

HOW TO BECOME A GCA JUDGE

GCA Rules, Requirements and Timetable:

Refer to *The GCA Judge: Procedures and Requirements* on the Judging Committee page.

Anyone interested in joining the GCA Judging Program should FIRST contact their zone judging rep to help guide them through the process. It is essential that your club president and the approved judges who will sponsor you know you well enough to write on your behalf. We all want to make sure this will be a good fit and that you thrive in the Judging Program before you embark on this journey!

Essentials:

1. The FS&JG is updated on July 1 each year, therefore it is essential to have the most current GCA [Flower Show & Judging Guide](#) on hand. Pay special attention to the annual List of FS&JG Updates.
2. Every year you must seek out opportunities to exhibit in club and other types of flower shows **AND** work on your clubs' flower shows.
3. Continue to educate yourself by taking classes whenever possible **AND** share your knowledge with your fellow club members.
4. Strive to be knowledgeable, respectful, cooperative, humble, kind and tactful. Be a team player.

OVERVIEW OF JUDGING PROGRAM PROGRESSION

CANDIDATE  PROSPECTIVE JUDGE  APPROVED JUDGE

As a Candidate, you must:

1. Exhibit often AND work on flower shows.
2. Check your email regularly for clerking opportunities from your zone judging rep.
3. Attend a one-day approved GCA judging workshop each year (five hours per discipline), or a two-day approved GCA judging workshop every other year (ten hours per discipline), within your zone or elsewhere.
4. Clerk in a minimum of 3 shows and have a minimum of 6 positive Evaluation Forms (J3) from at least 4 different judges.
5. Fill out, online, the J3-A form for EACH approved Judge, each time you clerk. Read the simple instructions on the form before you attempt to fill it out. Please keep in mind the following:
 - You will click 'SUBMIT' at the bottom, which will send your J3-A form responses to your evaluating judge and your zone judging rep. Please note: Certain email providers may block these form notifications.
 - You also will receive a confirmation summary via email with the contents of your J3-A submission. Make a hard copy of this and give to the evaluating judge before you begin clerking at the show. Please note: Certain email providers may block these form notifications.
 - You can send a very brief email to your Judges alerting them to expect a J3-A email with your form responses, and asking them to let you know if there is any problem. The judges will use your J3-A information to complete the J3-B.
 - Remember, you MUST close out of the J3-A form and reopen a new J3-A form for EACH evaluating judge.
6. Before you clerk, introduce yourself to the flower show chair of clerks and ask to become familiar with the location of classes that you will be clerking.
7. Introduce yourself as a candidate in the judging program to the approved judges before judging begins.

Hand each of them a copy of your J3-A form and tell the judges you have completed a J3-A forms online so that they may submit the J3-B. GCA approved judges or those from another organization/plant society may complete the J3-B forms and submit electronically by clicking on the “submit” button.

8. Keep a record of each time you clerk, work on a show or take a class. This will come in handy when you later fill out the J5: Annual Activity Record. Complete your J5 by June 30 of each year.
9. **Never** solicit judging assignments for yourself. When it is time, after a year **and** a minimum of 3 clerking assignments and 6 positive Evaluation Forms from at least 4 different judges, your file will be presented to the Judges Selection Committee for their review and consideration. Your zone judging rep, working with your zone area vice chairman, will determine when it is time for advancement; this can take several years.

As a Prospective, you must:

1. Exhibit often AND work on flower shows.
2. Check your email regularly for judging opportunities from your zone judging rep.
3. **Never** solicit judging assignments for yourself.
4. Attend a one-day approved GCA judging workshop each year (five hours per discipline), or a two-day approved GCA judging workshop every other year (ten hours per discipline), within your zone or elsewhere.
5. Practice judge at least 6 shows and receive a minimum of 10 positive J3-B Evaluation Forms. A minimum of 8 forms must be from GCA approved judges from outside the prospective judge’s club. Two may be from approved judges in another organization or approved judges in the prospective judge’s club. Prospective photography judges must have a minimum of 1 positive Juried Judging Evaluation Form: Part 2, from GCA approved photography judges on the Jury Panel. This will count as one of the 10 positive evaluation.
6. Fill out, online, the J3-A evaluation information form for EACH approved Judge, each time you judge. Read the simple instructions on the form before you attempt to fill it out. Please keep in mind the following:
 - o You will click ‘SUBMIT’ at the bottom, which will send your J3-A form responses to your evaluating judge and your zone judging rep. Please note: Certain email providers may block these form notifications.
 - o You also will receive a confirmation summary with the contents of your J3-A submission. Make a hard copy of this and give to the evaluating judge before you begin judging at the show. Please note: Certain email providers may block these form notifications.
 - o You can send a very brief email to your Judges alerting them to expect a J3-A email with your form responses, and asking them to let you know if there is any problem. The judges will use your J3-A information to complete the J3-B.
 - o Remember, you MUST close out of the J3-A form and reopen a new J3-A form for EACH evaluating judge.
7. Before you judge, introduce yourself to the flower show chair of judges. You must also come prepared, having done any research necessary to judge the show. This means studying and noting the Scale of Points for each class and reading the flower show schedule carefully.
8. Introduce yourself as a prospective judge in the judging program to the judges before judging begins. Hand them a copy of your J3-A form and tell the judge you have completed a J3-A form online so that they may submit the J3-B. GCA judges or those from another organization/plant society may complete the J3-B forms and submit electronically by clicking on the word “submit”.
9. Keep a record of each time you judge, work on a show or take a class. This will come in handy when you later fill out the J5: Annual Activity Record. Complete your J5 by June 30 of each year.
10. Continue to exhibit and work on shows. Consider chairing a show of ANY size. It is an invaluable experience.
11. Seek out other opportunities for education and share what you learn.
12. Be a prospective judge for a MINIMUM of three years, have exhibited frequently in and beyond the zone, and have positive evaluation forms in your file. There must be a minimum of three letters of

recommendation written within the last three years endorsing your move to approved status. The zone judging rep will solicit letters of recommendation from approved judges willing to write or they may be unsolicited letters received after judging assignments. **Never** solicit letters of recommendation for yourself. Original sponsors of the candidate may not write letters of recommendation. It can take 3-8 years to advance.

13. While you are a prospective judge, write a sample flower show schedule in your discipline, using the GCA Flower Show template. Include at least three classes and the GCA rules and guidelines. This could also be an approved GCA Flower Show schedule that you have worked on. Submit the schedule to your Judging zone rep who will review and suggest improvements if necessary.

As an Approved Judge, you must:

1. Continue to exhibit regularly and work on flower shows.
2. Keep a record of each time you judge, work on a show, take or teach a class or workshop. This will come in handy when you later fill out the J5: Annual Activity Record. Complete your J5 by June 30 each year.
3. Attend a one-day approved GCA judging workshop each year (five hours per discipline), or a two-day approved GCA judging workshop every other year (ten hours per discipline), within your zone or elsewhere.
4. Keep learning and sharing your knowledge. It is expected that you seek out workshops, classes or lectures in your discipline each year.
5. Remember that it is your responsibility to mentor exhibitors, candidate and prospective judges and look for and encourage new candidates for the Judging Program.
6. Remain humble, respectful and open to learning.
7. Be kind in all your GCA dealings; as a GCA Judge you are often the face of the GCA for club members.
8. Remember how critical it is to work as a team and be open to the ideas and opinions of your colleagues.
9. Work diligently to express educational comments relating to the principles and elements of design for Floral Design judges; likewise, for Photography and Horticulture as appropriate.