juniors and to new adult exhibitors.

They have been broken down into the most common Sections to be found in most Show Schedules and into the most common Classes found in those Sections.

Of course they do not cover every Section or Class in every Show but hopefully, they will be a useful guide to most Shows.

Remember that Judges are looking for the best exhibit which is presented ON THAT DAY and they always take into consideration early or late seasons; weather conditions in the days leading up to the Show etc.,

These hints and tips are not meant to discourage you from exhibiting but rather to encourage and assist you towards becoming a regular and successful exhibitor.

ENTRIES AND EXHIBITS

There is an important distinction between an **ENTRY** and an **EXHIBIT**

Your **ENTRY** is the **WRITTEN RECORD** which the Show Secretary makes of the article/articles which you will be presenting for judging on Show day.

Your **EXHIBIT** is the **ARTICLE ITSELF**.

ENTRIES

When your Schedule states that **ENTRIES** will be received at specific times, this means that you should bring along your completed **ENTRY FORM** to have each individual article recorded in its appropriate Section and Class by the Show Secretary or Stewards. This does not mean that you bring along the articles themselves only the entry forms.

When you presented your **ENTRY FORM** you will be issued with a numbered **ENTRY TICKET** for each of **EXHIBITS**. It is most important that this numbered ticket is securely attached to your **EXHIBIT** in such a way as to enable the Stewards and Judge to clearly see the Section, Class and Number.

A duplicate of the numbered Entry Ticket with your name written on it is then held in the Stewards Book and is the only way of identifying each winner.

Sorting out **ENTRIES** takes quite a lot of time so the earlier you can make your **ENTRIES**, the easier it will be for your Show official.

Once the **ENTRIES** have closed, the Secretary then has to group them all into their appropriate Sections; arrange each Section into the appropriate Classes and order for the Stewards in that Section; write out Prize Cards for each Class which has been entered even though there may be only one entry in that Class.

ENTRIES usually close a day or two before Show Day and late Entries may not always be accepted so check carefully on the closing date.



EXHIBITS

EXHIBITS should be brought along at the times specified in your Schedule, usually the **Day Before** the Show or **EARLY** on Show Day.

At these times there will be someone available to place your exhibits in the correct areas, get them checked off by the Stewards and arranged in the proper order for the Judge.

Show Officials are only too happy to help if you have any queries about your entries and once you get the hang of it,

ENTERING your **EXHIBITS** is a 'piece of cake'.....

Or a piece of embroidery

Or a pumpkin

Or a jar of jam.....

**MEMBERSHIP TO YOUR SHOW SOCIETY
KEEPS IT HEALTHY
BECOME A MEMBER NOW. CONTACT YOUR SHOW
SECRETARY FOR DETAILS**

PRESENTING YOUR EXHIBITS

The first requirement for successful showing is to **READ YOUR SCHEDULE CAREFULLY** and then make sure that your exhibit conforms exactly to what is required, e.g.,

Section 12, Class 19: Collection – pickles, relish, chutney, sauce.

This means that your exhibit will consist of one jar of each of the varieties mention.

Another example:

Section 15A, Class 13: Patchwork article, machine sewn. This means that the entire article must be **MACHINE SEWN** and show **NO HAND STITCHING WHAT SO EVER.**

Another example:

Section 16, Photography: Photographs must be a minimum of 10 x 12 cm and have a cardboard backing, preferably white, 20 x 25 cm in size. The colour of the cardboard backing is not rigidly enforced here but its size is clearly stated, as is the **MINIMUM** size of the photos and the **MAXIMUM** number you are allowed to enter. These conditions must be adhered to so as to avoid possible disqualification.

Any special conditions throughout the various Classes and Sections must be adhered to so as to avoid possible disqualification and much disappointment.

FARM PRODCUE:

The judges are looking for:

- Good quality produce;
- Evenness throughout exhibit;
- Freedom from disease and damage.

As with all 'grown' exhibits this section is heavily influenced by the season so remember everyone is in the same boat and the judges will always take things into consideration.

- Keep strictly to weights and quantities required as in the schedule
- Label each exhibit with neat cardboard labels
- Do not wash eggs as this removes the natural bloom. Clean nesting material in the days before the show is best but if really necessary a slightly damp cloth may be used
- An evenly sized clean exhibit is the key to success here.

In this section the spirit of showing your produce is to provide an exhibition for show patrons who may not know one variety from another but will appreciate the display.

VEGETABLES:

The judges are looking for:

- Exhibits which are typical of the variety mentioned in the schedule
- Free from disease, insect or other damage
- Fresh, crisp and clean produce
- Uniform shape and size.

