



IRON COUNTY FAIR

SELECTING & PREPARING
**VEGETABLES,
HERBS,
& FRUIT**

EXHIBITS AT THE
IRON COUNTY FAIR



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
IRON COUNTY

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GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING VEGETABLES

ASPARAGUS - ASPARAGUS OFFICINALIS

Desirable traits – Select straight, dark green spears with tight scales at tip. Blanched asparagus should be uniformly white. Spears should be crisp and firm.

Undesirable traits – Avoid crooked stems, loose scales at tip, and spears with insect and mechanical damage.

Preparation – Trim bottom of bunch evenly to a uniform length of 6-8 inches and loosely tie spears in a bunch. Can be displayed in water to prevent wilting.

Exhibit – (6) stems

BEANS (LIMA) - PHASEOLUS LUNATUS

Desirable traits – Uniform, well-filled pods. Harvest when seeds are mature but still tender. Pods should be fresh, bright green.

Undesirable traits – Avoid misshapen or poorly filled pods and those that are yellow, dried, rusted, or have insect damage.

Preparation – Exhibit with stems attached, trim evenly to 1/4 inch. Wipe clean with a soft cloth; do not wash. Pick before seeds reach full size. Pod color changes from dark green to light green and they become more starchy as they approach maturity.

Exhibit – (12) pods

BEANS (POLE, SNAP AND WAX) - PHASEOLUS VULGARIS

Desirable traits – Straight, fleshy, tender, well-filled pods of uniform length and color representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits – Over-large seeds and toughness indicates the bean is too old. Avoid beans with rust and other diseases, as well as mechanical or insect damage.

Preparation – Exhibit with stems attached, trim each stem evenly to 1/4-1/2 inch. Brush with soft-bristled brush or soft dry cloth to remove dirt.

Exhibit – (12) pods

BEETS - BETA VULGARIS

Desirable traits – Smooth, uniform roots, 1-3 inches in diameter with color representative of the cultivar that are mature, but not overgrown. Specimens should be free of side roots, cracks, and blemishes.

Undesirable traits – Avoid pithy or coarse textured roots that are blocky or angular, those with rough or broken skin, missing taproot, or over-mature roots showing white or light-colored internal rings that are not true to type. Select exhibits that are free from insect or disease damage.

Preparation – Dig roots to avoid mechanical damage. Tops should be uniformly trimmed off 1 ½ - 2 inches above the crown to reduce wilting. The taproot must be intact while side roots should be carefully removed. Wash carefully, but do not scrub.

Exhibit – (6) Pickling Beets
(3) Table Beets

BROCCOLI - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. ITALICA

Desirable traits – Choose dark green, crisp heads with tightly closed buds, at least 3 inches in diameter that are representative of the cultivar. Heads should be compact and dense with a few leaves surrounding the head.

Undesirable traits – Avoid over mature, discolored, or wilted heads with open buds or protruding leaves in the heads and those with disease or insect damage.

Preparation – Trim the leaf tips to 1 inch above the head. Soak for 15 minutes in cool salt water and rinse. Salt water will drive out hidden worms so you can remove them. Cut stems of heads evenly to a length of 6-8 inches.

Exhibit – (1) head

BRUSSELS SPROUTS - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. GEMMIFERA

Desirable traits– Select uniform, medium sized, firm, well-shaped, compact heads that are the correct color for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits – Avoid over-peeled yellow, wilted, shriveled, or insect damaged sprouts.

Preparation – Remove heads from stem and trim stems evenly 1/8 - 1/4 inch. Two or three outer leaves should be left. Remove those leaves that are damaged, but do not peel excessively.

Exhibit – (6) Sprouts

CABBAGE - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. CAPITATA

Desirable traits– Uniform, solid heads that are the correct color and weight for size and cultivar. Heads should have at least one set of wrapper leaves, those curling just slightly at the edge are best.

Undesirable traits– Avoid cracked or wilted heads, those with insect or mechanical damage, over- peeled or shiny heads. Wrapper leaves should be free of worm damage, decay or injury.

Preparation– Cut stems ¼- ½ inch below the lowest leaf. Two or three outer leaves should be left on.

Exhibit– (1) head

CABBAGE (CHINESE, NAPA) - BRASSICA RAPA VAR. PEKINENSIS

Desirable traits– Tight, solid compact heads that are heavy for size about 12-16 inches high and 5-6 inches in diameter with clean, bright colored foliage.

Undesirable traits– Avoid poorly colored, wilted, blemished heads showing signs of insect or disease damage or that have too many outer leaves removed.

Preparation– Trim outer leaves to give heads a tight, cylindrical appearance, but do not over-peel. Keep one or two outer leaves on head. Trim the stem off ¼ inch below the lower leaves. Wash in cold water to remove soil and keep refrigerated until ready to exhibit.

Exhibit– (1) head

CARROTS - DAUCUS CAROTA

Desirable traits—Uniform roots and true to size, shape, and color of the cultivar grown. Select carrots with straight roots with appropriate color for the cultivar, smooth skin, and no side roots.

Undesirable traits—Avoid carrots with immature coloration or green shoulders, those that are too large or small for the cultivar, having pale colored, forked, crooked, or cracked roots, and with insect or disease damage.

Preparation—Dig carrots to avoid breakage. The taproot must be present and side roots should be carefully trimmed. Tops should be uniformly trimmed 1 to 1 ½ inches above the crown. Remove soil by brushing or wash in cold water. Wash carefully, but do not scrub and damage the outer skin.

Exhibit— (6) specimens

CAULIFLOWER - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. BOTRYTIS

Desirable traits—Firm, compact, heads with appropriate color for cultivar and at least 4 inches in diameter across. Heads should be free of small leaves within the head and have a “jacket” of leaves fresh with uniform color

Undesirable traits—Avoid over-mature, discolored, heads with uneven or loose development. Discolored or injured leaves, insect damage or disease damage, or hollow stem should be avoided.

Preparation— Trim the stem ¼ to ½ inch below the bottom leaves and cut straight across. Outer leaves should be trimmed 1 inch above the head. Some of the older leaves may be removed. Soak in cool salt water 15 minutes to drive out the insects and rinse.

Exhibit— (1) head

CELERY - APIUM GRAVEOLENS VAR. DULCE

Desirable traits—Large plants with many crisp stalks. Bright green leaves, uniform color for type, with crisp, firm, thick, and uniform petioles (stalks) held tightly together in a bunch.

Undesirable traits—Avoid pithy, woody, stringy, wilted, or small size stalks, those with blemishes, split stalks, poor color for type, and insect, disease, or mechanical injury. Also avoid diseased and broken leaves and suckers on the outside.

Preparation—The basal end should be trimmed straight across and the roots removed; diseased and broken leaves, small stalks, and suckers on the outside should be trimmed off. The leaves may be partially clipped. Specimen can be washed in cold water or wiped clean.

Exhibit— (1) plant

CUCUMBERS (PICKLING) - CUCUMIS SATIVUS

Desirable traits— Specimens with uniform size, shape, color, and maturity. Fruit should be straight, crisp, firm, and have blunt ends.

Undesirable traits— Avoid discolored, over-mature, oversized, misshapen or crooked, puffy fruit, and with insect or mechanical damage. Do not wax or oil fruit.

Preparation— Pickling cucumbers can be harvested in varying sizes depending on the type of pickle being made. Exhibit uniformly sized fruit from 2 ½ to 6 inches in length and 1 ½ inches in diameter. Leave stems attached to the fruit and trim to ¼ inch. Remove dried flower blossoms. Brush, wipe clean, or rinse carefully if cleaning is necessary. The natural spines should be left on. Do not wax or oil.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

CUCUMBERS (SLICING) - CUCUMIS SATIVUS

Desirable traits— Straight specimens of uniform size, shape, and color. Fruit should be crisp, firm, and free of blemishes.

Undesirable traits— Avoid discolored, dull, over-mature, over-sized, misshapen or crooked, puffy fruit with insect, disease, or mechanical damage. Avoid pointed fruit or fruit uneven in diameter.

