



SHOWTIME

OHA JUDGING COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER VOLUME 10 - April 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

OHA Judging News

OHA Judging School and Updates Coordinator

We Need Your Feedback

Sow, Grow and Show

How Should Invasive Species be Dealt with in Flower Shows?

Judging Special Exhibits

Judging Ethics and Etiquette

Editor's Message

OHA Judging News

Virtual Judges Updates

May 27, 7:30-8:30 PM

How to Exhibit/Conditioning and Grooming (including houseplants).

Demonstration of a Design

June 5, 7:30-8:30 PM

Demonstration of some Designs

The goal of these virtual design demonstrations is to build a library of instructional videos that members can reference later.

OHA Certified Judging School

District 3 and District 1 are hosting an OHA Judging School starting in August 2025. It has been years since a Judging School has been offered in this area. The Judging School would be set up to run over 2 to 2.5 years and consist of six (6) sessions of two (2) days each. Each session will have experienced and knowledgeable Design and Horticultural speakers and demonstrators who will walk participants through the curriculum. There are a few spots left, so if you are interested, please email:

Penny Stewart at pssloves2garden@gmail.com or
Lezlie Miller at lezliemiller.55@gmail.com.



Photo Credit: Debi Foster

OHA Judging School and Updates Coordinator

Greetings

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the new OHA Judging School and Updates Coordinator. I am a life-long gardener, having been exposed and nurtured by my dad and Grandparents, who were all keen gardeners. My first exposure to Floral Design was in a course at the University of Guelph. I was hooked. It took a few years of working, parenting, and home gardening before I joined my local Horticultural Society.

My life before retirement was a thirty-three-year career with the Ministry of the Environment. These years allowed me to develop and hone problem-solving, supervisory, project management, and program delivery experience. I was involved in developing and implementing compliance training for over 900 Provincial officers.

I've enjoyed being actively involved with the OHA since 1999 at the local, District, and Provincial levels. My judging credentials include holding an OHA-Judge certification (2010), Royal Botanical Garden (RBG) accreditation as a Horticultural Judge (2011), and Garden Clubs of Ontario (GCO) accreditation as a Design Judge (2015). In 2006, I started studying Ikebana in the Ohara style.

As a founding member of the OHA Judging Committee and current chair, my government experience has been used to help implement new ways to teach judges, exhibitors, and societies.

As the new coordinator, I look forward to working with the OHA Board, Districts, Societies, Judges, and Exhibitors to find innovative ways to keep the love of "growing and showing" and the "joys" of floral design alive and relevant in today's world.

I can be reached at: judgingschoolcoordinator@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Happy Spring gardening. May there be many blooms and few weeds.

Kind Regards,

Penny Stewart



Penny Stewart

We Need Your Feedback

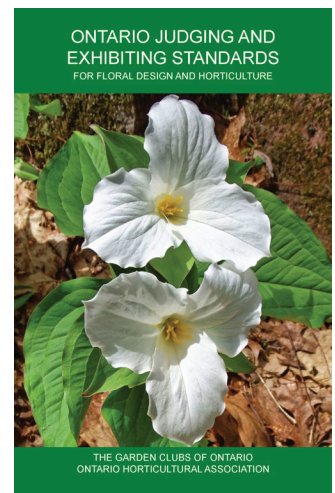
The OHA Judging Committee is looking at developing an Illustrated Guide to Floral Design to supplement the guidance provided in OJES (the Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards 2019).

We would like to know if your Society sees this as a useful contribution to encourage and support your members to enjoy floral design at home and to exhibit in your shows.

If so, what designs do you think would be most useful to illustrate as we are looking to draft a prototype of the guide using your feedback to present to the OHA Board.

Please send your feedback to OHAJudges@gmail.com

Kathryn Lindsay, OHA Judging Committee member-at-large



Sow, Grow and Show

Submitted by Dale Odorizzi and Helen Halpenny

I always admire the Flower Shows at our regular Horticultural Society meetings, but I am a little intimidated about entering a show. I recently learned that there is a category for a tray of seedlings. I might have a chance to enter. If you are like me, you may find this article helpful. We will discuss sowing seeds, growing plants, and showcasing these transplants in our flower shows.

