



PASSING
HORTICULTURE

A Few Things to Think about...

Before you arrive to Pass:

It is highly recommended that you take an assignment to pass as seriously as you do judging. Just as you do with judging, prepare before you get there; time is usually in short supply during passing and anything you can do ahead of time to help yourself and the exhibitors is time well spent! Read the Passing Horticulture sections in [Book 4: Flower Show & Judging Guide - Pocket Guide at the Show](#).

Find out what, if any, supplies you are expected to bring. This is a good time to make sure there will be adequate passing supplies on hand such as: extra copies of the schedule, reference books, an internet connection, and if so, mobile devices or laptops to check nomenclature, pencils, erasers, red pencils, tape measures, chalk, extra 4" x 6" white cards, paper clips, grooming tools, etc.

Ask how the passing area is being set up. *If* you are concerned about this, ask if you can help set up.

Ask to see the schedule as soon as it is available; look it over very carefully, familiarizing yourself with all the rules and guidelines, class descriptions, requirements, scales of points, award requirements, etc. The more educated you are about the intricacies of the schedule the better you will be able to help the exhibitor.

If, after reading the schedule, you have any questions or concerns, talk to the passing or show chair and clear them up before you get there.

Ask to see the entry card and look it over carefully; hopefully it will be the standard [GCA Horticulture Entry Card](#). If not, this is a good time to catch potential problems and alert the show chairman. Ask if they are using the [GCA Horticulture Propagation Card](#).

Find out which classes you are passing and do any necessary research before you get there. This includes identifying specific reference books and finding copies of them or finding websites that will help you identify and name plants. Bring a mobile device such as an iPad, phone or laptop (making sure there will be an internet or Wi-Fi connection).

Bookmark, at home, the websites that have the best information and images. You don't need to be an expert on the Aloes of Madagascar to pass them, but you should know where you can find that information before you get there. The internet can be a very good tool for checking nomenclature if you do your homework and find reputable sites.

Find out who will be the final arbiter on decisions about not passing an exhibit or making exceptions to the rules.

While you are Passing:

Get there early to set your space up and become comfortable with the surroundings and perhaps help the show or passing chair set up.


Put your happy face on; you want to encourage exhibitors from the start and put them at ease. This is a rare opportunity to engage club members or the public. Who knows, you may be helping a future judge or Flower Show or Judging Committee member!

If exceptions are made or rules are relaxed for an exhibit or class during passing, be sure the exhibitors knows this and are told that next time they will be expected to follow the stated rules.

Keep notes of any exceptions that are made or special circumstances that arise that the judges need to know about. Make sure the passing chair or judge's chair gets these notes to include in the briefing of the judges.

Remember, the passing committee can refuse to pass an entry that doesn't conform to the schedule; conversely, the judges may not disqualify any entry that was passed by the passing committee except in cases where pests and disease are present and were missed by the passing committee.

"For Exhibit Only"; If the exhibit cannot be passed, it must be designated 'For Exhibit Only'. A brief, constructively worded comment should be added to explain why it could not be judged by the show committee .

 THE GARDEN CLUB of AMERICA Passed

HORTICULTURE ENTRY CARD

Club GCA Major
 Class: Entry #: Award:
(Entry # given after passed)

Plant Material

Botanical Name: *(Genus species 'Cultivar')*

Common Name:

Length of Ownership:

Propagated by Exhibitor
(Check for yes)
 Propagation Card (attached to qualify for special awards)
(Check for yes)
 Key Card (must be attached for more than one variety)
(Check for yes)

Growing Conditions:

Judges' Comments:

Eligible for:

Novice (Exhibiting alone) Club Award
 Willemsen (GCA Show) Beattie (GCA Show)
 Wrinkle (GCA Major Show) Corning (GCA Major Show)

Exhibitor:

Exhibitor's Club & Zone:

Show Name:

Show Date(s):

Spring 2018

THE ENTRY CARD

Is it legible?

Is the exhibit in the correct class?

Has the exhibitor checked the applicable boxes?

Ask each exhibitor about award eligibility. Many new exhibitors are not aware of how important this is.

Is the botanical nomenclature correct? See the [GCA Botanical Nomenclature](#) document.

Has the exhibitor filled out all the relevant information that the class and entry card requires?

Did the exhibitor propagate the plant? If so, is the [propagation card correctly filled out](#)?

Is a key card required for the class and has it been [done properly](#) and thoroughly? Is it legible and accurate? Nomenclature all correct?

Is there a limit to how many exhibits an exhibitor can enter in each class?

If the exhibit is an endangered or threatened species in the area in which it is being exhibited, accompanying paperwork stating when and how it was propagated by the exhibitor or where the plant was purchased from must accompany the entry card and exhibit.

Check the Passed box or initial the card only when you feel certain the entry card and exhibit are ready to be judged.

PASSING
 HORTICULTURE

THE EXHIBIT

Look over the exhibit very carefully. Is it adequately groomed? Is it in good condition? Would the exhibit benefit from any additional grooming?

Are there pests or diseases present? If so, the exhibit should be removed promptly.

Does the exhibit fulfill the class requirements: blooming or fruiting, pot size, stem length, staking, number of plants per pot allowed of same species or cultivar, number of different species and/or cultivars required for collection or mixed container classes?

Container Classes: Is the pot clean? Is it the correct size or type according to the rules and guidelines? Is top dressing appropriate and neatly applied? Is disguised double potting done properly? Does the exhibit have the correct number of plants in it? Which side does the exhibitor want to face the judges? Chalk the back with an "X" for the stagers.

Cut Specimen Classes: Was the cut specimen conditioned correctly? Would it benefit from one more cut? Is the exhibit the correct length? Is the glass bottle in proportion to the cut or would a different size work better? Is the wedging material done well and effectively? Is the stem in the water?

Remember, no wild collected, endangered or threatened plant material can be exhibited unless it is accompanied by a key card with an explanation of how it was propagated by the exhibitor or which reputable nursery it was purchased from; no invasive plant material may be exhibited.

Make certain each exhibit in a competitive class adheres to the general rules, guidelines and class requirements for each division as outlined in the schedule

a. In a manner that is thoughtful, precise, patient, tactful and encouraging to the exhibitor

b. With knowledge of the schedule, class intention and attention to all details including all size restrictions

[GCA 2021 Flower Show & Judging Guide, Book 4, Page 6](#)

The Tact Factor

Sometimes, for various reasons, an exhibit can't be passed. It is very important to handle this situation with the greatest tact. Take the time to look the exhibitor in the eye and explain exactly why the exhibit can't be judged or can't remain at the show. Never, give the impression you are rejecting the exhibitor. It's all about the exhibit. Try to give constructive advice on how to make the exhibit show-worthy next time. By giving friendly, tactful and constructive advice to the exhibitor, you are almost assured they will try again. Encourage exhibitors to leave their exhibit in the For Exhibit Only area.

THE LAST WORD

Exhibit, exhibit, exhibit! It is a humbling experience and will make you a better passer (and judge). Work on flower shows in every capacity you can, as often as you can. Mentor club members and exhibitors who are clearly interested in flower shows.