Preparation— Slicing cucumbers should be 6-9 inches long with 2 - 2 ¼ inches in diameter. Burpless types should be 8-12 inches long by 1 - 1 ½ inches in diameter depending on the cultivar. They should be symmetrical and have a rounded end. Leave the stems attached to the fruit and trim evenly to ¼ inch. Brush, wipe clean, or rinse carefully if cleaning is necessary. Do not wax or oil.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

EGGPLANT - SOLANUM MELONGENA VAR. ESCULENTUM

Desirable traits— Firm, shiny, medium to large size fruit with uniform color representative of the cultivar. Heavy specimens matched for size, shape, and color with a small blossom scar and fresh green calyx (the leaf-like cover on the top of the eggplant fruit).

Undesirable traits— Avoid soft, wrinkly, immature or over-mature fruit, with dull, bronze, or discolored appearance or with a damaged or dried calyx. Dark spots indicate bruises or decay.

Preparation— Leave a stem 1 - 1 ½ inches long, cut off cleanly. The calyx should be clean and free of brown edges and insect damage. Specimens should be wiped clean, but not washed. Use caution with white eggplant because they bruise easily. Handle these exhibits very gently. When at the proper harvest stage, light thumb pressure will leave a dent in the skin.

Exhibit— (1) specimens

GOURDS - CUCURBITA PEPO

Desirable traits— Select mature fruits with hard, firm, well-cured rinds. A thumbnail should not be able to dent the rind. Size, shape, and color should be regular, medium size for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid soft, immature fruits with poor coloring, missing stems, rinds easily punctured with a thumbnail, or those with disease, mechanical, or insect damage.

Preparation—Stems should be attached and trimmed to 1-2 inches. Wipe clean with a soft cloth.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

KALE - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. ACEPHALA

Desirable traits—Dark green, crisp fresh leaves with bright, clean stems

Undesirable traits—Avoid dirty, wilted, poorly colored leaves with insect damage or the seed stalk present.

Preparation—Remove discolored outer leaves and place roots in jar of water.

Exhibit— (1) plant

KOHLRABI - BRASSICA OLERACEA VAR. GONGYLODES

Desirable traits— Solid, crisp, well-shaped and tender specimens. The ball should be 2-3 inches in diameter, or appropriate for the cultivar, with color that is true to type. Skin should be able to be punctured with a thumbnail.

Undesirable traits— Avoid overly large, tough, dull-skinned, woody specimens with poor color, insect, disease or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Remove all but the top 2-5 leaves and trim these evenly 2-3 inches long. Remove the root ½ inch below the ball. Kohlrabi should be clean, but not washed or wiped heavily.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

LETTUCE (LEAF OR HEAD) - LACTUCA SATIVA

Desirable traits—Leaf or head lettuce may be exhibited, include the entire plant. Head lettuce should have at least two intact wrapper leaves. Exhibits should be crisp, firm, fresh, and representative to a cultivar's form, shape, and color.

Undesirable traits—Avoid plants with old, injured, wilted, dirty, insect, disease or mechanical damaged leaves. Flower stalks are not desired.

Preparation—Select compact young heads. Remove dust or dirt on leaves with water spray or careful washing. Trim the butt of the plant to within 1/8 - 1/4 inch of the bottom leaf. Remove older outer leaves that show yellowing. Exhibit with the base of the head in water.

Exhibit— (1) head or plant

**MUSKMELON
(CANTALOUPE) -
CUCUMIS MELO**

Desirable traits— Mature specimens matched for size, shape, color, and netting that are true to type for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid fruits that are soft, cracked, discolored, have mechanical or insect injury, or are showing symptoms of sunscald. Over-mature or immature fruit or those lacking netting (if netted type) should also be avoided.

Preparation— Fruits should be harvested when they separate easily (slip) from the vines. The stem scar must be dry and free from decay. The melon should have a rich, sweet aroma. Brush clean, if necessary, after the soil is dry, but do not wash.

Exhibit— (1) specimens

**OKRA - ABELMOSCHUS
ESCULENTUS OR HIBISCUS
ESCULENTUS**

Desirable traits—Select straight and tender pods 2-4 inches long, with uniform diameter and length, and uniform color representative of the cultivar. At this young stage, the pods snap easily when bent and are easily punctured.

Undesirable traits—Avoid crooked, hard, over-mature, large, leathery, or woody pods.

Preparation—Select young pods with proper coloration. Leave stems attached and trim to 1/4 inch.

Exhibit— (6) specimens

**ONIONS (MATURE) -
ALLIUM CEPA**

Desirable traits—Uniform, well-cured, mature, well-shaped, solid bulbs with at least one clean, dry outer scale. Scale color should be bright and typical of the cultivar. Ideal bulb diameter is 2-4 inches.

Undesirable traits—Avoid slick, immature, misshapen, poorly colored, over-peeled onions with soft necks, sprouts, bruises, sunscald, double or split bulbs, disease or insect damage.

Preparation—After digging, spread onions in a warm, airy, dark location to cure. Cure bulbs at least two weeks before exhibiting. While curing, check each onion to make sure there is no rot present. Stems should be 1 inch or less in diameter and trim stems 1 inch above the bulb. Small basal roots should be left intact, but trimmed to a uniform length of ¼ inch. Wipe or brush off dry soil, but do not wash. Remove only the outer scales that are broken or discolored.

Exhibit— (2) specimens

**ONIONS (GREEN) -
ALLIUM CEPA**

Desirable traits—Dark green leaves with long, straight, slender, white shanks.

Undesirable traits—Avoid crooked or discolored shanks, dry or yellow leaves, or overly peeled or enlarged bulbs.

Preparation—Remove outer wrapper skin to expose the long white shank. Trim the tops to 3 inches long. The overall length should be 7-10 inches long. Trim roots to ¼ inch. The diameter of the onions should be no more than 1 inch.

Exhibit— (1) bunch of (6) onions

**PARSNIPS - PASTINACA
SATIVA**

Desirable traits—Clean, medium to large sized, smooth, well-shaped roots, with uniform tapering, light, even-colored skin, and firm flesh.

Undesirable traits—Avoid small, misshapen, soft, or woody roots, those with green shoulders, insect or mechanical damage, discoloration, or side roots.

Preparation—Select roots that are medium to large size, less than 2 inches in diameter, and 7 inches long. Trim tops to 1- 1½ inches above the crown. Roots may be carefully washed, but not scrubbed so that the outer skin is injured. Trim off side roots, but the taproot should be left intact.

Exhibit— (6) specimens

**PEAS (EDIBLE POD) -
PISUMSATIVUM**

Desirable traits—Tender, flat pods with seeds just beginning to form, bright green color.

Undesirable traits—Avoid tough pods or those with maturing seeds, insect, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Pods should be picked carefully and handled as little as possible to avoid removing the waxy coating or “bloom.” Pick and exhibit peas with the stems on, trimming evenly to ¼ inch. Use a soft-bristled brush to remove soil, but do not scrub.

Exhibit— (12) specimens

**PEAS (SHELLING OR
GARDEN) -
PISUM SATIVUM**

Desirable traits— Bright green, well-developed pods with seeds at the best eating stage for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid poorly filled, overly mature, shriveled, yellowed or discolored pods or those with tough, shriveled, starchy, bitter tasting peas.

Preparation— Pods should be picked carefully and handled as little as possible to avoid removing the waxy coating or “bloom.” Pick and exhibit peas with the stems on, trimming evenly to ¼ inch.

Exhibit— (12) specimens

PEPPER (BELL TYPE) - CAPSICUM ANNUUM

Desirable traits—Firm, crisp specimens with thick flesh showing uniform color, correct for the cultivar. All fruits should be the same size, color, shape, and have the same number of lobes (2, 3 or 4).

Undesirable traits—Avoid immature, wrinkled, or misshapen specimens. Sunburn, blemishes, mechanical, insect, or disease damage is not desired. Specimens with traces of contrasting or non-representative color should be avoided.

Preparation— Stems should be left on and trimmed evenly to ½ inch long. If cleaning is necessary, wipe with a soft dry cloth.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

PEPPER (OTHER TYPES) - CAPSICUM SP.

Desirable traits— Firm, crisp specimens with thick flesh showing uniform color and shape correct for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid immature, wrinkled, or misshapen specimens. Sunburn, blemishes, mechanical, insect, or disease damage is not desired. Specimens with traces of contrasting or non-representative color of the cultivar should be avoided.

Preparation—Stems should be left on and trimmed evenly to ½ inch long. If cleaning is necessary, wipe with a soft dry cloth.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

POTATOES - SOLANUM TUBEROSUM

Desirable traits— Uniform, clean, medium sized specimens that are true to type. Skin should be firm, well-cured, free from blemishes and soil, insect and mechanical damage, and peeling.

Undesirable traits— Avoid potatoes with poor coloration, growth cracks, second- growth bumps, blemished, diseased, or damaged skin. Do not select potatoes with sunburn or green coloring, which is from exposure to light; or enlarged white lenticels (breathing pores), a sign that they were grown in poorly drained soil.

Preparation— Remove the vine two weeks before harvest. Dig tubers carefully to avoid cuts and bruises. Brush or wipe with a soft cloth after the tubers are dry to remove soil, do not wash or scrub. Store in a cool, dark place.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

PUMPKIN - CUCURBITA PEPO

Desirable traits— Mature and uniform in size, shape, and color for the cultivar with thick flesh, and hard, thin, clean rind.

Undesirable traits— Avoid lightweight pumpkins with a distinctively flat side, thin flesh, blemishes, insect or disease damage, scabs, or soft skin or those with coloration or shape that is not true to type.

Preparation—If the pumpkin is light for its size or is flat on one side, the flesh is probably too thin. Stems should be attached and trimmed neatly at the point where they attach to the vine. Pumpkins should have a sturdy stem. Do not carry pumpkin by the stem. If cleaning is necessary, wipe pumpkins clean with a cloth, but do not wash.

Exhibit—Large field (jack-o'-lantern type and pie types) - (1) specimen

RADISH - RAPHANUS SATIVUS

Desirable traits— Smooth, crisp, firm, uniform, bright-colored, roots free of blemishes, and insect or mechanical damage. Select radishes of medium size, 5/8 - 1 inch in diameter. Color, size, and form should be typical of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid radishes with spongy, soft, rough, blemished, wilted, or poorly-colored roots. Also avoid those with oversized or split roots and with insect or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Trim the tops evenly to 1 inch above the crown. Leave the taproot intact. Roots can be gently washed in cool water.

Exhibit— (6) specimens

RHUBARB - RHEUM RHABBARBARUM

Desirable traits— Stalks (petioles) should be crisp, tender, straight, free of any blemishes or damage, and be uniform in size, length, and color for the cultivar. The bases of the leaf stalks should be clean and free of any soil.

Undesirable traits— Avoid poor colored, tough, wilted stalks, with insect or mechanical damage, or blemishes, and those with the lower end cut,

Preparation— The stalk should be pulled, not cut, from the plant and the leaves trimmed so only 1 inch of the leaf blade remains attached to the petiole. Remove the small bracts at the base of each stalk. If cleaning is necessary, wipe clean with a cloth or wash gently.

Exhibit— (3) stalks

**RUTABAGA -
BRASSICANAPOBRASSICA**

Desirable traits— Uniform, smooth specimens 3-5 inches in diameter.
Undesirable traits—Avoid over-grown, pithy, or coarsely textured roots with mechanical or insect damage.

Preparation— Side roots should be carefully trimmed, but the taproot should remain intact. Carefully wash the roots, but do not scrub and injure outer skin.

Exhibit—(3) specimens

**SALSIFY - TRAGOPOGON
PORRIFOLIUS,
SCORZONERA HISPANICA**

Desirable traits— Straight, smooth roots at least 6 inches long and 1- 1 ½ inches in diameter at the top.

Undesirable traits— Avoid soft or shriveled roots with mechanical or insect damage.

Preparation— Remove tops neatly and evenly 1- 1 ½ inches above the crown. Carefully remove rootlets and side roots but leave the taproot intact.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

**SPINACH - SPINACEA
OLERACEA**

Desirable traits— Exhibit intact plants with the appropriate color for the cultivar with clean, large, crisp, broad, thick, fresh, undamaged leaves.

Undesirable traits— Avoid leaves that are wilted or poorly colored and those damaged from insects, disease or mishandling.

