

Vegetables: Selection and Preparation for Display

Derylee Hecimovich, originally developed by H.W. Pillsbury, revised by Harlem Sandberg in 1971, further revised by Wayne Vandre in 1978 **HGA-00039**

Produce exhibits are an important part of Alaska's fairs. This publication will help you select and exhibit vegetables or other produce, while gaining knowledge and experience towards success. High quality produce has greater food value, will be in the best condition for table use as well as exhibition purposes, may attract attention and increased interest in Alaskan grown vegetables.



General Rules

For Exhibitors

1. Read and follow the show or fair rules, deadline dates, entry times carefully.
2. Produce variety names may be required.
3. Harvest and deliver your exhibits in the shortest time possible to keep them fresh. Refrigerate if needed to insure freshness.
4. Carefully transport exhibits to retain freshness and protect from bruising. Wrapping in damp paper towels and individual packing can be helpful. Consider bringing some extra vegetables in case of damage or loss.
5. Remember, judges must place your vegetables as they see them at that judging time.

Exhibits

1. All produce should be clean; remove excess soil by brushing, gently washing or wiping with a damp cloth. Specimens should be of uniform size, shape, color, freshness and degree of maturity.
2. Other than "giant" categories, entries should be of a size and maturity most commonly sold in standard commercial markets. They should not be overripe, wilted or immature.
3. Exhibits should be free from insect, disease, cracks, blemishes or mechanical injury.
4. The exact number of specimens required should be shown or entry may be disqualified.
5. Remove side roots and trim tops to one inch on root crops.

For Judges

1. Take into consideration gardening in Alaska can be particularly challenging and varied in location. Keep the growing season weather and other unique conditions in mind.

2. Identify those exhibits grown indoors or greenhouses, hoop houses and judge accordingly.
3. All produce should be judged as top-quality commercial produce, unless entered in giant or other novelty categories.
4. Include positive or helpful comments on scorecards whenever possible.

Exhibit Entry Guidelines for Produce

Artichoke	1 artichoke	Trim to 2 inch stem
Beans	12 whole beans	Leave stems (tops) attached, pods should be long, straight, firm
Beets	5 beets	Table beets, 1 ½-2 ½ inch, Pickling beets are ¾ -1 inch
Berries	1/2 pint of same type	Clean and transport carefully, leave stem tops all on or all off
Broccoli or Romanesco	1 bunch	Chose bunch at least 3-4 inches in diameter; stems should be 5-6 inches long' no more than 3 stems should be tied together
Brussels Sprouts	12 sprouts	Remove loose outer leaves, trim neatly
Cabbage	1 head	Leave stem ¼ inch long to hold leaves firmly, leave 3 wrapper leaves after trimming
Carrots	5 carrots	Trim top to 1 inch and cut off side roots
Cauliflower	1 head	Leave 4-6 green outer leaves, trim to 1 inch above the head
Celery	1 bunch	Remove root, trim butt to form a triangle or pyramid
Cucumbers	3 cucumbers	Display 1 European, 6 pickling cucumbers, cut stems neatly
Eggplant	1 eggplant	Cut stems neatly
Endive	1 bunch	Trim neatly to ½ inch
Fruit	5 or ½ pint	5 apples or similar, ½ pint crabapples, cherries or similar
Grains	1 bunch	1-2 inch diameter bunch, trimmed
Greens	1 bunch	Collard, turnip, beet, etc. Trim to 1 inch
Herbs	1 bunch	½ inch diameter bunch, 4 -20 inch stem length
Kale	1 bunch	Select young leaves 5-10 inches long
Kohlrabi	3 kohlrabi	Trim leaves to 3 inches and roots to just below the ball
Leeks	3 leeks	Trim roots to ½ inch
Lettuce	1 head/plant	Remove loose outer leaves, keep cool, trim tap root to 1 inch
Melon	1 melon	Cut stem squarely and leave 2 inches attached
Onions and garlic	1 bunch (5-6) 5 dry	Green; cut roots to ½ inch, should be straight, smooth Trim roots and neck to ½ inch, should have hard, dry skin
Parsnips	3-5 parsnips	Trim tops to 1 inch, remove side roots
Peas	12 whole pods	Leave ½ stem tops
Peppers	1 pepper	Leave stem ½ inch long
Potatoes	5 potatoes	Carefully wash or brush off
Pumpkin	1 pumpkin	Cut stem squarely and leave 2 inches attached
Radishes	1 bunch (5)	Leave tops on and trim taproot to 1 inch
Rhubarb	1 bunch (5 stalks)	Pull stalks from the crown (do not cut base) and leave a small portion of leave (1/2 -1 inch) to prevent bleeding.
Rutabaga	1 rutabaga	Trim top and leave stems 1 inch long
Spinach	1 bunch/plant	Trim roots to 1 inch

Squash	3 summer 1 winter	Choose uniform size, variety, squarely cut stems to 1 inch
Sweet corn	3 ears	Select ears well filled out to the tip, trim to ½ inch, trim silk
Swiss Chard	1 bunch	Remove root, trim butt to form a triangle or pyramid
Tomatoes	3 tomatoes	Choose uniform sizes, trim stems to 1 inch or remove the stem
Turnips	3 turnips	Trim tops and roots to 1 inch
Giant	1 specimen	Must be clean, trimmed, edible, larger than market size

Table adapted with permission from Harvest Fair Guidebook, CRD -00020, by Heidi Rader
<http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/cred/CRD-00020.pdf>

Derylee Hecimovich, 4-H and Youth Development

Published by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution.