

The Role of a Flower Show Convener

Goals of flower show:

To educate society members and the viewing public in floral design, stimulate interest in Horticulture and provide an outlet for creative expression. Members see new cultivars and learn what trees, shrubs and plants grow locally.

Recognition and awards instill personal pride and confidence. Members may later decide to attend judging school to become a Judge - which is an asset to the society in the future.

The qualifications of the flower show convener:

For a Show Convener to be able to produce a good flower show, they need to have an extensive knowledge of a variety plant species, cultivars and their common and Latin names. Knowledge of the O.J.E.S. Rules and Standards is necessary as well as experience in flower shows and the meaning of show terminology. The convener should have entered flower design and horticultural shows both in and outside the society.

Scheduling

The Show Convener writes a yearly show schedule with two divisions, Horticulture and Design, which conforms to Ontario Judging and Exhibiting Standards (O.J.E.S.). The schedule must use specific wording to include all essential details of the shows. The society should endeavor to have standard shows. A standard flower show has a minimum of five classes in each division with a minimum of four exhibits in each class. The show should always strive to encourage learning.

The schedule needs to conform to the seasons, selecting flowers, fruit and vegetables that are expected to be in peak condition at the time of the show. Once the dates, classes and themes for design have been set, the schedule is printed and made available to all members.

Special classes may be added (i.e., Youth, Novice and Men Only), to encourage more members to participate.

The schedule and accompanying rules become the "Law of the Show". All exhibitors and Judges are bound by its requirements. If there is a conflict between O.E.J.S. and the schedule, the schedule is the one that prevails. For this reason it is important that the schedule be carefully written and adheres to the standards of the O.J.E.S.

Staging

Staging is done by the Show Convener with the Flower Show Clerk. Tables must be set up at a standard height with neutral coloured cloths as well as signage to identify divisions, dividers between classes, and correctly sized niches for standard and miniature designs. Extra lighting may be provided for judging. Flower show entry tags must be made available to exhibitors both prior to as well as at the show.

Placement and Classification

The Show Convener helps the exhibitors fill in exhibit entry tags and with the placement of their specimens for cultural or design classes if needed.

Prior to the judge arriving, the exhibit area is closed to members to allow the Show Convener to check for the correct placement of exhibits, moving those that may have been placed in the wrong section and removing those that do not conform to the schedule, i.e., the wrong type of flower. If a schedule asked for a cactus dahlia and a collarette dahlia was placed, the Show Convener may find another suitable class, i.e., AVO, in which to place it. If no alternative is on the schedule the entry will be disqualified.

Show Conveners may help members in the grooming of dead foliage or blooms prior to the show when necessary. For example, removal of a bud from the stem on a specimen entered in a class that asks for one bloom to avoid disqualification.

If a class attracts a large number of entries the Show Convener may subdivide that class. There must be a minimum of three specimens in each subdivision. This allows for fairer judging, i.e., tulips subdivided into large bloom tulips and small bloom tulips. This encourages exhibitors as their flowers are judged against similar specimens.

The Show Convener must ensure that members adhere to the timetable for placement of their exhibits. Members need to place their exhibits within the time allotted in the schedule so the Show Convener can check to ensure that all the exhibits are in the proper classes and conform to the schedule prior to judging. Judges do not disqualify exhibits - that's the responsibility of the Show Convener prior to the Judges' arrival. (O.J.E.S. 2003 Edition), however, Judges may draw attention to misplaced entries and suggest to the show convener that they need to be moved to the correct class.

Judges

The Show Convener will select and invite a Judge or Judges well in advance of the show. The Show Convener must provide the Judge with the address, show

schedule and rules of the show prior the event. If the Judge has any questions the convener must be available to answer them. A reminder call or email a week before is advisable. The Show Convener has a list of accredited Judges and their location to choose from. It is normal practice to use a variety of Judges. The choice of Judge is based on their training qualifications. Some Judges have both horticultural and design accreditations, while some have one or the other.

A Judge with both qualifications can be used for a small show. It may be necessary to book two Judges for a show with more classes, especially in months with an abundance of flowers. In this event one, Judge is booked for Horticultural classes and the other for design.

The Board of the society agrees upon an honorarium which includes travel expenses. The Show Convener provides the President and Treasurer with the name of the Judge and the amount of the cheque prior to the show. The Show Convener hands the Judge/Judges a thank you note and the cheque after the judging is completed.

The Show Convener allows time for briefing the Judge prior to starting judging. Rules specific to each society will be clarified at this time, i.e., is more than one HM given? Does each section have a best in show and Judge's choice? Are there any specialty awards to be given?

If the Judge has any questions regarding the schedule, the convener must be able to answer them to the Judges' satisfaction.

Only the Show Convener and Clerk may be present while judging takes place. The Show Convener accompanies the Judge to answer any further questions that may arise during judging. The Show Convener requests that the Judge write clear and concise comments on the entry tags to educate and encourage members and provide helpful feedback.

The Judges' decisions are considered final; however, any protest must be made in writing and submitted to the Show Convener.

Awards

Annual awards for design, most points and novice of the year are given to members at the Annual General Meeting and are presented by the Show Convener. Recognition and awards instill personal pride and confidence.

Education

If any member has questions regarding the show schedule or needs assistance with understanding the rules, the Show Convener must be willing to help.

A variety of workshops covering a wide range of topics are offered to members. Workshops are given by judges or the Show Convener. When a Judge is presenting a workshop, the Show Convener is responsible for the logistics of the event, i.e., determining what workshop would be desirable or helpful to society members, arranging for the presenter to come, booking the venue, ensuring materials are provided, and collecting any fee, if applicable.

When the workshop is run by the convener he or she is responsible for the event in its entirety.

As the society is a non-profit organization, and in order to continue to receive funding, the convener must write an annual report to be published in the newsletter. This report summarizes the year's shows, i.e., how many shows were held, and how many new members entered. The report must also show plans for future educational programs, and continue to encourage members to enter shows.

The Show Convener also encourages the purchase of the O.J.E.S. book which is a valuable source of information.