Preparation— Pull the entire plant and remove the outer damaged leaves. Trim the base 1/8 - 1/4 inch from the bottom leaf and exhibit in water to avoid wilting. Gently wash to remove soil.

Exhibit— (1) plant

**SQUASH (SUMMER) -
CUCURBITA PEPO**

Desirable traits— Select specimens true to type in size, shape, and color. Long- fruited varieties (zucchini-type) should be 4 to 8 inches in length. Flat or scalloped types should be 3 to 5 inches in diameter.

Undesirable traits— Avoid large, over-mature, soft fruits, with missing stems, disease or insect damage, or blemishes.

Preparation—Harvest at an immature stage when the rind is easily punctured with thumbnail. Handle fruit carefully to avoid bruising. Cut from the vine and leave about ½ inch of stem, neatly trimmed. Select clean specimens and remove flecks of soil by brushing lightly. Do not wash or wipe.

Exhibit— (1) specimen

**SQUASH (WINTER)
CUCURBITA PEPO,
CUCURBITA MAXIMA**

Desirable traits— Select squash with mature hard, firm, well-cured rinds. A thumbnail should not be able to dent the rind. Size, shape, and color should be medium size for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid soft, immature fruits with poor coloring, missing stems, rinds easily punctured with a thumbnail, or those with disease, mechanical, or insect damage.

Preparation— Yellowish ground spot indicates ripeness. Stems should be attached and trimmed to 1-2 inches. Wipe clean with a soft cloth.

Exhibit— (1) specimen

SWEET CORN - ZEA MAYS

Desirable traits— Select plump, straight, uniform ears that are well-filled to the tip. Husks should be fresh, green, and fit tightly around the ear. Kernels should be fully grown in the young milk stage with good color.

Undesirable traits— Avoid ears that are poorly filled or not filled to the tip, crooked, have yellow husks, or have kernels that are immature or over-mature and doughy or watery. Avoid worm, bird, or insect damage and insect frass or droppings, which can indicate corn earworms are present.

Preparation— Leave the husks on and do not cut any “windows” in the husks. Remove only loose husks. Trim silk 1 inch from tip of husk and the shank 1-2 inches from base of the ear.

Exhibit— (2) specimens

**SWEET POTATOES-
IPOMOEA BATATAS**

Desirable traits— Smooth, bright, well-shaped, and well-colored roots. Length should be 2-3 times longer than diameter.

Undesirable traits— Avoid misshaped, rough, off color, bruised roots with sprouts, or evidence of nematode, insect, mechanical, or disease damage.

Preparation— Dig roots early enough to cure well before exhibiting. Curing should take 7 to 10 days. Skin must be firm, well-cured, and clean. Clean the roots by brushing or wipe with a soft, dry cloth when the soil has dried. A short stem and about 1 inch of taproot should be attached. Remove all “hair” roots.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

**SWISS CHARD - BETA
VULGARISVAR. CICLA**

Desirable traits— Leaves should be large, clean, broad, crisp, and fully expanded with bright, tender, fleshy leaf stalks with color representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid wilted, poorly colored leaves showing insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Rinse in cold water. Exhibit with stems immersed in a jar of cold water to prevent wilting.

Exhibit— (1) plant

**TOMATOES -
LYCOPERSICON
ESCULENTUM OR
SOLANUM LYCOPERSICUM**

Desirable traits— Firm, evenly colored, mature, uniform in size, and shape that are true to cultivar and heavy for the size with small blossom scars.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over-mature specimens with poor color, sunscald, blemishes, puffiness, growth cracks, disease, insect, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Mature fruits with diameters of 2- 3 ½ inches are most desirable for many of the medium to large round-fruited varieties. To clean, wipe gently with a soft cloth. Always remove the stems when harvesting to avoid injury to other fruit.

Exhibit— Standard type fruit (2 inches or more in diameter including slicing,)—(3) specimens

Plum or sauce type and Salad type fruit(under 2 inches in diameter including cherry, pear, or grape types)—(6) specimens

**TURNIPS - BRASSICA
RAPA VAR. RAPIFERA**

Desirable traits— Smooth, well-formed, and tender fleshed roots of uniform size and shape with matched color patterns true to cultivar. Select medium size roots 1-2 inches in diameter.