Most vegetable judges are looking for 'table' quality so, **bigger** is **not necessarily** better unless the schedule calls for size.

e.g. Section 9, Class 28: Three Heaviest Onions A.V. (Any variety).

This is not to say that big vegetables are not always quality vegetables either. Just try to keep each entry true to the variety mentioned.

Unless the schedule states otherwise vegetables such as **carrots, parsnips, beetroot, radishes and turnips** should have their tops cut back so as to leave about 75-100mm. The remaining tops should be fresh without wilting or other damage.

All root vegetables: should be shown free from forked roots and dirt and when cut should show a small core, fine grained flesh and good even colour.

Beans: should be straight and of uniform length size and colour. In 'collections' it is a good idea to tie beans together in a bunch using a rubber band or light string.

Cabbage: should be typical of the variety, show no yellowing, scorching or insect damage and have a stalk of 5-10mm long.

Cucumbers: long types should be straight with a stem intact. Apple types should be true in shape and colour also with a stem intact.

Herbs: All specimens should be clearly named if possible. The leaves and stems or commonly used parts should be fresh, good colour, aromatic and typical of the variety or type.

Lettuce: heads should be crisp, firm and clean – watch out for burning or slime. Some loose outer leaves may be removed but do not strip right down to the heart. Ideally a stalk of about 5mm long should be left on the exhibit.

Onions: should show bright, clean, hard, dry skins. Necks should be small and well cured. When cut onions should show clean circular rings with no double centre.

Peas: should be of good length and be full to the ends of pods. They should carry a fine powdery bloom. **Snap, Sugar or Snowpea** pods should not have enlarging contents.

Potatoes: keep tubers uniform in size, free from hollows, blemishes and shoots. Deformed or misshapen potatoes should not be shown. Potatoes should be clean but not washed.

Pumpkin: should be mature – test by pushing fingernail into skin – the harder the skin the better. Stems should be attached.

Silverbeet / Spinach: should have straight, clean, crisp stems with a good balance between the white and green sections. Individual leaves should be uniform in size and colour.

Sweetcorn: Cobs should be well filled, husk should be fresh and green. Some outside husk can be removed leaving enough to cover kernels. Cobs should have a short shank.

Tomatoes: should be firm with no cracks or deformities. When cut, flesh should be of even colour and there should be an even balance between flesh and seed segments. **Green tomatoes** should show no red or pink at all. Tomatoes are shown with not stem.

Rhubarb: though used as a sweet, rhubarb is classed as a vegetable. Stalks should be an even size and colour and have the green tops cut back. Tie bundles of stalks together for showing.

Squash / Marrow: should be typical of variety with a soft tender rind. Leave a stem of about 15mm..

Zucchini: should have a soft, tender rind (easily punctured by a thumb nail) They should be about 160mm long and have a stem of about 15mm left on them.

FRUIT:

The judges are looking for:

- Fruit which is typical of the variety mentioned in the schedule
- Free from disease, insect or other damage
- Clean, bright and free from dust
- Uniform shape and size

Particular fruits have different requirements when exhibiting....for instance, some fruits should have stems attached and some should have stems removed.

Apples, pears, cherries, plums should have stems left on but **peaches, apricots, nectarines** and most **berries** should not.

Strawberries: should have caps and short stems attached.

Citrus Fruits: should have stems cut close to the surface of the rind leaving green plump sepals. A tip with citrus fruit is that freshly picked fruit usually has thicker pith which is not desirable.

Plums and Grapes: should not have their natural bloom removed by wiping or polishing.

Passinofruit: should be ripe and full of flesh. Choose your passion fruit by weighing them in you hand. They should have a short stem attached.

CONDIMENTS:

Jams, Jellies, Sauces, Chutneys, Pickles & Relishes.

The judges are looking for:

- Freshness
- Finished product free from any mould or scum
- Jam which is true to fruit colour
- Jellies which are clear and transparent
- Sauces, chutneys, pickles and relishes which are true to type and have a bright natural appearance.
- Jars that are clean and free from any advertising including the lids. This is important as it may disqualify you if any advertising is seen.

Jams, jellies, chutneys, sauces, pickles and relishes: should look good enough to eat but flavour and consistency are just as important.

Always taste-test your work. It should not be sugary or have bits of froth or burnt pieces present. Check that there is no mould under lids of work that you may have had stored for a while. It is easy to remove the cap and replace it with plastic wrap or a jam cover the day before the show.

Jams: should be true to fruit colour and should not have large chunks of fruit and should be of a good spreading consistency. Never use jamsetta as this often makes jam stiff and unnatural and Judges can always tell anyway.

