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Planning Growing and Preparing Vegetables for EXHIBIT



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Leo E. Lucas, Director



Planning, Growing, and Preparing GARDEN VEGETABLES for Exhibit

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Fair and garden shows are happy activities in which an exhibitor plays a major role. A well-planned display of the many attractive vegetables that can be produced on a relatively small plot of land contributes much to the success of a fair. Reasons for participating:

Education and experience gained from growing and exhibiting fresh produce.

Service to your area by showing the different kinds of vegetables and characteristics of varieties that can be grown.

Fellowship and excitement gained from competing.

Sense of accomplishment from awards won for good exhibits.

Premium prize money.

Steps in Planning, Growing and Preparing Prize-Winning Exhibits

1. Review the most current fair book. It is the best source of information regarding premium list and rules on how vegetables should be displayed.

2. Grow varieties adapted to local conditions. Sources of information on suggested varieties are:

- . EC 70-1211 Variety and Planting Guide for Home Garden Vegetables in Nebraska.

- . Series of University of Nebraska Extension circulars on specific vegetables.

- . Department of Horticulture and Forestry, University of Nebraska Progress Reports.

- . Experience of local vegetable growers and exhibitors.

3. Read circulars and bulletins on growing vegetables. Following is a series available from your county agricultural agent or Department of Information, College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

- . EC 69-1216 Cucumber Production Practices for Nebraska.
- . EC 69-1217 Onion Production Practices for Nebraska.
- . EC 71-1218 Growing Asparagus, Rhubarb and Horseradish in Nebraska Gardens.
- . EC 71-1219 A Guide for Producing Top Quality Sweet Corn in Nebraska.
- . EC 71-1220 Growing Garden Peas.
- . EC 72-1223 Growing Snap Beans in the Home Garden.
- . EC 72-1225 Growing Table Beets.
- . EC 72-1226 Growing Vegetable Transplants.
- . EC 72-1227 Growing Pumpkin and Squash for Ornamentation and Food.
- . EC 72-1228 Culture, Preparation and Use of Gourds.
- . EC 73-1229 Growing and Harvesting the Cole Crops—Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower and Kohlrabi.
- . SB 519 Vegetable Gardening in Nebraska.

4. Schedule planting for best quality at time of showing. Consider the time requirement from planting to harvest for each variety grown in relation to the opening date of the fair. Timing is particularly important with sweet corn, snap beans and lima beans. Allow for weather variation by making an additional planting of these crops.

5. Grow enough produce for a good selection. A prime specimen or collection of well-matched specimens is best achieved when the quantity of produce grown permits rigid selection.

6. Handle vegetables carefully. Pack in undamaged condition. Avoid bruising and prolonged exposure to sun or high temperature. Wrap individual tomatoes, eggplant and peppers in paper and place in a strong container, protecting different layers with several sheets of paper. Take extra specimens along to replace any that may be damaged or spoil.

7. Enter correctly. Follow rules and regulations in tagging each entry to be certain that it is in its proper class and contains the proper number or amount of specimens.

8. Prepare an attractive display. Factors to consider in selecting and preparing vegetables for exhibit:

a. Trueness to type—specimens should be typical of variety with regard to shape, color and size.

b. Quality and condition—specimens should be edible, in prime condition and free from blemishes or damage from insects, disease or handling.

c. Uniformity—specimens should be alike in size, shape, color, texture and stage of maturity.

d. Size—contrary to popular opinion (except for special entries—largest pumpkin, watermelon or head of cabbage) large specimens do not have a competitive edge over other entries. Largeness suggests coarseness, overmaturity and possible poor quality. Medium-size specimens are more typical of variety characteristics and most desired.

e. Cleanliness—dirt detracts from the natural attractiveness of vegetables and conveys an unfavorable impression to judges and public. Wipe cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, etc., with a damp cloth. Wash or lightly brush soil from potatoes, carrots and beets. Clean leafy vegetables such as Swiss chard by dipping in cool water.

f. Arrange neatly in containers. Carefully orient and align specimens so as to enhance their most attractive and desirable characteristics.

Relative importance of characteristics when exhibits are judged:

Specimen Vegetable Exhibits (4-H - Other) %

1. Uniformity-size, shape and color	25
2. Condition-freedom from dirt, disease, blemish	25
3. Quality-crisp, firm, edible, maturity	20
4. Typical of type	20
5. Size-in relation to market demand	10
	<hr/> 100

Vegetable Collection Exhibit Commercial (Open Class)

1. Quality and condition	40
2. Attractiveness of display	30
3. Uniformity-size, shape and color	10
4. Number of kinds of vegetables	15
5. Neatness and labeling	5
	<hr/> 100

Table 1. Desirable characteristics and possible faults in vegetable specimens with suggested methods of preparing and maintaining freshness for exhibit.