Seed catalogues have arrived, and stores are filling up with seeds, and gardeners want to start gardening. One of the best ways to get your “gardening fix” early is to start your own seeds. Starting seeds is rewarding and very cost-effective. A seed contains a complete plant. All you have to do is get it started.

If you are starting seeds for the first time, start small, with only a few types of plants that are easy to grow. I find that Marigolds and Zinnias are very rewarding and do not require a lot of special treatment. Tomatoes grow well too. These plants do not need months of babysitting and can usually be transplanted in about 4-6 weeks.

Sow

Prepare your containers. They must have drainage holes in the bottom, so the roots of the new plant do not sit in water. Fill the container three-quarters full of moist potting or seed-starting soil. Do not use garden soil or soil from last year’s containers. If you are using last year’s containers, make sure they are sterilized first. To sterilize them, clean out all the old soil and wash in a mixture of water and bleach. This will eliminate any remaining fungus spores.

When do I start my seeds? Different plants need to be started at different times. Marigolds and Zinnias grow quickly. Perennials often take longer. Quality seed packets typically indicate the number of days or weeks before the last frost date that you should start your plants. It is tempting to start early, but if you do, you will end up with a jungle of plants. Tomatoes are often victims of this. People are eager to get started and plant their tomato seeds in February. By April, they are unable to control the plants indoors. Tomatoes prefer being planted out in early June once the soil has warmed. Your seed packet will indicate how deeply to plant your seeds or whether they should be pressed directly into the soil. The following link lets you plug in your postal code and advises when to start plants. Almanac – <https://www.almanac.com/gardening/planting-calendar/postalcode>. Enter your own postal code for your area.

No fertilizer is necessary until the plants appear.

Now that your seeds are planted, what do you need to do?

To prevent your seedlings from becoming long and spindly, they need light. If you are growing them using light from a window, be sure to rotate your plants ¼ turn every 2-3 days. You want your plants to grow straight. If you are using fluorescent grow lights, the lights should be about 10-15 cm above the plants. If you are using LED lights, place them farther above the plants, as these lights can become quite hot. Keep your eye on the plants to adjust the lights as needed.

Some plant containers can dry out quite quickly, especially if you’re using peat-based pots, so check your plants frequently. I prefer watering my seedling from the bottom.



Photo credit: Catherine McGill

Grow

When a seed germinates, two leaves will appear. This is the cotyledon, also known as a seed leaf. Next to appear will be the plant's true leaves. If you are familiar with your plant's adult leaf form, you will recognize the leaf on your seedling. When the true leaf appears, it is time to start fertilizing. You can use a balanced fertilizer (10-10-10) at about half strength. Fertilize every 7-10 days. Over-fertilizing can harm the young plant. It is better to under-fertilize than to over-fertilize.

After the first true leaves appear, it is time to transplant your seedlings. Seeds are usually planted very close to the surface of the soil, so their roots will be near the top as well. Transplanting into their more permanent container lets you adjust the depth.

Continue with your regular watering, fertilizing, and rotating the plants in the window or adjusting the light height.

Show

Your seedlings on the windowsill and those under grow lights are thriving. You have been faithful about turning the trays a quarter turn every couple of days, so the plants are growing straight. Now you know about 'Phototropism.'

Societies create show schedules based on the interests and abilities of their members. Let's say, at the Horticultural Society mini show in May, there is a class for 'a tray of seedlings, with at least 8 plants growing in the container,' and you think, "I could enter that. My tray of dwarf marigolds are nearly three inches tall."

A judge will search in OJES for judging criteria. There is no mention of seedlings in the glossary, but specimen foliage plants criteria would be close. Societies can

create any classes they want for a show. The classes are judged according to OJES. At a May mini show, there may be a class for seedlings, and it is interesting to see tomatoes, marigolds, zinnias, and other plants in their infancy stage. Some Societies give out seeds for a 'Challenge' class. Seedlings for that could be shown in the spring and then entered as mature plants in the summer or fall.

In a class of 'seedlings', cultural perfection and foliage are both very important. A judge looks for plants grown in optimum conditions. Sturdy plants with healthy foliage and uniform growth are what you are looking for. Since there are many plants in the tray, uniformity is also important. Be sure to groom off any yellowing or dead leaves. A clean container is always a plus, and naming the plant will earn you an additional five points.

Exhibitors will need to fill out entry tags properly, place their entries in the correct class, and be aware of the time when entries arrive at the show and when they need to be picked up. Entering a show will give you satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. If you win a ribbon, you will also be proud that you are a good grower.



Photo credit: Catherine McGill



Photo credit: Catherine McGill

How Should Invasive Species be Dealt with in Flower Shows?

by OHA Judging Committee

A. It is important that the rules and regulations that are part of the Flower Show Schedule have a description of what the Society considers invasive for their particular flower show.

Ontario has two Acts and accompanying Regulations that deal with invasive and prohibited plants. These are the Ontario Invasive Species Act (ISA) and the Ontario Noxious Weed Act (ONW). Federal legislation also comes into play with the Seeds Act (SA) and the Plant Protection Act (PPA). These two provincial acts and two federal acts prohibit or restrict, under law, certain identified plants. In addition, other organizations recognize that more species are threatening the natural environment. These include the Ontario Invasive Plants Council (OIPC), Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS), and Conservation Authorities (CA).

As a horticultural society or garden club, you should consider making your members aware of the significance of continuing to grow these plants. This can be done by prohibiting certain plants from your show table but you should also consider having guest speakers come to talk about Invasive species and the importance of controlling them.

As a Society, you can create a list of the plants from any of the above-mentioned sources that you do not want on your show table and list them directly in your Schedule. Or you can include a reference in your show schedule. You also need to make sure that your Show Chair/Convenor and the Passing Committee are aware of the list and that they can recognize the plants.

Should a Member bring in one of the prohibited plants to a show, the issue should be explained quietly and politely. They should be asked to remove the exhibit from the show table.

The Ontario Invasive Species Act lists 15 restricted terrestrial plants. These 15 plants should be the minimum list of plants that you should not permit on your show table.

**Table 4 from Ontario Regulation 354/16
Restricted invasive species — plants**

| Item | Common Name | Scientific Name |
|------|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Black Dog-strangling Vine | <i>Cynanchum louiseae</i> |
| 2. | Bohemian Knotweed | <i>Reynoutria xbohemica</i> |
| 3. | Carolina Fanwort | <i>Cabomba caroliniana</i> |
| 4. | Dog-strangling Vine | <i>Cynanchum rossicum</i> |
| 4.1 | Eurasian Water-milfoil | <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i> |
| 5. | European Frog-bit | <i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i> |
| 5.1 | Floating Primrose-willow | <i>Ludwigia peploides</i> |
| 5.2 | Flowering-rush | <i>Butomus umbellatus</i> |
| 6. | Giant Knotweed | <i>Reynoutria sachalinensis</i> |
| 7. | Himalayan Knotweed | <i>Koenigia polystachya</i> |
| 8. | Japanese Knotweed | <i>Reynoutria japonica</i> |
| 9. | Phragmites | <i>Phragmites australis</i> subsp. <i>australis</i> |
| 9.1 | Tree-of-heaven | <i>Ailanthus altissima</i> |
| 9.2 | Water Fern | All species in the genus <i>Azolla</i> |
| 10 | Yellow Floating Heart | <i>Nymphoides peltata</i> |

If you wish to include other plants the following is a detailed list that the Oakville Horticultural Society has adopted. We thank the Oakville Horticultural Society and Cathy Kavassalis for providing this list for use in the newsletter. It also includes Species at risk.

Invasive Plant List from Oakville Horticultural Society

The following is a list of some of the invasive plants found in Southern Ontario. All of the plants listed are prohibited from being entered in horticulture classes and should not be used in Design or Special Exhibits classes. This includes cultivars like 'Peppermint Stick' giant reed grass. Educational exhibits may be permitted with permission from the monthly show convenor.

