

Things You Need In The Garden..... To Win

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Continuing on with our third of a series of articles intended to make many of you more comfortable with the idea of exhibiting, let's take a closer look at what you really need in the garden in order to compete at a rose show. We will look at the various types of roses and what, as well as, why you might want to consider our suggestions. Remember, all roses are beautiful and the rose show provides a venue for all of us to show off the best we have, as well as, to teach others why the rose is in fact America's flower. With that in mind let's take a closer look at what you might want to consider growing in order to win at rose shows and a few of the classes within each type of rose that we have identified.

Hybrid Teas – are what most individuals envision when it comes to roses. The Queen of Show is considered the top award of the rose show and the Queen of Hybrid Teas is where it all begins. Winning queen of show at your local or district rose show is the prime objective of most top exhibitors. It is difficult but not impossible and there is always going to be a Queen of Show. Remember, all it takes is one rose in order to win.

In order to compete effectively with the exhibitors who have won Queen of Show previously, you might want to consider growing a minimum of **15** to **30** roses. Our suggestion is to take the top five or ten exhibition roses and grow them in multiples of three each. These are referred to as Bankers. Bankers are those roses that consistently do well for you and can always be counted on at rose show time. By growing several bankers you can almost certainly be assured to have good Queen of Show type of roses when you need them for the show.

In addition to the Queen of Show, new exhibitors might want to consider entering a Hybrid Tea in the **Open Bloom** class. Most everyone can and will enter an open bloom but in order to win you will need a fresh specimen that has blown naturally with clean fresh stamens and as flat as possible. Having won this class on the national level we know that flat and fresh are two of the three most important aspects in winning. The final important aspect to winning the open bloom class is color. A nice contrasting blend will most often win over a solid colored rose.

Another category that new exhibitors should consider entering is the **Fragrance Class**. Often this class is restricted to Hybrid Teas but, sometimes there is but one fragrance class for all large roses. On the local level you typically do not see a lot of entries in this class. If the class is not restricted to Hybrid Teas, we would strongly urge you to consider entering any of the extremely fragrant Old Garden Roses. If the class is restricted to Hybrid Teas, there are several specimens that can and do win with 'Double Delight', 'Mister Lincoln' and 'Secret' leading the way.

Floribundas – are very popular in rose shows primarily due to the color that they bring to a rose show. Historically, they are a cross between Polyanthas and Hybrid Teas and typically result in a profusion of sprays. Our garden is considered quite large by most standards with 700 plus roses being grown; we have about 30 Floribundas. We would suggest initially that the newer exhibitors consider growing some where between three and six Floribundas in order to be competitive.

Sprays – are now considered a Queen of Show classification for Floribundas although implementing this at the local and even district level has been an extremely slow process. The decorative varieties such as ‘Hannah Gordon’ and ‘Nicole’ have a tendency to win this class although singles (4 to 8 petals) such as ‘Betty Boop’, ‘Play Boy’ and ‘Play Girl’ can and often do win. Growing the above five varieties would position the newer exhibitor on close to the same playing field with the experienced exhibitor.

One Bloom Per Stem – Floribundas is typically won by a specimen with Hybrid Tea form although decorative form and singles can and do win. Ideally, the new exhibitor will confer with a few seasoned exhibitors and grow what exhibits well in their area.

Miniatures – the Guidelines for judging roses state that miniatures are judged basically the same as Hybrid Teas with a few minor exceptions with the concept of **petiteness** being taken into consideration. While this concept stills hold significant weight among well seasoned judges, a closer look at top winning Miniature roses tends to suggest this criteria may have out lived its usefulness.

Our suggestion for Miniatures is similar to that of Hybrid Teas; grow the top ten in multiples of three to four each. As space is considerably less than for large roses, a new exhibitor might want to consider thirty to forty roses to begin with. The total number is not something you need to have initially but, rather something that you can work toward over a period of time.

In addition to the open bloom class, the new exhibitor might want to consider growing a few Miniatures primarily for their ability to throw beautiful sprays. Sprays are two or more blooms forming a geometric arrangement. Form for a spray takes into consideration both the individual blooms and the overall form of the spray which is referred to as **inflorescence**. This implies the way that the individual blooms are arranged on the stem. The newer exhibitor would be well served to spend some time conferring with seasoned spray exhibitors in order to understand and appreciate the nuances of exhibiting sprays.

Minifloras – are the rose that we have gravitated toward and have enjoyed perhaps our greatest degree of success over the past three or four years. In our opinion they are somewhat easier to work with than Miniatures and the hybridizers are introducing many, many more Minifloras each year than any other type of rose. Also, many of the older exhibitors do not grow Minifloras and this is an area the new exhibitors can position themselves to do well. Our suggestion is to grow multiples of the top ten to fifteen Minifloras with 40 or more being a number to work towards over time.

Floaters – or properly referred to as The Rose in a Bowl is a very popular class found at most rose shows. Typically the schedule calls for a single bloom without foliage but we have had the opportunity to exhibit multiple blooms, as well as fully open blooms in the floater class which results in a very enjoyable experience. Winning this class is difficult but not impossible with the same entries that win Queen of Show having a tendency to do quite well in this class. The newer exhibitor will improve their chance of success if entries primarily consist of blends as opposed to solid colored roses as a blend will have a tendency to capture a judges' attention and if all things are equal will tend to win more often than not.

OGR's – are a class of rose that three years ago we did not grow. In all honesty we did not appreciate these fragrant and quite exquisite roses until a trip to visit Peter and Susan Schneider during their annual open house. We are not going to say we are hooked on OGR's to the extent we are with Minifloras and Hybrid teas but, after winning two queens with our entries last year our appreciation, as well as, the number of OGR's we current have is growing exponentially. The thrill of winning our first OGR Queen...priceless.

If you haven't figured it out by now...we are rose junkies! We didn't get that way overnight. For the seasoned exhibitor, we challenge you to broaden your horizon as far as your entries go. Try your hand at a few other types of roses. If you have never grown any OGR's or entered an English Box, consider giving it a try. For all of our new exhibitors, start off with one or two types of roses that you really like. Read and learn everything you possibly can about those roses and start to exhibit in those particular classes. Once you get comfortable with exhibiting you can begin to add to your rose collection. Soon you may go from 15 to 800 or more roses...in a mere blink of the eye.

Next week...Everything you wanted to know about pruning but were afraid to ask! Speaking of asking, send your questions to **Richard** at RJA4CPA@aol.com or **Kristine** at Beancounter30@wideopenwest.com.