Undesirable traits— Avoid poorly colored, soft, spongy, overgrown, pithy, coarsely textured, irregularly-shaped, or forked roots and those with insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Trim the tops to 1 to 1 ½ inches above the crown. Carefully remove small side roots, but leave taproot intact. Roots may be carefully washed, but do not scrub and injure the outer skin.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

**WATERMELON -
CITRULLUS LANATUS**

Desirable traits— Mature, ready-to-eat fruit that have the size, shape, and color typical of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over or immature, misshaped fruit with sunburn, blemishes, insect, or disease damage.

Preparation—Yellowish ground spot indicates ripeness. Icebox types should weigh 4-8 pounds, with the large types weighing up to 50 pounds. Leave about 1 inch of stem on each melon. To clean, wipe with a soft cloth.

Exhibit— (1) specimen

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING HERBS FOR EXHIBIT

ANISE - PIMPINELLA ANISUM

Desirable traits— Heads should be 3 to 5 inches across with well-filled seeds.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over-mature or shattering seed heads and immature stems without a “head” of seeds.

Preparation— Outer spreading leaves should be removed and the base trimmed and cut cleanly with a sharp knife. Overall length should be 10-12 inches.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

BASIL - OCIMUM BASILICUM

Desirable traits— Leaves should be glossy and well-developed on stems 6-10 inches long, of uniform size and development, with characteristics representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid flowering stems, leaves that are discolored, dirty, or have insect or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Cut stems with scissors and place cut ends in cool water. Stems can be gently rinsed in cool water. Use caution because basil bruises very easily. Exhibit with stems in a container of water. Remove leaves below the water line.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

DILL - ANETHUM GRAVEOLENS

Desirable traits— Seed heads should be green-brown to brown in color, mature, and ready to use. Stems that are tender and green are desired.

Undesirable traits— Avoid immature stems with no “head” of seeds or dry, over-mature stems losing seeds.

Preparation— Cut seed heads with 10-12 inch stems and loosely tie at base and again near seed head.

Exhibit— (5) seed heads tied near lower end of stems and again just below seed heads

GARLIC - ALLIUM SATIVUM

Desirable traits— Late garlic has bulbs that are smoother with cloves that are smaller and more numerous than early garlic. Cloves of early garlic are tan, while cloves of the late type are pink or pinkish brown. Either is suitable for exhibiting.

Undesirable traits— Avoid peeled, dirty, or otherwise damaged bulbs.

Preparation— Garlic should be well-cured when exhibiting. Select fairly smooth bulbs with small, well-dried necks, trimmed to 1 inch. Roots should be trimmed to a uniform length of ¼ inch below the bulb.

Wrapper leaves should be intact, clean, and white.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

MINT - MENTHA SPECIES

Desirable traits— Succulent stems 6-10 inches long and uniform in size and development. Stems may have blooms, but development should be uniform.

Undesirable traits— Avoid dirty, insect or disease damaged leaves, and stems that are not uniform in size and development.

Preparation— Cut stems with scissors and place cut ends in cool water. If stems are dirty, rinse gently in cool water. Display in a container of water with foliage removed below the water line to prevent rotting.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

OREGANO - ORIGANUM VULGARE

Desirable traits— Stems should be 4-8 inches long, uniform in size and development, and representative of the cultivar. Flavor is best before plants bloom.

Undesirable traits— Avoid flowering stems and leaves that are dirty or have insect or disease damage.

Preparation— Cut stems and place in cool water. If dirty, gently rinse in cool water, but handle carefully as oregano leaves bruise easily. Exhibit with stems in a container of water. Remove the leaves below the water line to prevent rot.

Exhibit—(5) sprigs per bottle

PARSLEY - PETROSELINUM CRISPUM

Desirable traits— Stems should be 4-8 inches long, uniform in size and development, and representative of the cultivar. Flavor is best before plants bloom.

Undesirable traits— Avoid flowering stems and leaves that are dirty or have insect or disease damage.

Preparation— Cut stems and place in cool water. If dirty, gently rinse in cool water, but handle carefully as oregano leaves bruise easily. Exhibit with stems in a container of water. Remove the leaves below the water line to prevent rot.