Below are plants recognized as invasive (plants that do harm to the economy, environment, and or public health) by authorities including: the Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS), the Ontario Auditor General (AG), and the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC). The list includes several plants regulated under the federal Plant Protection Act (PPA) and Seeds Act (SA), the Ontario Invasive Species Act and Noxious Weeds Act (NWA), but does not include many of the regulated weedy species or species not yet present in Canada. There are additional invasive plants of concern to area Conservation Authorities (CA) that should be discouraged. Lists of these additional invasive plants can be found on the Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation website (CCIPR.ca).

| Common name | Scientific name | Authority | Law |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|----------|
| baby's breath | <i>Gypsophila paniculata</i> | CCIS | |
| barberry, Japanese and common | <i>Berberis thunbergia</i> & <i>B. vulgaris</i> * | AG CA CCIS* | PPA1 |
| bellflower, creeping | <i>Campanula rapunculoides</i> | CA OIPC | |
| bittersweet, oriental | <i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i> | AG | |
| broom | <i>Cytisus scoparius</i> | CCIS | |
| buckthorn | <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> , <i>Frangula alnus</i> | AG CA OIPC | ONW PPA* |
| bugleweed | <i>Ajuga reptans</i> | AG CA | |
| butterfly bush | <i>Buddleia davidii</i> | AG CA | |
| carrot, wild; queen anne's lace | <i>Daucus carota</i> | CA CCIS | SA |
| chervil, wild ('Raven's wing') | <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> | CA | ONW SA |
| clematis, sweet autumn | <i>Clematis terniflora</i> | AG CA | |
| coltsfoot, European | <i>Tussilago farfara</i> | CA | ONW |
| cork tree, Amur | <i>Phellodendron amurense</i> | AG CA | |
| daisy, oxeye | <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> | CA CCIS | SA |
| dame's rocket | <i>Hesperis matronalis</i> | AG CA | |
| daphne, February & spurge | <i>Daphne mezereum</i> & <i>D. laureola</i> * | CA *CCIS | |
| daylily, tawny or orange or ditch | <i>Hemerocallis fulva</i> | AG CA | |
| dead-nettle, yellow archangel | <i>Lamium galeobdolon</i> | AG CA | |
| euonymus: non-native | <i>Euonymus alatus</i> , <i>E. fortunei</i> , <i>E. europaeus</i> | AG CA | |
| flowering rush | <i>Butomus umbellatus</i> | CA CCIS OIPC | ISA |
| garlic mustard | <i>Alliaria petiolata</i> | AG OIPC | |
| goutweed | <i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> | CA OIPC | |
| grass: reed Canary | <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> ssp. <i>picta</i> | CCIS OIPC | |
| grass: Japanese stiltgrass | <i>Microstegium vimineum</i> | CA | PPA |
| grass: silvergrass | <i>Miscanthus sacchariflorus</i> , <i>M. sinensis</i> | AG CA | |
| hogweed, giant | <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> | CA CCIS OIPC | ONW SA |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|--------|
| honeysuckles, non-natives | Lonicera x bella, L. maackii, L. xylosteum, L. caprifolium, L. japonica, L. morrowii,* L. tatarica | AG CA OIPC *CCIS | |
| iris, yellow flag | Iris pseudacorus | AG CA CCIS OIPC | |
| ivy, English | Hedera helix | AG CA CCIS | |
| jewelweed: balsam & small-flowered | Impatiens glandulifera, I. parviflora | CA OIPC | |
| knotweeds: Japanese, giant, Bohemian, & Himalayan | Reynoutria japonica, R. sachalinensis, R. x bohemica, & Koenigia polystachya | CA CCIS OIPC | ISA |
| lilac, common & tree | Syringa vulgaris & S. reticulata | AG CA | |
| lily of the valley | Convallaria majalis | AG CA | |
| loosestrife, purple & wanded | Lythrum salicaria & L. vulgaris | CA CCIS | SA |
| loosestrife; creeping Jenny | Lysimachia nummularia | AG CA | |
| maples: Amur, Norway, Sycamore | Acer tataricum subsp. ginnala, A. platanoides,* A. pseudoplatanus | AG CA *CCIS *OIPC | |
| olive, Russian & autumn | Elaeagnus angustifolia & E. umbellata | AG CA CCIS OIPC | |
| orchid, helleborine | Epipactis helleborine | CA | |
| pachysandra | Pachysandra terminalis | AG CA | |
| parsley, hedge | Torilis arvensis, T. japonica | CA OIPC | |
| parsnip, wild | Pastinaca sativa | CA OIPC | ONW SA |
| periwinkle, lesser | Vinca minor | AG CA | |
| phragmites (nonnative) | Phragmites australis sbsp. australis | CA CCIS OIPC | ISA |
| pilewort; celandine, lesser | Ranunculus ficaria | CA | |
| raspberry, Himalayan | Rubus bifrons, R. armeniacus | CCIS | |
| rose, multiflora | Rosa multiflora | AG CA OIPC | |
| scilla | Scilla siberica | CA | |
| sea buckthorn | Hippophae rhamnoides | AG CA | |
| spurge: cypress, leafy, & myrtle | Euphorbia cyparissias, E. esula & E. myrsinites* | CA *CCIS | ONW |
| swallowwort; dog-strangling vine | Vincetoxicum nigrum, V. rossicum | CA OIPC CCIS | ISA |
| salt cedar, tamarisk | Tamarix ramoisissima | CCIS | |
| teasel | Dipsacus fullonum, D. laciniatus | AG CA | |
| thistle, non-native | Cirsium vulgare, C. arvense | CA | ONW |
| toadflax | Linaria genistifoli, L. damatica, L. repens, L. vulgaris* | *CCIS | SA |
| tree-of-heaven | Ailanthus altissima | AG CA CCISC | ISAp |
| water chestnut | Trapa natans | CCIS | ISA |
| watermilfoil: parrot's feather & Eurasian | Myriophyllum aquaticum & M. spicatum | CA CCIS OIPC | ISA |
| water soldier | Stratoides aloides | CCIS | ISA |
| yellow floating heart | Nymphoides peltata | CA CCIS | ISA |

