



## SHOWTIME

### OHA JUDGING COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER VOLUME 9 - December 2024

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Photo credit: Penny Stewart

#### Summary of OHA Judges Committee Updates for 2024

##### *OHA Judging Committee Virtual Judges Updates:*

**December 2023:** Schedule Writing Part 1 presented by Penny Stewart (OHA Certified Judge and Chair of the OHA Judging Committee).

**January 2024:** Scheduling Writing Part 2 presented by Penny Stewart (OHA Certified Judge and Chair of the OHA Judging Committee).

**November 2024:** Show Staging and Clerking presented by Catherine McGill and Debi Foster (OHA Certified Judges and members of the OHA Judging Committee).

**Note:** Virtual updates are recorded and posted on the GardenOntario website under the Resources/Judges Corner tab.

##### *OHA Convention Judges Updates sessions:*

Two judges update sessions were held during the Convention.

The **"Judges on Judging and Shows"** session was an opportunity for Judges and Show Committee members to share on questions that crop up in relation to flower shows and becoming/being a judge. Twenty-three people attended the session coordinated by Kathryn Lindsay and Sharon Nivins, and supported by Catherine McGill (OHA Certified Judges and OHA Judging Committee members). A Q&A printout of 22 questions submitted to the OHA Judging Committee since the fall 2023 ShowTime newsletter was provided for use as a reference document and later emailed to those who requested it. A Q&A of 11 additional questions posed during the session has been prepared. Both the Q&A documents are to be posted on the GardenOntario website under the Resources/Judges Corner tab.

**Judge's Update #2** – Kiki Alwan showed about 40 attendees how to design, assemble and care for a terrarium, a self-enclosed ecosystem encased in glass that requires little to no maintenance, and hardly any watering – just twice a year! Built properly, a terrarium should remain green and fresh year-round. Following the demonstration, Penny Stewart (OHA Certified Judge and OHA Judging Committee Chair) provided a handout on the OJES (p.154) definition of terrariums and an explanation and scale of points for the Special Exhibits Division of a Show (OJES pp. 118-119) to 20 of the attendees. This update was supported by Catherine McGill. A good discussion between the judge attendees and members of the Judging Committee took place.

## Why Societies Should Write Schedules as Standard Shows?

Why should your Show Committee and Society write their Schedules as Standard Shows? Good question. There are two aspects to the importance of having Standard Show Schedules that societies should take into consideration when looking to write up the next show schedule.

Firstly, Standard Show Schedules give competitors more opportunities to enter. The more classes you have the more your members might consider entering. If you only have a very few classes then you may be limiting who has things in their garden to enter. If there are very limited Horticultural classes and members don't grow those few things listed then they can't enter. The same applies to Designs if you only have 2 design classes and neither of them appeals to members they won't enter. The more choices people have the better your chances of getting them to participate. Think of adding fun classes and novelty classes to widen appeal. Classes like "Most Holey Hosta" and "Biggest Weed" just might get people out and having fun. Why not have a Challenge Plant? You supply the seed and have people enter what they grow. You could alternate flowers and veggies each year or why not both?



Photo credit: Penny Stewart

Secondly, Show Schedules written as Standard allow Judges to enter to get credits to requalify as Judges. All Judges have to recertify every 3 years and part of that recertification includes entering shows. If Shows are not written as Standard then they don't count for Judges. Help your local Judges out and don't forget your local Judges are a great source of information on writing schedules and putting on shows.

To be a Standard Show a schedule must be written and have 2 divisions that must include Horticulture and Design and there must be five classes in both Horticulture and Design. If you have questions about this topic email: [ohajudges@gmail.com](mailto:ohajudges@gmail.com).

## Upcoming changes to OHA Judges Registry

The OHA Judges Registry has been in place since approximately 2011 and there have been no changes to the registration. Starting in 2025 the recertification fee will be increased to be \$30.00 for 3 years. New updated forms will be posted on the OHA website early in the new year. As a point of comparison, the Garden Clubs of Ontario/Judges Council charges \$35.00 for 2 years for their recertification.

The Judges Registrar, Sharon Nivins will send out a notification in late March to all Judges who are due to renew in 2025.

The increased fee will provide additional funds to increase grants to run schools and provide updates. The grants have not been changed since their inception. We are all aware that the cost of everything from room rental to speakers and printing has risen, especially over the last couple of years. The extra funds will also be used to allow the OHA Judging Committee to improve our educational outreach. Improved outreach and increased educational programs not only benefit Judges but will also benefit Society Show Committees and Exhibitors. As Judges we need folks to be keen to enter shows. The ongoing virtual updates that we record, and post give anyone province-wide access to information, and we want to expand the offerings.

## Don't Gloss Over the Glossary

As judges, we are often asked to explain the difference in the technical terms found in OJES and used in show Schedules. Competitors can be confused by the nuance in some of the terms we use in shows. Definitions can be similar but different and it's important to look at definitions so we as judges can assist others.