<i>Vegetable</i>	<i>Desirable characteristics</i>	<i>Possible faults</i>	<i>Preparation</i>	<i>Keep fresh</i>
Lima beans	Uniform, well-filled pods. Fresh bright green.	Misshaped or poorly-filled pods. Yellow, dried, rusted or insect damaged pods.	Wipe with soft dry cloth. Do not wash.	Pick close to fair time and keep in cool, ^{a/} humid place
Snap beans	Straight, fleshy, tender, well-filled pods with seeds about ½ mature.	Crooked, broken poorly-filled or overmature, stringy pods. Pods wilted, rusted or blemished.	Wipe with soft dry cloth. Do not wash.	Pick in cool of morning and store in cool, humid place.
Dry beans	Clean uniform seed of same variety.	Shriveled, cracked or blemished beans. Foreign matter and insect damage.	Sort beans and remove foreign material by hand.	--
Table beets	Smooth, round, uniform medium- to small size, free of side roots. Tops trimmed back 1 to 3". Deep red color.	Blocky or angular roots, rough skin, missing taproot, insect or disease damage. White or light colored internal rings. Roots too large.	Soak and wash in cool water.	Harvest close to fair date and keep in very cool, humid place.

Table 1. (Continued)

Broccoli	Dark green, crisp head with tightly closed buds.	Buds open or showing yellow color. Wilted heads. Insect damage.	Rinse in cool water.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Cabbage	Uniform, solid heads that are heavy for size.	Cracked or wilted head. Insect damage, peeled, shiny heads.	Peel away only damaged leaves and wipe with moist cloth if necessary.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Carrots	Uniform roots, true to size, shape and color of variety. Deep orange color, straight roots with smooth skin free of side shoots.	Forked or misshaped roots. Purple or green color. Too large or too small. Dirty roots. Cracked roots. Disease or insect damage. No taproot.	Trim tops 1 to 3" and wash thoroughly in cool water.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Cauliflower	Firm white head at least 4" diameter with 4 to 6 leaves trimmed slightly above head or curd.	Discolored, grainy head. Insect damage. Hollow stem.	Trim outer leaves slightly above head and wipe with soft dry cloth.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Cucumber (slicing)	Straight dark green specimen of uniform size and shape. Fruit crisp, firm, free of blemish.	Yellow color, oversized, puffy fruit.	Wipe with soft moist cloth if necessary.	Harvest close to fair time and store in cool, humid place.

Cucumber (pickling)	Deep green specimens of uniform size and shape. Size no more than 3½" long and 1¼" diameter.	Misshaped or crooked fruit.	Do not wash or wipe fruit.	Harvest close to fair time and store in cool, humid place.
Dill	Light green but mature and ready for use.	Immaturity with no "head" of seeds.	Cut seed head with 10 to 12" stems and tie in bunch at base and again near seed head.	---
Eggplant	Specimens matched for size, shape and color. Firm dark purple fruit with small blossom scar.	Immature fruit. Dried calyx. Bronze or green color. Soft fruit.	Wipe with soft dry or moist cloth if necessary.	Harvest close to exhibition time. Store in cool place.
Kohlrabi	Uniform specimens 2 to 3" in diameter.	Woody stems. Cracks or discoloration.	Cut stem ½" below "ball" and leaves even with its top. Brush or wipe with dry cloth.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Muskmelon	Mature specimens matched for size, shape, color and netting. Fragrant and of edible quality.	Soft or cracked fruit. Sun scald or lack of netting (if netted type).	Brush, if necessary, after soil is dry.	Store in cool, moist place.

Table 1. (Continued)

Okra	Small uniform pods not over 3" long. Pods are green color, fairly straight and tender.	Overmature, large, woody pods. Blemished or crooked pods.	Harvest with ½" stem attached to pod.	Store in cool place.
Onions	Uniform solid well-cured bulbs with smooth clear skin.	Green colored, peeled skin, soft neck, sprouts or double bulbs. Disease or insect damage.	Harvest in advance of fair to allow for curing. Remove no more than 1 layer of skin to clean. Do not wash. Leave 1" at top and trim roots to ¼".	Do not cure in full sun.
8 Onions (green)	Dark green leaves with long, straight, slender, white shanks.	Enlarged bulbs. Crooked or discolored shanks. Dry or yellow leaves.	Cut tops 4 to 5" above white shank. Tie in bunch of 10.	Store in very cool, humid place.
Parsnips	Clean, medium- to large-size smooth, well-shaped roots. Light even colored skin and firm flesh.	Soft roots, woody roots. Green shoulders. Insect damage.	Trim tops to 1" length and soak and wash in cool water. Do not remove taproot.	Store in cool, humid place and freshen in cold water if necessary.
Peppers (bell or sweet)	Firm with deep color. All specimens same size, shape, color and number of lobes.	Wrinkled or misshaped specimens. Sunburn or blemishes. Traces of contrasting color.	Wipe with soft dry cloth and trim stems even with shoulders of fruit.	Harvest close to time of fair and store in cool, humid place.