AG –Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, “Value-for-Money Audit: Management of Invasive Species,” 2022.

CA –Central Ontario Conservation Authorities (SCOCA) various lists: ccipr.ca/canadian-invasive-plant-lists/

CCIS – Canadian Council on Invasive Species, “Canada’s unwanted invasive plants,” 2019.

ISA – Ontario Invasive Species Act; ISAp – pending approval: www.ontario.ca/page/managing-invasive-species-ontario

OIPC – Ontario Invasive Plant Council, “Invasive plants,” 2023: www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/invasive-plants/species/

ONW – Ontario Noxious Weed Act: omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/noxious_weeds.htm

PPA – Federal Plant Protection Act; PPA1– exempted rust resistant cultivars of barberries are under review.

SA – Federal Seeds Act

Endangered Plants

Plant material for Horticulture classes must be grown by the exhibitor. While plant material for Design classes may be obtained from any source, wild-collected plant material of endangered and threatened species is strictly forbidden. For example, a branch or seedpods from an intentionally planted Kentucky coffee tree may be displayed with clear indication of the source, but a wood poppy collected in the wild is not permitted.

Species at Risk in Ontario

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| American ginseng | American hart’s tongue fern | American water willow |
| bent spike-rush | bird’s-foot violet | black ash |
| blue ash | blunt-lobed woodsia | branched bartonia |
| broad beech fern | butternut | cherry birch |
| climbing prairie rose | colicroot | common hoptree |
| crooked-stem aster | cucumber tree | downy yellow false foxglove |
| deerberry | dense blazing star | drooping trillium |
| dwarf hackberry | dwarf lake iris | eastern flowering dogweed |
| eastern prairie fringed orchid | eastern prickly-pear cactus | Engelman’s quillwort |
| False hop sedge | false rue-anemone | fern-leaved yellow false foxglove |
| Few-flowered club rush | forked three-awned grass | four-leaved milkweed |
| Gattinger’s agalinis | Gillman’s goldenrod | goldenseal |
| Green dragon | hairy valerian | heart-leaved plantain |
| Hill’s pondweed | Hill’s thistle | hoary mountain-mint |
| horsetail spike- | Houghton’s goldenrod | Illinois tick-trefoil |
| juniper sedge | Bakowsky juniper sedge | Kentucky coffee-tree |
| lakeside daisy | large whorled pogonia | lowland toothcup |
| nodding pogonia | Ogden’s pondweed | pale showy goldenrod |
| pink milkwort | Pitcher’s thistle | purple twayblade |
| red mulberry | Riddell’s goldenrod | round-leaved greenbrier |
| round-leaved greenbrier | scarlet ammannia | shumard oak |
| skinner’s agalinis | slender bush-clover | small white lady’s-slipper |
| small whorled pogonia | small-flowered lipocarpha | smooth yellow false foxglove |
| spotted wintergreen | stiff-leaved showy goldenrod | swamp rose-mallow |
| tuberous indian-plantain | Virginia goat’s-rue | Virginia mallow |
| western wilvery aster | white prairie gentian | white wood aster |
| willowleaf aster | wood-poppy | |