Use a vegetable peeler to achieve the right thickness of rind for marmalade and don't fall into the trap of having too much rind.

Pickles: chutney and relishes should always be thickened with cornflour and should be of a ***spreading*** consistency.

Sauces: should always be of an even ***pouring*** consistency.

Always fill jars to the very top and skim off any bubbles. Polish jars with vinegar. Attach neat labels and make sure your Entry ticket is firmly attached with sticky tape or glue (a rubber band is good) with the Entry number clearly visible.

Try not to use large jars – 250gm size is ideal.

**ENCOURAGE JUNIOR EXHIBITORS – THEY
ARE THE FUTURE OF YOUR SHOW**

COOKING:

Scones, Biscuits, Slices, Tarts, Pies & Breads.

The judges are looking for:

- Appearance, Finish, Colour, Texture
- Flavour, Aroma
- Decoration, Presentation

Scones: that are well risen with smooth slightly rounded tops; even golden brown top and with creamy white sides or of good colour according to type e.g. wholemeal scones.

Everyone has their own tricks with scones but a few tips for competition are:

- To always use a sharp cutter.
- Lift cut scones onto cooking trays with a spatula (helps to keep sides straight) and allow enough room so scones do not touch during cooking.
- Chop dates into small pieces.
- Do not allow fruit (dates or sultanas) to protrude as they could harden and burn.
- Always wipe excess flour from bases.
- Scones for showing should be approximately 2 inches or 5cm across.

Biscuits: Should have clean cut edges and good even colour and texture throughout. They should be uniform in size and shape.

When presenting biscuits for showing they should have a crisp unhandled appearance. There should be no flour or grease evident on the bases.

If “**distinct**” varieties are required then this means separate mixtures **not** one mixture dressed up in different colours and shapes. If **icing** is required this should be thin, delicate and smooth and come just to the edge of the exhibit.

Slices: As for biscuits.

Tarts: Should be small, round and uniform in shape and colour. They should have a dry smooth base with no air pockets underneath (bake in shallow patty tins for best results). Filling should be placed so as to leave a nice even margin all round and if jam is called for do not use jelly. The pastry should show a delicate golden biscuit colour and the filling should be clear and bright.

Pies: Apple Pies The crust should be rich light and an appetising golden colour. They should be a good shape usually round, well risen and evenly cooked top and bottom. The apple should be bright (a few drops of lemon juice helps) with just enough syrup to make it tasty. Fill so as to form a dome in the centre of the pie and do not glaze unless asked to do so.

Breads: Judges will be looking for a well risen loaf with good shape and neat clean sides with a rounded top. It should have a crisp golden brown crust and moist smooth texture.

A few tips with bread are:

- Sift the flours
- To have all utensils lukewarm or at least at room temperature before starting.
- Grease the rising bowl and cover with a cloth which has been wrung out in hot water and then cover the lot in a large plastic bag to keep the temperature even.
- A good loaf makes a hollow sound when tapped on the base.

Cakes: Judges will be looking for:

- Fine even texture without airholes
- Even colour on top sides and base
- Height in proportion to tin size
- No wire rack marks
- Typical of variety stated in schedule

Sponge Sandwich: Unless specified in the schedule, this should be unfilled and un-iced and should not contain cornflour, custard powder or maizena.

Sponge Roll: Should have uncut edges and the filling should not soak into the cake. A good tip is to use a cloth dipped in hot water then wrung dry when rolling the finished cake. Remove the cloth immediately though.

Butter Cake: Made by creaming the butter and sugar method. It is changed by the addition of flavourings such as orange/chocolate etc. A good tip when creaming the butter and sugar is to add a tablespoon of boiling water. When mixing cocoa and water try adding a pinch of

baking powder. When using bananas ensure that they are not over ripe.

Iced means plain, smooth icing on top only except for Decorated cakes and fruit cakes.

Fruit Cakes: Never vary the recipe of any special cake required by the schedule. Cut all fruit to ensure an even size throughout, except for sultana cakes which use whole fruit. A good tip is to wet your hands with cold water and wipe over the top of the mixture before placing in the oven for a smooth finish. The top of the cake should be quite flat or very slightly dipped in the middle before cooking.

Lamingtons: Should be made from butter cake mixture, show no soaking from icing and should be no more than 1 ½" - 2" or 4-5 cm cubes.

Patty Cakes: Should be cooked in tins not papers unless otherwise stated.

Plum Puddings: Whether cooked in a cloth or a basin should show no evidence of water seepage and have a smooth even surface.

