

Criteria for judging cut flowers

There is no such thing as the perfect flower. Every bloom has some imperfection, however minute. You just hope no-one else has a better one.

Generally speaking, a bloom should be circular in outline, with as long a stem as possible and showing some foliage on the stem.

- Stems should be face on to the judges but those which naturally face the ceiling, eg carnations, should have stems plugged in their bottles so they are erect and not leaning to one side.
- Plugs can be rhubarb or arum lily stems for soft stemmed flowers, eg gerberas. Foam or polystyrene can also be used. They can be used also the wedge the stem forward. Hard stemmed exhibits such as roses or natives can have cork cut in half for plugs. It is acceptable for plugs to stick up above the neck of a bottle.
- In a composite exhibit flowers should be of a similar size, or if of varied size, the largest and tallest flowers should be at the back grading to smallest and shortest at the front.
- Aids such as wires through stems, (except sweet peas), cotton wool to separate petals, sticky tape or pins to repair or compact blooms are unacceptable.

Anemones:

Large flowers with clear colours fully open with petals curving backwards. The stems are to be long, firm and straight and in balance with the size of the flower.

Calendulas:

Large flowers with closed centre preferably, circular in outline and clear colour with no fading of the edges of the petals

Daffodils:

Top petal should be at 12 o'clock and the bottom at 6.

Tulips:

Tulips should be round

Geraniums:

A well - shaped bloom should be ball shaped with florets curving backwards or reflexing right back to the stem. Florets should touch each other but can overlap a little. Stems should be stiff and strong.

Iris: Bearded:

Should have at least 2 florets open and the three upright or standard petals should meet at the top and the three pendulous petals , or falls, should be evenly spaced and well balanced. Can have 3 or more flowers showing.

Dutch:

These should have the three top petals or ears meeting at the top and the three falls should be evenly spaced and level at the bottom. Penalties exit for showing second flower colour.

Pansies:

This flower should have a circular outline of 5 uniform petals. The two top petals shall have their base directly above the centre of the eye with the other three placed to form a balanced circle. Blotches should be clear, solid colour and comprise half the petal area. Colours should be clear and bright.

Violas:

Violas have just one colour as distinct from pansies and will be devoid of the weeping eye as should the pansy.

Poppies – Iceland:

These should have large open-cup shaped blooms circular or saucer-shaped in outline and petals symmetrical with firm undamaged margins. Colours should be bright and fresh with no fading at the edges. Stems should be strong, straight and long. The anthers should be well endowed with pollen but none seen on the petals.

Daisies:

Should be flat

Lillies:

Lily stamen should be in a vertical line with the stem and clear. Bloom should be uncreased.

Ranunculas:

These should be semi-globular with support petals acting thus to the upper petals. The body should be a closely packed mass of incurved petals right to the centre which should be centre and completely obscured. The bloom should sit directly on top of the stem with no insect damage. Should be perfectly circled.

Sweet peas:

Petals of the florets should have an unbroken smooth outline, even in size, fresh, pure of colour, free from blemish, burn or any other colour. Florets must be evenly spaced on the stems, and all should face the front. Stem should be strong and straight.

Carnations:

These should be large and evenly rounded with guard petals fitting up tight under the bloom. The inner petals should lie regularly and smoothly over the guard petals and get smaller as they approach the centre of the bloom. The central petals should rise above the centre of the bloom. A good carnation should be flat at the base and nicely convexed at the top. Stems should be straight and long and in keeping with the size of the flower.

Statis:

Blooms should be evenly balanced.