

Are You Ready To Exhibit?...Making Your Entries

By: Richard Anthony & Kristine Vance

Hopefully many of our new exhibitors have followed some of our suggestions, combined with what they have read in various other rose articles and added their own unique tried and true growing techniques in order to become more comfortable with the entire process of exhibiting. This brings us to the end of the cycle... which for now is going to be our last article..."**Making Your Entries.**" Today's article concentrates on what you do with your roses at the rose show.

Exhibitors (especially ones that have experienced some degree of success) tend to take far too many roses with them to a rose show. You will see them enter the prep area carrying roses in every imaginable container, from vases to buckets to custom made transport boxes; often making several trips between their vehicle and the preparation room. Our newbie's should not be intimidated by others carrying in numerous roses. Most of us who fall into this category (too many roses) should take heed in the old adage that "all it takes to win is but one rose." Rose Societies and the show visitors tend to benefit from the extra roses but for our new exhibitors we strongly suggest that you take what you have to the show whether it is but one or many roses; take what you have and enjoy the entire process. You will meet some very nice people and just may get hooked on exhibiting as we have done.

Once we have gathered all of our supplies and arranged our vases (large roses first) in a rectangular pattern, we will place our completed entry tags on the vases or insert them in the slot on the wooden blocks at shows that use test tubes in lieu of vases. We do this in an alphabetical format going from top to bottom and left to right. We use this approach do to the number of roses we bring. If you have 20 or less you probably don't need to be so ridged/methodical. Once this task is completed we will begin to insert the canes into the vases/test tubes until all of our large roses are removed from the transport containers. Wedging, if allowed, is then positioned in the vase/test tube in order to keep the cane straight and erect. Care needs to be taken to insure that the wedging material complies with the show schedule (some rose show schedules will specify what type of wedging is allowed) and does not extend above the rim of the vase/test tube as a severe penalty will result.

Once all of our large roses are wedged, we will quickly take a look for Queen quality roses (refer to the article "**What Judges look For**") and set them aside. Depending on how many roses we take to a show, we may set aside as few as three and as many as a dozen. In our less than humble opinion, we are setting aside roses that we believe have the potential to be at minimum court quality roses or hopefully better. We typically will take multiples of a few different varieties as we enjoy entering various **Challenge Classes** (Three and Five of a kind/different and others) and will put these aside also. Now we will have a group of Queen type roses, Challenge Class roses and other roses which may be used for a floater, picture frame or open blooms.

By now our roses have warmed up sufficiently that we can begin the grooming process. Richard tends to position most of the **Q-tips** in the large roses while Kristine works on the open blooms removing petaloids and insuring that the bloom lies as flat as possible; the size of the hand pretty much determines who does what on our team. Roses are also reviewed for ancillary (**side**) buds, bad leaves and bloom imperfections that require trimming. Ancillary buds are left until about a half an hour prior to the close of entries before removal. Some buds can be removed with your fingers and other thicker stems require the use of **Felco Microtip pruners** or a **scalpel**. Extreme care must be exercised as not removing enough of the stem will leave an unsightly protrusion and cutting too deep will result in a leaflet hanging down or cut off; both conditions will not garner positive points with the judges. As soon as we remove the side bud we will place a drop of lemon juice on the remaining stub before we enter the rose. Failure to either do this or to place a drop of water on the stub will result in the stub turning very dark. Judges find this very offensive and penalize accordingly. Leaves with damage are trimmed with **deckle edge** shears, assuming the damage is on the edge or tip of the leaf. Oversized terminal end leaves are typically trimmed to bring them back in balance with the remaining leaves. Others leaves that are damaged may be removed depending on whether the removal will improve or be more offensive than the leaf damage that exists; if it is an improvement it is removed and if not we try to camouflage it using the leaf next to it to hide it as best possible. Imperfections on the bloom are handled by Kristine; once again it is related to the size of the hand...as in 'Dainty Bess' compared to ham hocks.

Once we have completed grooming the large roses we will repeat the same process first for the Mini-Floras and finally for the Miniatures. We pretty much use the same technique and format for the smaller roses that we do for the larger roses. The primary difference is in the size of the Q-tips. The Q-tips for Mini-Floras are cut in half and those used for Miniatures are cut to about forty percent in length when compared to those cut in half. The tedious part is removing about one half of the cotton tip from the end of each Q-tip; this is a week night project unless Kristine's oldest daughter accompanies us to the show. The cut Q-tips are inserted between the petals of the smaller roses much the same as it is done with the large roses. Once all of the smaller roses are separated and groomed, large rose entries can be made; some rose shows have a **placement committee** and others require the exhibitor to place their own entries. Keep in mind that if an entry is placed incorrectly by an exhibitor, it is subject to **disqualification** when found but not so when placed incorrectly by a placement committee.

We typically begin placing our least Queen quality roses first saving our best roses for last; this is a common practice with most seasoned exhibitors. We will also enter our Challenge Class entries at this time. With about thirty minutes or less remaining we like to be in a position that all we have left to enter is our very best Hybrid Teas, Mini-Floras and Miniatures; note that we said "**like to be**" as this very seldom happens. More often than not we are moving much faster than normal during the last five minutes before entries close trying fervently to get our last and best roses entered; we always do but have more than our fair share of near collisions in the process.

Once all of our entries are in, we take one final look at our Challenge Class entries (technically you are allowed to make adjustments up until the entries have closed) and clean up our area; if you clean as you go this is not a major task. It is now out of your hands and up to the judges to determine if you have the “Queen of Show”. The final event that we look forward to at a rose show, if we are not clerking or working on the show committee, is where to head for breakfast/lunch as by now we are hungry as it may be five to eight hours since we left our humble abode to travel to the show.

This article project, “Are You Ready To Exhibit”, started at a Forest City Rose Society Board Meeting last November. Thought was we could interest individuals who hadn’t exhibited before by taking them step by step thru the exhibiting process. Honestly at the time it didn’t seem like that big of deal. You know...What’s a couple of articles on a topic we LOVE? LOL Five months and 19 article later we are done. I don’t think either one of us will quit our day jobs (Accountants) to work in publishing, but it was nice to work together in writing these articles. We will be back again perhaps this fall with a few more informative articles related to exhibiting. As always, if you have questions regarding this or any of the other articles that we have written, please address them to Richard at RJA4CPA@aol.com or Kristine at Beancntr30@wideopenwest.com.