Tins: Cake tins should always be selected in proportion to the size of the mixture. Loaf or bar tins should be used for orange cake/date loaf. A seven inch or 18cm round tins for sponge cakes and **never** use a recessed or ring tin unless specified.

Plates: When presenting your exhibits it is best to display them on ***firm/rigid plates*** as soft cardboard ones collapse. A **clear** plastic bag (not a freezer bag) to cover the food is preferable rather than plastic wrap. This will save the food from slipping off the plates.

HOMEBREWING:

Read your Schedule carefully. Know what category you are entering. Sometimes more than one bottle is required, sometimes only one.

You **must** provide all details that are required from you. Here are a few tips:

- Wipe bottles over with vinegar to give them a clean shiny appearance.
- Have neat tidy labels
- **Must provide** Brewing Log Sheet and ensure that it is legible for the judge to read. (Neatly printed or typed would be best. Can be a separate item to the bottle. The best one was framed which certainly improved the overall look of the exhibit.) This includes:

- brew type
- Water volume wart
- Water added
- Sugar type wart
- Sugar type bottle
- Pre yeast temp
- Original gravity
- Final gravity
- Date brewed started
- Date brew bottled

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Read your Schedule very carefully and ensure that you are adhering strictly to the requirements of your section. If it states that your photograph should be of a particular size or that it should be mounted in a particular way, then ***THAT IS THE WAY YOU MUST*** present it. If you do not then you run the risk of being disqualified. This is a very large section for all shows and the requirements are very clear when entering.

All work must be bone fide and original.

ART:

This is such an individual section that the only advice is to read the schedule carefully. Limits do apply to some sections. Check carefully.

You **MUST** make sure that all frames are well presented and above all, **MAKE SURE** that your exhibit has some means of being **HUNG** on a wall or a chain.

HANDICRAFTS:

Many and varied are the exhibits which can come under this heading in you schedule but the judges will always look for original work.

Knitting/Crochet/Sewing/Embroidery

The judges are looking for:

- Clean well presented work
- Articles which conform **exactly** to the schedule. Ensure that you read it carefully.
- Originality

In these sections much depends on the finish of each exhibit.

Knitting and Crochet should show:

- evenness of stitching and tension.
- Inside there should be no knots or loose ends and seams should be as neat as possible – experts suggest weaving seams together so they are perfectly matched.

Needlework Sections, Machine Work must show:

- Straight even stitching with seams neatly matched
- Hems exactly even

Tapestry and Embroidery are judged on:

- Evenness
- Neatness
- Straightness of stitching

Quite often it is the ***inside finish*** of an article in these sections which helps the judge decide between two equally good exhibits.

Tips for these classes are to:

- Press embroidery well from both sides with padding underneath when doing the wrong side
- Fine crochet such as doilies should lie flat with no puckering
- All exhibits should be fresh and clean (some schedules state “unwashed”)
- Use safety pins to attach your entry tickets.

**SPONSORS ARE A VITAL PART OF
EVERY SHOW – WITHOUT THEM
NO SHOW COULD CONTINUE**

**READ YOUR SCHEDULE AND MENTION
THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF THEIR
SPONSORSHIP**

FLOWER SECTION:

The Judges are looking for:

- Blooms at the peak of development
- Good texture and free from blemishes
- Strong, straight stems
- Clear, bright colour
- Clean, healthy foliage

These above rules should always be followed, even for any flower not mentioned in this booklet as there are far too many for us to detail them all.

Talk to the Stewards at your local Show, they will be happy to advise you as to the particular requirements for particular blooms.

Also try to “**stage**” or set up your cut flowers so that the BLOOM is looking straight at the Judge – check to see if some support, perhaps paper in the neck of the container, is allowed. Always stage one bloom per container unless the Schedule says otherwise.

Always use clean containers and always ensure that the container will not tip over – sand in the bottom is usually Okay but it might pay to check with the Stewards.

Check that any exhibits which are subject to a specific measurement, e.g. Dahlias are within the allowed limit. It would be a pity to have a great bloom but have it too small or too large for the particular Class you have entered it into.

“**Distinct**” means same variety but different colours e.g. “Nasturtium, 3, distinct”
Means on red, one yellow and one orange.

“**N.N.D.**” means ‘not necessarily distinct’ which means that blooms may be all the same colour if desired.

Carnations: should have a good strong, straight stem with the bloom showing a waxy sheen. It should be free from blemishes, insect or other damage. The calyx should show no tendency to burst.