We want competitors to enjoy the experience of showing what they grow and not go away confused or frustrated that they didn't see the difference for example between a bloom vs a spray.

Classes for things like Roses often call for a Spray or a Bloom. The schedule is the law of the show so entries must conform with the schedule. So we must emphasize the need to check that schedule very carefully to see what is being asked for on the show table.

It's good to remind new competitors that a bud showing color is considered a bloom. So if a class calls for one bloom make sure there are no buds showing colour.

Let's take a look at the term "Bloom." Firstly it has two definitions within Horticulture. Competitors need to clearly understand the need to ensure that if a class calls for 1 bloom that means an individual flower. Disbudding of flowers like Peonies and dahlias are prime examples where any extra buds need to be carefully removed.

Here are the two definitions of **Bloom**:

- ▶ An individual flower, one to a stem. Specimen blooms should be disbudded for exhibition purposes.
- ▶ A whitish powdery or waxy covering of a surface, especially on leafy succulents, and on some fruits, vegetables and foliage, e.g., peaches apples, peas, leaves of red cabbage, hosta.



Photo credit: Penny Stewart

**Note:** *It's good to remind new competitors that a bud showing color is considered a bloom. So if a class calls for one bloom make sure there are no buds showing colour.*

Classes for things like Roses often call for a Spray rather than a Bloom.

**Spray:** The terminal flowering growth of an herbaceous or woody plant carried on one stem. Ideally, it would show all stages of development, e.g., flowers in bloom, buds showing colour, green buds and leaves.

Then there is Stalk and Stem and Spike

**Stalk:** The stem or main axis of a plant; any supporting or connecting part of a plant, as the petiole of a leaf, the peduncle of the flower, or the funicle of an ovule.

**Stem:** A main plant structure that supports flowers, leaves, buds, or fruit. (see Stalk)

Stalk or stem are very similar and often used interchangeably.

**Spike:** An upright stem carrying several flowers which are nearly stemless, e.g., Gladiolus, Liatris.

It is always worthwhile before Show season or before writing a schedule to review the glossary to get things fresh in your mind. Judges should encourage Show Committees to be sure to include definitions right in the show schedule. We all need to help competitors to make entering a show rewarding.

Happy Flower Show season.

# Christmas and Other Forest Cacti

By Dale Odorizzi, Lanark County Master Gardeners

The Christmas Cactus and Easter Cactus, both members of the Schlumbergera family and the Orchid Cactus the Epiphyllum family are all Forest Cactus and all are worth a little effort to get them to bloom. The natural home of the Forest Cactus is rain forests and jungles. It anchors itself to a tree (epiphytic) with its roots exposed to the elements and lives off what it can collect from air and water, or a rock (epilithic), where it collects what it can from rock debris and rainwater. It is a succulent though, storing water in its leaves. It is not surprising, therefore, that their growing needs are more like orchids than like the spiny cacti that grow in the deserts.

The typical Forest Cactus has leaf like stems and a trailing growth habit that makes it suitable for hanging baskets. The flowers on a Forest Cactus are spectacular but unfortunately, they are shy bloomers and there are rules to follow if you want a good display every year.

The Forest Cacti like a well-lit area that is shaded from direct sunlight. They thrive on an East facing window sill. During the resting period, a temperature of 13-16C is ideal. For the rest of the year, 15-20C.

They need regular watering during the active growing period but the compost should be allowed to dry between watering. During their rest period, water them infrequently. If your tap water is hard, use rain water to water the plants. Many of the forest cacti come from the Rain Forest. They love humidity but hate wet roots which can lead to root rot and fungal diseases. Your cactus likes evenly moist soil but allow the top 2.5 cm (1 inch) to dry out between watering. Set it on a tray of moist pebbles and mist occasionally to provide the humidity it craves. On warm, sunny days, water every 2-3 days but if it is cool and humid, only water weekly.

Schlumbergera likes to be pot bound so don't be too generous with the pot size, but rather repot every other year or so, shortly after its flowering period. Add fresh medium when you do - a mix of three parts peat or potting mix to one part sharp sand or perlite as the Schlumbergera likes things a little on the acid side. A light orchid mix works well, too.

The easiest way to increase Schlumbergera is to take leaf cuttings - two to three segments - and stick them halfway down into a mix the same as that of the parent. You should have roots in two to three weeks. Fertilize when one new segment appears.



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These are long-lived plants whose lifespan is measured in decades. As the cactus gets old, the branches near the roots will appear to become woody and tough. If your forest cactus is ill, first take stem cuttings to salvage an offspring in case the remedies don't work. If the leaves are limp and the soil dry, soak in water for a few hours. If the soil is wet and the leaves are limp, wash off the soil and repot in an evenly moist medium. If there are white spots on the leaves, use a fungicide. If the roots are rotted, start over.



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Once you get the hang of the treatment for your Forest Cactus, you might want to bring other Forest Cacti into your home, creating spectacular beauty virtually all year long following the steps outlined below.

