

## Poultry Days Flower Show Tips from The Gardeners

This is a set of tips for recommendations (based on the American Rose Society publications) which may help when preparing entries for the 2014 Poultry Days Flower Show. These are tips on selecting, cutting, preparing, caring for, transporting and entering your roses and perennials.

Roses to be entered into competition must have their water supply kept to the best possible conditions so there is as little interruption possible. This means you need to cut the rose at a time of day and day of week when the water content is as high as possible and then cooled quickly to slow the trauma of cutting. Best choices for time of day is either very early or a bit after dusk, hours later if the day has been very hot. It's best to not cut the day of the show! They need more time to adjust. The American Rose Society even says some people wrap white paper around the stem at the cutting point and go out very late using a flashlight! Immediately after cutting, place the rose in water then when all your entries have been cut, clean the leaves and stems using damp (water only) cotton cloth. Never use leaf shine or cleaning solution. The rose stem should be cut again between 1/2" to 1/3" (cutting under water to remove possibility of air in the stem). Always use a very sharp tool to avoid pinching the stem.

Choosing the rose to cut is the real challenge since a rose will continue to open after cutting and the stage of the bloom is very important when competing - no matter if you cut at the perfect time and got it in water in seconds! Roses cut in springtime open quicker than those cut later in year, such as for the fair. The number of petals in the bloom makes a difference, too. A rose with fewer petals should be cut when the bloom is only 1/3 to 1/2 open whereas a rose with lots of petals can be cut at 1/2 open or slightly more. Bad petals, extra buds, bad leaves can be removed later. Some people actually cut their rose up to three days before the show while some may cut a week ahead. That decision comes with experience and the number of roses you'll be entering as for time it takes. You may be lucky and have perfect choices but usually you will have bad leaves to remove. Try to limit the number you remove and be sure to leave at least one three leaf and one five leaf segment because the foliage can make the difference in placing or not. Leave only the leaves which will remain above the water level of the entry container since leaves under water can spoil the water. [Poultry Days usually has bud vases or salad dressing bottles, though you may bring your own.] Miniatures really require as long a stem as possible to even reach the water. You may want to bring your own small vase for these. You are allowed to remove bad petals but never try to trim the bad spot out. This alteration to the design will likely remove the possibility of an award. Please try to get out any bugs, too!

Storage of the rose between cutting and entering at show happens under quite a variety of methods. Some may be placed in water, of course, in a dark cool place such as the basement (preferably not air-conditioned) or cellar to the family refrigerator (DO NOT have any cut apples in the fridge!) to a cooler or dedicated refrigerator just for flowers! However, if it's a frost free fridge, then you should place a plastic bag on the bloom to help work against the moisture removing process. The ideal temperature is between 34 to 37F. Frostbite can occur if lower and watch placement in the prone to freezing spots - even in the fridge part. The damage done when too cold or in frost free usually doesn't appear for sometime after removal for the show.

To transport, keep them in water and placed so that there won't be lots of movement of the rose as you drive.

Selecting your rose is probably the first most important step. The entry rules state that only correctly named roses will be placed for judging. If there is room in the show, we may be able to place un-named or incorrectly named roses for display purposes only. Don't let that happen to your rose. You must first know the type of rose so it can be placed in the correct category - such as hybrid teas, floribunda, miniature, etc. Then under the correct type of rose, comes the rose variety name such as Peace or Princess Diana in hybrid teas. You may be surprised to learn that there are some rose names which may appear in more than one type of rose, so be careful. A good judge can spot the difference!

Most hybrid teas, grandifloras and miniatures should be on a single stem while floribundas, shrub, tree, old roses like David Austen, and some miniatures show with multiple blooms and may have multiple stemming such a spray. When picking these types, try to choose an example of the fullest range of blooming you can from very tight or slightly showing color buds all the way to slightly more than 1/2 open. This isn't always easy, but you can do it!! Single stem types will not be judged if there are extra buds, blooms or stems. If this is your only choice for entry, then carefully trim off the bud or bloom - preferably while the rose is still on the bush weeks ago as if you were grooming this rose to be the chosen one. Use a very sharp tool such as an Xacto knife and carefully - like a surgeon - remove the offender. If this is done early enough any trace may disappear before show day.

Perennials follow many of the same tips as for roses - cutting, placing in water, re-cutting under water, cleaning leaves, cleaning blooms, possibly removing offending extra blooms or buds depending on the type of perennial. Some people debate the sensitivity of the perennials as compared to roses in terms of time of day to cut, length of time prior to show day (some perennials don't hold up as well as roses) or temperature control. Use the same type of standards as with the roses and you shouldn't go wrong. Perennials may prove to be more sensitive to bouncing around and the larger ones more so than the smaller ones. Yucca, for instance, have very delicate flowers even though they look tough and thrive in the desert!!!! These also need to be cut with the longest stem possible to be able to reach the water supply during the show and many are actually designed to be a tall specimen. The only possible one is the clematis which may be shown in flat dishes so the stems may only need to be an inch long. Some people display clematis in small stand up vases, so adjust the stem accordingly. Best decision is to come to the show with long stems and alter when entering. Again clear extra leaves which will be under water for judging as this will taint the water. Those people bringing yuccas need to bring their own large container as there may not be enough for everyone.

Here again the entries should all have variety names such as "Mabel" in iris, "Abilene" in clematis, "Angel Cheeks" in peony and "Olivia Tango" in lily. These four categories will adhere to required names for each variety under the category. Within the spike, spray and round categories, there may be some allowances. A special note here about lilies. Not all 'lilies' are actually lilies. The judges will be looking for the lilies which come from bulbs. The most common two lily plants are 'real' lilies vs. day lilies. To tell the difference for entry purposes in the correct category, the lily leaves encircle the entire stem from the ground up whereas the day lily leave all come from the ground individually. Non-lilium plants may be allowed entry in another perennial category.

The Versailles Garden Club hopes these tips for rose and perennial entries for the Poultry Days show will help you have a better flower show experience!!! If you have a large number of entries, please contact Sue at 526-4798 or Judy at 526-4256 for entry cards by June 12 to get entry cards to be filled out ahead

of time. You will only need to enter your assigned entrant number on the day of the show. See you at the show!!!!