Dahlia: blooms should conform with the size requirements in your Schedule and should appear fresh and mature, have a firm substance, firm texture and be free from blemishes. Stems should be straight and situated in the centre of the bloom and should be in proportion to the size of that bloom. The stem should hold the bloom facing upwards at 45 degree angle except for **POMPONE** types which should face straight upwards in line with the stem.

Fuschias: should display petals and sepals which are firm and fleshy with a smooth, gleaming or crepe-like surface and clear, bright colours.

- Single Fuschias have four (4) petals;
- Semi-double have five (5) and no more than seven (7) petals;
- Doubles have more than eight (8) petals. All Fuschias have four (4) sepals.

Geranium/Pelargonium: There are a host of different types of these blooms so the general rules for cut flowers should be followed but-

- single blooms have no more than five (5) petals per floret;
- semi-double have more than five (5) but not more than eight (8) petals and
- doubles have more than eight (8) petals per floret.

Where the Schedule calls for '**Ivy**' or '**Ivy leafed**' blooms, always leave a leaf attached to your exhibit.

Gladioli: These are four classes of Gladioli **Formal, Informal, Intermediate and Miniature** with small differences between each class however:

- Every spike should be shown one to a container unless the Schedule state otherwise
- Have two-thirds flower head and one-third stem
- Florets should be held upright and rigid and all face the one way.

Formal Gladioli: should have a straight spike right through to the top and florets should overlap the centre of the spike so as to hide it. The bottom of the second floret should be level with the centre of the first etc....

Informal Gladioli: should have a straight stem but a slight wave in the top is allowed. Florets should not overlap but be separated enough to allow full appreciation of each floret.

Intermediate Gladioli: have bottom florets in the informal position and remainder in the formal.

Miniature Gladioli: have florets of no more than 85 mm across.

Hydrangeas: should have straight stems which are at right angles to the head. The head should be regular in outline and individual pips should be displayed evenly over the surface of the bloom i.e. it should present a smooth 'mushroom' styled surface. Hydrangeas can be of any colour across the range but, each bloom should show clear, uniform colour.

Marigolds: can be either large or dwarf variety. In either case, blooms should have good shape, double flowers should show no centre, stems should be strong and straight and should hold the bloom clear of the container in which they are displayed.

Petunia: blooms should always be circular in outline with regular petals of good texture, colour/colours should be clear and distinct. The blooms should be free from damage and show healthy foliage.

Roses: blooms should have a well-balanced, symmetrical shape and display petals free from blemishes. Stems should be straight with clean healthy foliage.

Polyanthus Roses: should have all florets fresh and free from any damage.

Where the Schedule says 'Rose in three stages, bud, half blown, full blown'- you should present one variety, e.g. 'Peace' but three distinct cuts of the above.

Zinnias (large): should not be less than 90 mm in diameter with evenly spaced petals overlapping and compact. They should be full to the centre with at least eight rows of petals. Stems should be straight and hold blooms erect.

Zinnias (Lilliput): should be of clear, distinct colour with straight stems and free from bleaching or damage.

Pot Plants / Ferns: always make sure that pots are clean and in good condition. A clean, healthy exhibit is always the most eye-catching. If required to be flowering, make sure there are no dead or dying blooms visible.



FLORAL ART:

The judges are looking for:

- A well balanced exhibit which conforms exactly to what the Schedule requires
- Good clean material
- An attractive, complimentary container (no bottles)

Unless otherwise specified, a good rule of thumb is to make your arrangement roughly one and a half to two times the height of your container.

Table arrangements: should be done so as they can be viewed 'in the round' and should be low enough to see over when seated at the table.

Miniature arrangements: should be exactly the dimensions stated in your Schedule – Judges actually measure them!!!!

Basket arrangements: should allow two thirds of the handle to be seen.

Posies: should be made up of small flowers and be presented in a 'mushroom' shape i.e. nicely oval and presenting an even surface.

Floral Saucers: should be filled with sand to anchor flowers. Cover edges with tiny leaves or flowers but do not let them overhang. Try for the 'mushroom' shape. Do not add extra embellishment e.g. ribbons etc. to floral saucers. Do not allow any sand to show through finished exhibit.

WOODWORK:

The judges will be looking for:

- Work which conforms exactly to the Schedule
- Well finished work

A hint for Juniors is to be very sure that you have:

- sanded all rough edges
- cleaned up any spilt glue



Acknowledgments & Further information available from:

Horticultural Judges' & Exhibitors' Show Manual
Canberra Horticultural Society Inc. ACT

Judging and Showing—A guide to Exhibitors—June Show Society

Cooking for Competition, by J. Graham & D. Moore

Local Judges and Stewards of the Far South Coast Show Societies.

GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY SHOWING!