

# **Preparation At The Show...On Your Way To Winning**

## **By: Richard Anthony & Kristine Vance**

Walk into the “**Prep Room**” the first time you attend a rose show and you will be absolutely amazed at what you will see; a hustle and bustle of activity...Q-tips, wedging, basting tubes, English Boxes, Pallets, Picture Frames and more roses than you have ever seen at any one place previously. To our way of thinking, this is the fun part of exhibiting and that is exactly what prepping your roses should be; work but fun as well. Bear in mind, especially our new exhibitors, preparation should actually begin before you arrive at the rose show; all seasoned exhibitors do as much before hand as possible. Do as much as you can prior to the rose show as the close of entries will come before you know it. The extra preparation at home may be the difference between making that one final entry or not. **Clean and trim** as necessary all of your leaves soon after cutting your roses. **Entry tags** can be completed or at least partially filled in at home also. This is critical for exhibitors who have a large amount of entries. Review the show schedule assuming you have requested that the schedule be emailed to you a week or two prior to the show. Other last minute details include checking your **supplies**; nothing is more embarrassing to get to a rose show only to find out you have either left your Q-tips at home or do not have enough to prep your entries. We have done both previously and now make certain that we have an ample supply on hand at all times.

Plan to arrive at the show venue at least **15 minutes** or more before the doors open. Often the facility is open much earlier than published and sometimes you can get a head start. Another good idea is to check the day and date of the show as it is not fun to drive over three hours to a show only to find out that the rose show is scheduled for the next day. It sure makes for a long drive home if you do not pay close attention to the **show day** as we found out last year along with two others. Believe it or not, not all rose shows are on Saturday!! LOL Fortunately it all worked out in the end.

Depending on the rose society some set out filled specimen vases at each prep workstation, others leave it up to the exhibitor to gather your supplies. We prefer to have the workstation set up with a minimal amount of supplies as it takes away from valuable preparation time. After you do this for a season, or two, you are able to plan in advance for shows that require you to get your vases filled. If you bring a lot of roses which we and several other exhibitors tend to do, you will be amazed how fast the time flies by. If you happen to finish early there is always someone else who can use some assistance whether it be carrying entries up to the placement table or lending a hand at some other task. If there is no one who needs any help it is probably enjoyable to watch others work on their roses; something we have yet to experience as we are typically running full speed trying to get every last entry in; especially those final 15 minutes before the close of entries.

When you select your prep table and locate all of the supplies; vases, boxes, pallets, picture frames, wedging and bowls that most societies typically provide, make certain you are courteous to your fellow exhibitors and not take more than what supplies you will actually need. If you later determine that you have more supplies than needed either return the supplies or ask others if they might need additional supplies. Hopefully, you selected a prep table with good overhead lighting or better yet near a window. An east facing window can work wonders helping to open a tight rose especially singles that have been in a cooler; without warmth they are not going to open to the degree needed to be displayed properly.

Our typical format (each exhibitor tends to have their own unique style) is to locate a prep table that is out of a traffic area and then pick up all of our supplies. Once we do this Kristine will take the entry tags for large roses and place them alphabetically on the vases beginning at the top left hand corner and working from top to bottom and left to right until finished; bear in mind that this may be a bean counter thing as opposed to what other exhibitors do or do not do. As she is doing this, Richard will begin to insert the roses in the vases and position the wedging to insure that our roses are positioned straight and erect. As soon as we have finished this task, Richard will begin inserting Q-tips as necessary while Kristine will begin the same procedure with the entry tags for the Minifloras and finally for the Miniatures. Once we have all of our roses lined up we will determine together which are our best roses that we will put in for Queen and also select other roses for Challenge Class entries; we tend to enter the other roses as soon as possible but save our best for last often placing them back in our transport boxes until just before the close of entries. We do this especially with small roses to insure they will not blow open before they are judged. Even though we work together as a team, we do divide up various tasks as to who does what best; Richard has very large hands which are much too large to effectively work with miniature singles or any single for that matter so Kristine works on them; or at least that is what she lets Richard believe. The importance of working together and also dividing up specific responsibilities can not be emphasized enough. Certain things such as checking if a petal is **below horizontal**, if a rose is **staged too high** or if a rose needs to be **disbudded** is best done in tandem where as other tasks should go to whomever does it best or in the case of singles who has the hands best suited for the task. Kristine is better when it comes to trimming bruised or burnt edged petals while Richard excels at improving the roses form with Q-tips (and use of ball stylus). Kristine will work on all of our open blooms and select all of the roses for our English Box entries while I will groom them once she has set the roses in the box; this is teamwork and what makes things fun for both of us as a team.

One area we advise against is paying too much attention to what roses other exhibitors have. More often than not, someone else's roses are going to look better than your own (especially at 10 to 15 feet away) if for no other reason other than you are acutely aware of every flaw your roses have or at least should be but you are comparing them to a rose that you gave a cursory glance to at best; not a fair comparison in our book. Look and acknowledge your friends and acquaintances but pay particular attention to your own roses as it just may benefit you in the long run. Socializing should be kept to a minimum during the prep time as the more you talk the less you groom. And yes, on occasion, one of Anthony/Vance team needs to be reminded of this. **CRITICAL NOTE: All exhibitors REQUIER coffee (juice for our friends who do not indulge) and donuts. Not a pretty**

**sight to see/deal with an exhibitor who hasn't had their coffee/donuts.** Exhibitors tend to work very late the night before and then get up early without the benefit of normal sleep, so coffee/juice and donuts hit the spot! It is not going to help you win Queen of Show but it may make you feel just a little bit better especially when they are like the donuts we enjoyed this morning at the Western Reserve Rose Show....two thumbs up! Our final suggestion is to clean up your area when you are finished. Each Rose Society has a show committee that puts in a lot of hard work and typically does not receive their fair share of accolades for the fine efforts that they put forth. Helping to clean up plus a nice oral thank you or even a nice hand written note to the show chairperson will most definitely be appreciated.

As always, if you have questions regarding this or other articles please direct them to Richard at [RJA4CPA@aol.com](mailto:RJA4CPA@aol.com) or Kristine at [Beancntr30@wideopenwest.com](mailto:Beancntr30@wideopenwest.com).