The official Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) list is provided in Ontario Regulation 230/08: www.ontario.ca/page/species-risk-ontario#section-7

Judging Special Exhibits

by Linda Bartlett (notes from Judy Fine)

Special exhibits are one of the three main divisions typically found in a Flower Show. According to the Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards (OJES), a special exhibit is a combination of rooted horticultural specimens, often incorporating cut plant material and other elements arranged to create a cohesive artistic display. These exhibits serve as a bridge between horticultural expertise and artistic expression. (See OJES page 151 for definition).

Key Considerations for Special Exhibits

All growing plants within a special exhibit should have similar cultural requirements, ensuring that the exhibit remains a harmonious and sustainable display. Additionally, all plant materials used should be clearly labeled with both their common and botanical names, providing an educational component to the exhibit. The show schedule should specify whether newly acquired plant material may be used. It should also indicate the space allotted for each exhibit.

Depending on the schedule, special exhibits may feature plants and plant parts displayed in various mediums such as soil, water, or moss. They may also be arranged with or without containers and accessories, provided they remain in proportion to the exhibit.

Judging Criteria

Judging special exhibits is based on horticultural perfection and aesthetic design. Ideally, the judge should be qualified in both horticulture and design, or a qualified team should be appointed.

The scale of points for judging is structured as follows:

- ▶ Design: 30 points
- ▶ Cultural Perfection: 30 points
- ▶ Scale of Components: 10 points
- ▶ Compatibility of Components: 10 points
- ▶ Distinction: 10 points
- ▶ Conformance to Schedule: 5 points
- ▶ Proper Naming of Plant Material: 5 points

Classes of Special Exhibits

Special exhibits fall into various categories, each with its own set of requirements:

Bottle Garden: A collection of different plant species artistically arranged within a transparent container with an opening too small for a hand to enter. All plants should be entirely contained within and share similar cultural needs.

Dish Garden: A shallow, open, and portable container housing a collection of compatible horticultural plants.



Photo Credit: Rose ODell



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Schleicher

Display: An educational or informative exhibit rather than a competitive one, featuring a combination of cut flowers, potted plants, foliage, herbs, branches, fruits, vegetables, or nuts. This class is judged on both artistic merit and horticultural perfection.

Fairy Garden: A miniature scene within a single container, often inspired by children's stories.

The plants used should be alpines, miniatures, or smaller parts of larger plants with similar growing requirements. Accessories are permitted if they are necessary to complete the scene.

Miniature Landscape: A planted exhibit designed to realistically recreate a natural scene. A proper balance between organic and non-organic components is critical, and mature miniature plants are preferred.

Planter: A single, open container featuring a collection of compatible plants arranged in an artistic manner. Planters may be designed for indoor or outdoor settings, such as window boxes or urns.

Plants and Flowers: A composition combining growing plants with cut flowers and/or foliage in a water source. Additional plant materials, such as branches or seed heads, may be included, and the exhibit may be housed in a single or multiple containers.

Pot-et-Fleur: A combination of growing plants, green or flowering, either potted or arranged in soil or other moisture-retaining material, alongside cut flowers in water tubes or floral foam. Flowering branches are permitted, but cut foliage is not. The arrangement should be contained within a single container and may incorporate decorative elements, such as moss, wood, or rock.

Terrarium: A miniature landscape contained within a transparent, covered container (excluding bottles). All plants must be growing within the container and share compatible requirements. Cut plant material is not allowed.

Trough Garden: A miniature landscape designed to replicate a natural ecosystem. The container should frame the exhibit, typically taking a long, narrow shape similar to an animal feeding trough.

Vignette: A small, functional section of a room, terrace, patio, or similar area. It may include elements such as furniture, drapery, or floor coverings, and must feature a plant-based design or decoration. For example, a class may call for a floral arrangement in a teapot accompanied by a matching teacup to complete the scene.