Exhibit—(5) sprigs per bottle

SAGE - SALVIA OFFICINALIS

Desirable traits— Stems should be 6-10 inches long with uniform size and development. Stems may have blooms, but development should be uniform.

Undesirable traits— Avoid dirty stems with insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Cut stems and place in cool water. If leaves are dirty, gently rinse in cool water, but handle carefully as sage bruises easily. Exhibit with stems in a container of water. Remove the leaves below the water line to prevent rot.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

THYME - THYMUS VULGARIS

Desirable traits— Tender, green, 6-8 inch long stems uniform in size and development. The flavor is best before plants bloom.

Undesirable traits— Avoid dirty, woody, diseased, or insect damaged stems.

Preparation— Snip stems and rinse gently in cool water. Exhibit with cut ends in a container of water with leaves below the water line removed to prevent rotting.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

ANY OTHER HERB

Desirable traits— Fresh, clean, herbs at the proper harvest stage for use. For herbs grown for seed, see the instructions for dill. Herbs grown for leaves generally should be harvested before they bloom. Herbs grown for flowers should be in bloom at the time of exhibiting

Undesirable traits— Avoid herbs with dirty, wilted leaves and stems, at the improper stage for use, or those with signs of insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Display in a container of water with foliage removed below the water line to prevent rotting. If dirty, rinse gently in cool water.

Exhibit— (5) sprigs per bottle

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING FRUIT FOR EXHIBIT

APPLES AND PEARS - MALUS DOMESTICA AND PYRUS COMMUNIS

Desirable traits— Uniform, medium sized fruits with good color and shape typical for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid fruits with insect, disease, or mechanical injuries.

Preparation— Handle with care since fruits bruise easily. Leave stems attached but clip the end short enough so it cannot puncture other specimens in the display.

Polish with dry cloth.

Exhibit— (3) specimens

GRAPES - VITUS VINIFERA

Desirable traits— Bunches uniform in size and color with fruits that are plump, fresh-looking, firm, compact, and uniformly ripened. All grapes must be firmly attached to the stem.

Undesirable traits— Avoid fruit with broken skins or showing signs of insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Deep color for the cultivar indicates good quality and sugar content. Avoid skin breaks on the grapes. Preserve as much of the natural “bloom” as possible, rinse quickly with water to remove dust. Do not soak, fruits may split from absorbing water.

Exhibit— (1) bunch

PLUMS

Desirable traits— Uniform, medium sized fruits with good color and shape typical for the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over-ripe or immature fruit and those with insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Clean, but do not wash the fruit. Use caution as plums bruise easily. Remove stems so they cannot puncture other specimens in the display. Remove dust with soft brush.

Exhibit—(4) specimens

RASPBERRIES AND BLACKBERRIES - RUBUS IDAEUS AND RUBUS SPECIES

Desirable traits— Fruit uniform in ripeness size and shape, with color representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over-ripe fruit and those with insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Clean, but do not wash the fruit. Remove dust with soft brush.

Exhibit— (1/2) pint

STRAWBERRIES - FRAGARIA X ANANASSA

Desirable traits— Firm, uniform, fully ripe fruit and free of any injury. Size, shape, and color should be representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid immature or over-mature, injured, or stemless fruit or fruit with insect or disease damage.

Preparation— Leave stems and “cap” attached to prevent moisture loss. Clean with a soft artist’s brush. Do not wash.

Exhibit— (1/2) pint

ANY OTHERSMALL FRUIT AND BERRIES

Desirable traits— Fruit uniform in ripeness with size, shape, and color representative of the cultivar.

Undesirable traits— Avoid over-ripe fruit and those with insect, disease, or mechanical damage.

Preparation— Clean, but do not wash the fruit. Remove dust with soft brush. Exhibit—(1/2) pint

**This document was adapted from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension's Selecting & Preparing Vegetables, Herbs, and Fruit for Exhibits at County Fairs and the Nebraska State Fair document, which can be found here:*

<https://4h.unl.edu/4hcurriculum/preparingvegetabeshersandfruit>