

# Sharing and Showing at GCP Hort Shows

## **Read the Hort Guidelines and Show Schedule**

## **Scope Out Your Entries a Couple of Days in Advance**

**Walk your garden a few days in advance to see what looks good and fits the schedule.**

**Check the weather forecast** a couple of days before the show and figure out the optimal time to cut.

## **On the day that you cut**

**Bring your sterilized clippers and a pail of water on your garden walk.**

**Cut stems as long as possible and place the cut branches and blooms in the water asap.**

**Cut in the early morning or evening.**

## **Conditioning and Grooming of Your Plants**

**Create a grooming kit** including: small manicure scissors, Joyce Chen scissors, clippers, Q-tips, flashlight, magnifying glass, tweezers, needle nosed tweezers (if possible), a small water mister, alcohol (to sanitize scissors), small paint brush, exacto knife or precision pointed knife, wedging material of cork and/or boxwood, paper towels, black pen and blank entry cards.

**Collect green large and small Perrier bottles and a few small clear glass containers for collections.**

**Condition your cut stems and branches. Consult the book *Flowers for Bouquets* by Joanne Lenden.**

**Groom your entries:**

- Re-cut your branches to the length that optimizes the display of the bloom and complies with any height restrictions specified in the schedule. Try to include foliage, fully opened and opening blooms. Remove spent or blooms past their time.
- Place them in a Perrier bottle filled with water.
- Check that your stems and branches are free of insects and disease.
- Check that your containers (usually green Perrier bottles or terra cotta pots) are sparkling clean, free of labels, markings, dust and metal neck rings. Nothing should be floating in the water.
- Check that your foliage, fruit, vegetables and/or blooms are clean and free of dirt, spray residue and pollen. Use your dampened small paintbrush or Q-tip to clean the plant material. [The use of a leaf-polishing agent is prohibited by the Hort Guidelines.]

- Remove dead, past its prime and blemished material. Use your manicure scissors or pinch it off. If the plant has an opposite leaf structure, remove the opposite leaf as well.
- Trim damaged foliage, mimicking the shape of the leaf.
- Wedge your entry if necessary with cork or boxwood, creating a pleasing “pose.”
- Re: showing potted plants. Soil surfaces should be clean. You may top dress the soil but use material that does not float. Keep the level below the top of the container. Staking, if allowed, should be done as unobtrusively as possible.

### **Prepare Your Entry Cards**

**Fill out entry cards with the correct botanical and common names of each plant written legibly in waterproof black ink.** If you have not filled out your entry cards in advance, have this information prepared with you when you arrive at the show. See sample entry card.

**If the class calls for a key card,** usually used with entries containing a combination of plants, prepare the key card on a 4x6 entry card. See sample key card.

**Identify your plant’s botanical and common name** using the Internet and/or The American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Plants, or other references.

**Make a note of your plant material’s botanical and common name** in a garden journal or on a spreadsheet to facilitate later entry into shows.

### **Botanical names include the following:**

**Genus:** a group of one or more plants that share a wide range of characteristics. This is the first word in a plant’s botanical name and is always capitalized. Ex.: *Viburnum*

**Species:** distinguishes a plant from other plants in its genus, i.e., *alba* or *rubrum* or sometimes the name of the person who discovered it, i.e., *farrerii*, always written in lower case. Ex. *Viburnum nudum*. When the species is unknown it is permitted to write *sp.* after the genus. Ex. *Viburnum sp.*

**Cultivar:** a plant that has been selected and cultivated for a particular set of characteristics. A hybridizer may cross two plants or might just be a variation that occurs in cultivation. It is always capitalized and put in single quotes. Ex. *Viburnum nudum* ‘Winterthur’

If you see an X in the plant name, two plants have been hybridized.

**Common names are noted as stated in reference texts, usually capitalized.**

This practice speaks directly to The Garden Club of America’s educational mission.

### **Bringing your Entries to the Show**

**The club will have water, grooming supplies, extra green bottles and wedging material, as well as the *A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants* and other references on site.**

**Transport your entries** using a box or six pack container, cushioning your bottles with newspaper or other materials.

**Top off** your bottles with water.

**Arrive EARLY with your entries, botanical information completed entry cards in a zip lock bag, and grooming kit. If you are working the show, you will have to bring your entries at 8 a.m.**

**Check the pose** of your entry and adjust your wedging material, if necessary.

**Obtain your entry number** from the Registrar, Trudy Healy, who will be at the show site. This will be your entry number for the entire 2016-17 GCP year.

**Re-check the condition of your entries** to confirm that the plant material and bottle are clean, bug free, not dead or dying and ready for the show.

**If you have a desired front and back** to the entry, mark the back of the bottle or terra cotta container with chalk or black marker so the placer will know how to place the entry.

**Bring your entry to the passing table and STAY WITH YOUR ENTRY UNTIL IT IS PASSED** with a red "P" placed on the entry card.

**Be sure to pick up your entries and entry cards** after the meeting, hopefully with blue, red, yellow or white stickers on them. Keep your entry cards for future reference, in case you want to enter the same plant again and for your own reference. If you like, take pictures of your entries to keep with the cards in a notebook.

**Enjoy your entry experience!** Participating in flower shows by sharing your beautiful plants with the club and experiencing the stunning entries of others is one of the most pleasurable parts of being a member of GCP!

Good luck,

Kathy Enquist and Deb Jordan

### **Resources:**

The American Horticultural Society's *A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*

The Garden Club of America's Website: <http://www.gcamerica.org>

The Garden Club of America's *Flower Show & Judging Guide*

New Jersey Native Plants: <http://www.npsnj.org>