	<b>Christmas Cactus</b>	<b>Easter Cactus</b>	<b>Orchid Cactus</b>
January	<b>Flowering Period</b>	Resting Period	Resting Period
February	Resting Period	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear
March			
April	Treat normally, water well when soil begins to dry	<b>Flowering Period</b> -water normally. Minimum temp15C	<b>Flowering Period</b> -water normally. Minimum temp15C
May			
June	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs	Outdoors in a shady spot. Protect from Slugs
July			
August			
September	Pre flowering period Keep dryish and cool until buds appear	Resting Period	Treat normally, water well when soil begins to dry
October			
November			
December	<b>Flowering Period</b>		Resting Period

## Clerking and Etiquette

By Penny Stewart

Volunteering as a Clerk is a good way to help your local society at their Flower show.

Usually, the Show Chair or Convenor will review any paperwork and record-keeping with the Clerks before the Judge arrives. Be sure to ask any questions you might have before things get started.

There are a few pointers Clerks should keep in mind.

Duties usually include:

- ▶ Recording the winners of first, second, third place and honourable mention in each class or subclass and if requested to prepare class placement summary cards. ( not all societies use them)
- ▶ You may also be required to tabulate results, particularly if aggregate points, awards and cash prizes are involved and if there is no Show Registrar or Statistician.
- ▶ Clerks should not offer advice or unsolicited information to the judge. Keep your eyes and ears open and save any questions till the judge is finished.
- ▶ Work quietly if you are working with a second clerk. Keep the chatter down so as not to distract the Judge.
- ▶ Clerks should not interfere with the judging process or crowd the judge. Give the Judge(s) lots of room and stay back at least 6 feet.
- ▶ If the Judge has a question refer it to the Show Chair/Convenor.
- ▶ After judging is completed, and if time permits, clerks may ask the judge questions that will help the clerks broaden their judging knowledge.
- ▶ Exhibitor names on tags and class placement summary cards (if used) should not be exposed until all judging of special awards have been completed.
- ▶ Be sure to wear comfortable shoes as you may be on your feet for an hour or more depending on the size of the show.
- ▶ Clerking can be a great opportunity to learn more about shows and exhibiting.

# How To Become A Certified OHA Judge

by Jim Mabee

Each year I get questions about how to become a Certified Judge for the Ontario Horticultural Association.

Since the schools are run by a District, the first thing to do is talk to other like-minded people. Then, contact your District Director and let them know there is an interest in becoming a judge. When there are approximately 10 or more people interested, the District Director informs the OHA Board and a motion is made to hold a school in that District. Nearby districts are often invited to attend and sometimes a call goes out to all societies in Ontario and a larger school is held.

With that taken care of, the District Director then contacts the Judging Schools and Updates Coordinator and everything is set into motion. A qualified Principal for the school, along with a Secretary and Treasurer are appointed after collaboration between the District Director and Coordinator.

The Principal now takes the lead and a venue is found for six two-day sessions, usually over a three-year period, and includes spring, early summer, late summer, and autumn timings. The registration fees are then worked out depending on the costs of running the school. The costs include such things as the price of the venue, speaker fees, materials needed, and whether or not lunches and/or dinners will be served. This is split between the number of registrants and the fee per student is set. All schools and updates are designed to be self supporting, even though there is a fund that can be used when the school or update is completed, whereby a grant can be applied for. The money for the grants is supported by the judges' registration fees that are charged for judges to remain in good standing.

The Principal will then be sent the Judging School Manual which contains all the information needed to run a school, and all the material that is to be covered, along with the examinations for each session. A passing grade of 70% is required to complete each session.

So, after all of this, if you are interested in becoming an OHA judge, make sure you inform your District Director and the Judging Schools Coordinator. If there is not sufficient interest in your district, your name will be put on a list of people awaiting a school and you will be contacted when one is available in the province. From there it is up to you to contact that School Principal and see if they are accepting outside districts. You would then decide whether travel and accommodations are something you are comfortable with and apply to be accepted.

## Thank you, Jim

We want to express our sincere gratitude to Jim Mabee as he retires from the OHA Judging School and Updates Coordinator position.

Judges, Show Committees, and exhibitors alike have benefited from Jim's willingness to share his vast knowledge and experience in horticulture and design. He has been key in the work undertaken by the OHA Judging Committee since it started in 2014. We wish him all the very best. Thank you for your dedication and commitment.

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Just like that, another year has slipped by. Here is a long overdue edition of the SHOWTIME newsletter. We are looking forward to keeping in touch more in 2025. We would like your input as to what topics you would like covered in the newsletters or Judges' updates. Please send them by email to: [ohajudges@gmail.com](mailto:ohajudges@gmail.com).



*'Tis the season to celebrate with  
family and friends  
May the New Year be filled with  
much happiness good health and  
joyful times  
Best wishes  
The OHA Judging Committee*