

Passer's responsibilities for Hort Shows:

Before you arrive to pass, familiarize yourself with the event schedule. Read both the general rules and the horticulture rules. Make sure you know all the size requirements, such as the diameter of the pot, the length of a cut branch or any other specifications stated in the schedule. Know the number of required plants in a pot (minimum and maximum). It is important to familiarize yourself with all of the details in the schedule so that if you have questions, the person in charge can answer them before you start the passing process. Remember that once you have passed an entry it has to be considered by the judges. If it doesn't fulfill the show requirements, it is embarrassing, as the judges will probably spot it immediately. If the judges question whether an entry should have been passed, they may consult with the Captain or a Hort chair. A Captain or Hort Chair may disqualify an entry.

Members of the passing committee should be aware of the importance of being tactful, patient and kind to the exhibitors. A considerate, friendly passer can make the difference between losing a discouraged exhibitor and gaining a wiser one.

The passing process should begin with checking the entry card to be certain the exhibit has been entered in the proper class (use Arabic numbers only) and making sure the entry fills the class requirements stated in the schedule. The passing table should have the necessary tools for measuring pots and cut specimens. If a pot is completely filled with a plant, it can be difficult to measure properly. In such a case, a wooden skewer can be stuck in each side and the distance between the skewers measured.

A passer should next ascertain that the proper nomenclature is on the entry card. The botanical name in Latin (2 words – genus and species) and cultivar name in English (in single quotes) should be included. Some schedules require a key card to accompany a collection of plant material. If you have someone who is knowledgeable about nomenclature, it can be helpful to have that person specifically in charge of that aspect of the entry process. There should be reference books available for nomenclature questions. It is helpful to have them at a location away from the passing table as there can be a lot of "traffic jams" at the passing table. Exhibitors should be encouraged to do their nomenclature research at home or to arrive in plenty of time to do it at the show.

The next step is to check for grooming. Some of the most important things to look at are:

1. Cut specimens should have ample water in the container to keep them from wilting.
2. No leaves should be below the water line in the container.
3. The specimen should be clean, bug free, and free of any spray residue. Make sure you check the backs of the leaves, stems, etc. **THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO EXCUSE FOR A DIRTY PLANT!**
4. Dead, diseased or damaged foliage, flowers and branches should be removed. If there is minimal damage to a leaf, the removal of it can be left to the discretion of the exhibitor, especially in this age of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) as sometimes the removal of a leaf can affect the aesthetics of the plant. Judges

- today are more lenient, to an extent, about insect damage. You, as a passer, must decide what is acceptable to you to pass.
5. If leaves or branches have been removed, make sure there are no unsightly stubs.
 6. Pots must be clean and free of salts. The surface of the soil in pots must be clean and uniform with no perlite showing. Most schedules allow top dressing (except peat moss) on the pot.
 7. Stakes should be removed unless they are essential, as with orchids. If a stake is necessary, it should be as unobtrusive as possible.

Most of these problems can be corrected at the grooming table. The grooming table should have small, delicate paint brushes, scissors, water, alcohol, tweezers, Q-tips, skim milk (for cleaning daffodils), cotton balls, and any other useful grooming items. Newly cut stubs can be camouflaged with mud or with a marker.

A good passer should be encouraging and supportive of the exhibitor by making gentle suggestions about the best possible way to correct any problems. She may suggest that the exhibitor go to the grooming table and then return. A passer may not touch the exhibit or assist the exhibitor in any way. Make it very clear to the exhibitor that she must remain with her exhibit until it has been passed. Once an exhibit is passed, the exhibitor may not touch the exhibit again.

An exhibit that does not qualify should, with the approval of the Chairman, be designated "Not in competition."