Peppers (hot)	Well-colored, uniform and true to type.	Wilted specimens, blemished or sunburn.	Same as bell pepper.	Same as bell pepper.
Potatoes	Uniform clean specimens true to type.	Greening or sunburn. Diseased or damaged skin. Growth cracks.	Brush or wipe with soft cloth after specimens are dry. Do not wash.	Store in cool, dark place. Exposure to light may cause greening.
Pumpkin and winter squash	True to type in size, shape and color. Thick flesh and heavy for size. Mature with clear color. Hard skin.	Misshaped fruit. Scars or blemishes. Light weight for size.	Wipe and polish with soft dry cloth. Leave portion of stem attached.	Store in moderately cool place.
Rhubarb	Uniform in size and color. Smooth, well-colored skin. Fresh, solid.	Wilted stalks or those with lower end cut. Poor color or blemishes.	Pull, do not cut, stalks. Leave 1" leaf on stem. Tie bundles at both ends.	Soak in ice water.
Summer squash	Matched specimens true to variety in size, shape and color. Medium-size with soft skin.	Large and over-mature. Missing stems. Blemishes.	Clean by brushing. Do not wash.	Store in cool, humid place.

Table 1. (Continued)

Sweet corn	Well-filled, plump, uniform ears. Kernels with good color typical of variety.	Worm, bird or insect damage. Immature or overmature kernels. Poorly-filled ears. Yellow husks.	Trim silk to 1" of tip of husk and shank 1 to 2" from base of ear. Remove loose husks.	Harvest as close to fair time as possible. Store in cool, humid place.
Sweet potatoes	Smooth, bright color. Free of pest damage or bruises. Uniform and true to variety. Medium-size.	Side roots, growth cracks. Too large or small. Poor shape. Rough skin.	Dig early enough to cure well before a fair. Clean by brushing or wipe with soft dry cloth.	Store in moderately cool, (55-60° F), humid place.
Swiss chard	Clean, fresh, well-colored leaves with bright, tender stems.	Wilted, poorly-colored leaves with damaged skins.	Wash in cold water.	Store in cool, humid place. Exhibit in jar of cold water to prevent wilting.
Tomatoes	True to variety in size, shape and color. Smooth skin with uniform color.	Poor color, sunscald, puffiness, growth cracks. Disease damage. Overripe.	Avoid overmature fruit. Remove stems to prevent damage. Clean with moist soft cloth.	Store in cool, moist place.
Turnips	Uniform size and shape with matched color patterns. Smooth skin, medium-size and firm flesh.	Irregular shape and forking roots. Insect, disease or mechanical damage. Soft spongy roots.	Cut tops back to 1 to 2". Leave 2" of top root. Soak and wash in cold water.	Store in very cool, moist place.

Watermelon

Typical of variety
in shape and color.
Ground spot should
be yellowish and
skin of good color.

Misshaped fruit.
Blemishes. Sunburn.

Wipe with moist cloth.

Store in cool, humid
place.

a/ Very cool - 32-34° F

Cool - 40-50° F

Moderately cool - 50-55° F

4-H And Other Exhibitors

Planning, Growing and Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit

Suggested number or amount of vegetables to include in your exhibit

<i>Vegetable</i>	<i>Number if fresh</i>	<i>Amount if canned</i>	<i>Vegetable</i>	<i>Number if fresh</i>	<i>Amount if canned</i>
Asparagus		1 Pint	Sweet Corn		
			yellow in	5	1 Pint
			white husk	5	1 Pint
Beans (in pod)			Tomatoes		
snap yellow	5	1 Pint	red (slicing)*	5	
snap green	5	1 Pint	yellow (slicing)*	5	
lima	5	1 Pint	small (canning)**	5	1 Pint
other	5	1 Pint	cherry or salad**	5	1 Pint
Beets	5	1 Pint	paste	5	
Broccoli	2		Turnips	5	
Brussel Sprouts	5		Okra	5	
Cabbage			Onion (mature, dry)	5	
green			green (bunching)	5	
round	2	1 Pint	Parsnips	5	
flat	2	1 Pint	Peas		1 Pint
savoy	2		Peppers		
red	2		bell colored	2	
Carrots			bell green	2	
long	5	1 Pint	hot peppers	5	
oxheart	5		others	5	
Cauliflower (head)	2		Potatoes		
Swiss Chard (stalk)			white	5	
white	2		red	5	
red	2		russet	5	
Cucumbers			Rutabaga	2	
slicing	2		Salsify	5	
pickling	5	1 Pint	Spinach		1 Pint
other	2		Watermelon		
Egg Plant	2		long	2	
Kohlrabi	5		oval	2	
Musk melon	2		ice box	2	
Pumpkin			largest & best	1***	
small sugar pie	2				
large field	2				
largest & best	1***				
Squash					
summer	2				
winter					
large	2				
small	2				
largest & best	1***				

* 2 inches or over

** Under 2 inches

*** As applies to individual shows

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and educational programs to all people without regard
to race, color or national origin.