
Pointers for Novice and First-Time Rose Exhibitors

The following are some suggestions to help you prepare your roses and to enter them. If you have questions, bring them with your roses to the show and Portland Rose Society volunteers will be glad to answer them and help you enter your roses in the show.

BEFORE SHOW DAY

1. Try to learn the names of your roses. If you cannot identify some of your roses bring them to the show anyway and personnel at the rose show will try to identify them for you. However, on occasion they will not be able to identify a rose (rarely) but we will provide a name suitable for entry in the show.
2. Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras and Floribundas grown singly (disbudded) which are going to be shown as one bloom per stem, should have the side buds removed. These types of roses can also be entered into a show as sprays of roses, that is, two or more blooms on one stem. The entry classes for Miniature and Mini-Flora roses are the same as for the Hybrid Teas and they may be shown as either disbudded one bloom per stem entries, or as sprays of two or more flowers on one stem.
3. Knowing the color classification of your roses is usually necessary in order to enter your blooms correctly. The official color classification is not always as obvious as it may seem. If you know the name of your rose, we can provide the correct color classification to you at the show. You can find the color classification in the American Rose Society "Guide for Selecting Roses." The PRS usually has these handbooks for sale at the shows. There will be copies of this publication for sale at the show and at the general meetings.
4. Make sure the stem and leaves of your rose entries are clean and free of dirt, insect webs, various other foreign materials, spray residues, etc. Do not put anything on the flowers or foliage to enhance their appearance. Oil or leaf polish applied to the leaves may make them look better but will cause the judges to mark down the score.
5. Novices often cut the rose stem too short and remove too many leaves. Do not remove any of the leaves until entry time, and then only if you find it necessary. If there is any doubt about whether to remove a leaf or not, leave it on. Leaves can help to hold the stem up straight in the vase, thus making a better presentation. Remember, the judges will be judging more than just the flower. Choosing the proper length of stem is a bit more complicated. The bloom and stem should be in a pleasing proportion. If you have doubt about the stem length, cut the stem as long as possible (well not over 2 feet) and bring it to the show. One of our experts can help you judge proper length. Or look at several other exhibitors' entries and make yours about the same length. If it towers over other exhibits it is probably too long. If it is much shorter, there will not be much you can do except find a vase with a very narrow neck that will hold your bloom up higher, and then cut your stems longer if possible the next time. Sprays of roses, two or more blooms on one stem, follow the same rule of thumb, except the stems tend to be a bit shorter in proportion to the total diameter of the spray. They should at least have a pleasing amount of foliage to enhance the spray of flowers.
6. Show schedules will be sent to you several weeks before the show. Review the show schedule so that you have an idea where you are going to enter your roses. The schedule contains information that will help you at entry time. It also contains the point scoring system that the judges will use, directly or indirectly, to judge your roses.
7. The evening before the show, visit your roses and cut as many blooms as you like. Select blooms that look pretty to you. The blooms can be in almost any stage of development except tight buds. A bloom which is a little over half open is excellent, but there are also categories for fully open blooms. Cut the stems and immediately place them into water. A plastic pail or bucket works great for keeping them and transporting them to the show the next day.

ON SHOW DAY

1. Transport your roses to the show in water. The roses are going to be in the show for two full days. If the stem has been out of water for any period of time, it is likely the rose will wilt before the show is over.
2. Arrive early! Entries are accepted from 6:30 am to 9:30 am; check the show schedule for the exact time. Things tend to get a bit hectic near the end of entry time.
3. When you arrive, find a work space in the entry area. Space for Novice/Junior entries is often reserved and marked. In addition, help will be provided for you in that area.
4. Put your roses in the space you have chosen and select vases for your entries from the many vases provided by the Rose Society. Please do not use your own vases. Fill the vases with water and return to your work space.
5. Obtain entry tags and rubber bands which will be available on the entry tables. Fill in your name and address, including zip code where indicated (address labels are a great time saver). Should you be fortunate enough to win a ribbon or two, they will be mailed to you. If you happen to win a trophy, it must be picked up at the end of the show or whenever trophies are awarded. Check the show schedule for the time of the awards presentations.
6. Review the applicable sections of the show schedule if you have not already done so. Determine the class or classes you plan to enter. Write the name of the rose, the Division and the Class number in the proper place on the entry tag. There are classes for most rose types in the Novice and Junior divisions, but some types, such as climbers, must be entered in the open classes. Attach the completed tag to the neck of the vase with the rubber band and fold up the bottom of the tag so that your name does not show.
7. Take your entries to the show area. There will be maps and guides to direct you to where your roses should be placed in the show. Find the number on the table that corresponds to the one you wrote on the tag. Check to see if your entry and the description on the table agree. If you have a red rose and the table number says that the class number you have entered is for white roses you will need to recheck your tag with the schedule.
8. If there is still plenty of time before entries close, take some time to watch other exhibitors prepare their roses for entry. Much can be learned in a short time when watching some of the experts. Some exhibitors are quite willing to talk to Novices at this busy time about what they are doing. Some are not.
9. Return after the judging has occurred and the show is open to the public and see how you and your fellow exhibitors did. Compare your entries to similar entries on the trophy stand. This is one of the best ways to gauge areas of improvement and learn what the judges are looking for. Again at this time, you can learn a lot by seeking out other exhibitors. There are almost always a few of them around. They really are not too hard to spot and there are often little discussion groups taking place around a rose show. Go up and introduce yourself or just listen in on the conversation if it is about rose exhibiting. Novices often find the “old timers” to be intimidating, but take a chance, you will find that the average experienced exhibitor is generally friendly and most of them will gladly share information with you.

Additional Information

1. Above all else—Do Not let all of the rules and other stuff keep you from participating.
2. The Portland Rose Society will have people to help you and answer questions on show day.
3. If you do not understand some of the items discussed above and want answers before show day, do not hesitate to call any of the Consulting Rosarians listed in *The Chatter*. They are available to answer your questions on just about any aspect of growing and showing roses. They will even visit your garden if you have a problem that cannot be solved on the phone.
4. Rose shows are a celebration of beauty that the rose society hosts to share the beauty of roses with the public. Please come to the show with your roses and help make our celebration a success.