Photo Credit: Debi Foster



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Schleicher



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Schleicher

Judging Ethics and Etiquette

Penny Stewart, OHA Judging Committee

Flower Show season is just around the corner. It will be great to see the snow disappear, and spring flowers bring our gardens to life again with a burst of colour. In getting ready for the new flower show season, it's the perfect time for Judges to pull out and dust off OJES (2019). Judge's ethics are found under Section 4.6 on page 11 of OJES. If you have a copy of The Encyclopedia of Judging and Exhibiting by Esther Veramae Hamel, now would be a great time to reread pages 9 through 29 on Ethics and Conduct. She has a wonderful way with words.

The off-season for gardening, when we are not busy in our gardens, is a great time to upgrade your knowledge as a Judge. Judges should have a sense of responsibility to upgrade their knowledge. Check out online courses and in-person courses, videos, and new books.

“Judges must progress or retire! The time never comes when knowledge is complete! Success is not a destination... it is a continuing journey.”

Esther Veramae Hamel, The Encyclopedia of Judging and Exhibiting 1966, pg. 11”

As Judges, we are guests of the Societies that invite us, and we should always be courteous and professional. It is unfortunate that the number of shows has dwindled over the past few years. With fewer opportunities to judge, please keep in mind that Judges should not solicit assignments.

If you are fortunate enough to be asked to Judge, if for any reason you cannot fulfill your commitment, it is your responsibility to find a replacement and consult with the appropriate (sub-)committee for approval.

Be aware that the OHA's position is that repeatedly judging the same show year after year is not appropriate. If called upon to do so, please suggest that the Society check the OHA website for other judges in the area.

Get out those comfortable shoes and your Judging package with a clipboard, pens, pencils, sticky notes, etc. Make sure you have been sent a complete copy of the Schedule and rules in advance, print them off, and review them.

It is best to ask questions of the Show Chair in advance if possible. This gives the Chair time to respond, we all know how busy it is for the Chair just before the Judging starts. All judges should remember that the schedule is the “Law of the Show”. Check on specific rules, special awards, interpretation, or changes to the schedule.

Be ready to arrive on time. It's best to arrive shortly before judging so your presence is known, but wait away from the show area. Always check with the Show Chair or convenor and be sure you know how much time you have been allotted and complete your assignment in the allotted time. Never ever leave before all judging is complete and your departure is confirmed with the Show Chair. The Chair may need to check that all awards were addressed.

When walking the show, remember to keep your comments positive, constructive, encouraging, and respectful. “Joy can be brought to Judging by maintaining a sincere, enthusiastic approach. A grim dictatorial attitude is as out of place as an insect on a specimen “ibid. Pg. 19

Clerks have ears and may know the exhibitor or even be the exhibitor. Speaking of exhibitors, judges should not have entries in larger shows. In smaller shows, judges should preferably not have entries in the show, but certainly not in the division they are judging.

Judges do not disqualify entries. If there is a concern about an entry, then any disqualification is the responsibility of the Show Chair or their designate. Bring any concern to the Show chair's attention, allowing them to make a decision.

Be sure to ask the Show Chair if they would like any feedback. Be prepared to provide positive feedback to the Show Chair. Show Committees often welcome suggestions on how to improve their next Show. Judges have the opportunity to help educate committees and exhibitors.

Be aware that you do not make any comments or criticisms of any other Judge's decision. A Judge's decision is final, and no Judge should comment otherwise. Commenting on another Judge's decision is very unprofessional and reflects poorly on your Judging ethics.

Be sure to give a heartfelt thank you to the Show Chair and Clerks for the privilege and opportunity to judge. Take every opportunity to help Show Committees and exhibitors. Without Shows and Exhibitors, there would be little need for Judges. Be an ambassador for the joy of "growing and showing."



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

This is our first newsletter for 2025. It is a little longer than usual but we had lots to share. We would love to hear from you on what you would like covered in the newsletters or Judges' updates. Please send them by email to: ohajudges@gmail.com.

Mother Nature is truly wonderful. Last week, I had snow in my yard. This week I have daffodils. Enjoy the warmer weather. Happy Spring!

Together We Grow - AdobeStock photo

Linda