



Milton Country Park Produce Show Guidance for exhibitors



These notes are intended as guidance for exhibitors in the Milton Country Park Produce Show. They are adapted from the Horticultural Show Handbook, produced by the Royal Horticultural Society.

As we've said elsewhere, this event is intended to be a bit of fun for everyone and we don't require Chelsea Flower Show standards! Don't worry if your produce doesn't meet all the criteria listed below. Enter it anyway: you may be lucky, and anyway it's the taking part that counts!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the organisers at produceshow@milton.org.uk, or pop into the Visitor Centre at Milton Country Park.

Please note that for some classes judges may need to cut open the fruit or vegetable to assess its internal condition, and the home produce will of course be opened and tasted!

Vegetables

5 tomatoes

- All 5 tomatoes should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: symmetrical shape, ripe, firm, rich colour
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, unripe/overripe, dull colour, damaged by pests or disease
- Presentation tips: leave the calyces (leaves) on.

2 courgettes

- The courgettes should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted
- Points will be awarded for: young, tender, uniform shape and colour, close to 150mm long and 35mm diameter (or 75mm diameter in the case of round cultivars)
- Points will be lost for: old, not tender, misshapen, damaged by pests or disease
- Presentation tips: it's up to you whether to leave the flowers on or remove them.

1 cabbage

- Any variety is accepted
- Points will be awarded for: symmetrical shape, fresh, solid head, healthy surrounding leaves, bloom intact and of good colour.
- Points will be lost for: soft or split head, not fresh, leaves damaged by pests or disease.
- Presentation tips: leave about 50mm of stalk attached.

5 potatoes

- All 5 potatoes should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: about 175 – 225g each, shapely, clear-skinned, eyes few and shallow.
- Points will be lost for: very large or very small, damaged, misshapen, speckled or patchy skin, greening, very deep eyes.
- Presentation tips: make sure you clean all the soil off.

1 leek

- Any variety is accepted
- Points will be awarded for: clean, firm, solid, parallel-sided, unbroken and unblemished skin, fresh and undamaged foliage, intact roots.
- Points will be lost for: soft, thin, tapering, discoloured, bulbous, damaged.
- Presentation tips: avoid specimens where the seedhead is forming. Do not strip off so many outer leaves that the 'ribbing' inside is exposed. Clean all parts thoroughly.

3 carrots

- All 3 carrots should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: fresh, firm, smooth, symmetrical shape, uniform bright colour, no side shoots.
- Points will be lost for: soft/ bendy, misshapen, split, different coloured crown, dull, pale, damaged by pests or disease, going to seed.
- Presentation tips: trim foliage to about 75mm.

3 onions

- All 3 onions should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: firm, well-ripened, thin neck, unbroken skin, intact roots
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, soft or thick neck, broken outer skin, blemishes, damage from pests or disease, excessively skinned.
- Presentation tips: only take off the outermost layers of skin. Tie the tops together neatly with raffia/ string.

6 shallots

- All 6 shallots should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: round, firm, well-ripened, symmetrical shape, thin neck
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, soft, thick neck, poorly ripened, broken or blemished skin, excessively skinned.
- Presentation tips: only take off the outermost layer of skin. Tie the tops together neatly with raffia/ string.

1 squash

- Any variety of mature squash (not summer squashes which are eaten before they are mature) is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: shapely, large, firm, even colour and ripeness
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, soft, unevenly ripened, spotty or marked skin
- Presentation tips: leave the stalk attached. Tie the tops together neatly with raffia/ string.

3 beetroot

- All 3 beetroot should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: shapely (spherical if a globe variety, cylindrical or evenly tapered if a long variety), undamaged taproot, smooth skin of a uniform colour appropriate to the variety.
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, tough, more than one root, damaged by pests or disease, rough corky skin, showing signs of age, cracked, feels spongy to the touch, poor colour.
- Presentation tips: trim foliage to about 75mm.

3 chillies

- All 3 chillies should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: fresh, bright colour appropriate to variety, clear skin.
- Points will be lost for: dull, misshapen, shrivelled, poorly coloured.

5 runner beans

- All 5 pods should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Any variety is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: long, uniform, straight, shapely, fresh, good colour, have stalks and uniform tail, no outward sign of seeds.
- Points will be lost for: short, misshapen, damaged, bottle-necked, when snapped are stringy, limp or show prominent seeds.

Longest runner bean

- Any variety accepted
- Measured in a straight line, not including stalk.

Heaviest potato

- Any variety accepted
- All soil must be removed.

Biggest pumpkin

- Any variety accepted
- Circumference will be measured around the widest part.

3 different herbs in water

- "Herb" means any plant whose leaf is used for flavouring dishes. NB this excludes plants where the seed or the root is the part used.
- Points will be awarded for: clean, unblemished, healthy foliage.
- Points will be lost for: deformed, damaged or diseased foliage.

Living salad in a container

- "Salad" means a vegetable used either raw or cooked, served as a cold dish.
- The salad should be planted in soil/ compost.
- Points will be awarded for: young, fresh, clean, attractive appearance
- Points will be lost for: old, limp, soiled, damaged by pests or disease.

Ugliest/ most misshapen vegetable

- Decision is purely at the judge's discretion!

1 of any vegetable not in schedule

- “Vegetable” (in this context) means a plant grown to be eaten but not usually as a dessert or pudding. This definition includes many plants which are botanically fruits, e.g. tomatoes. If in doubt whether your plant is a fruit or a vegetable, check with the organisers first.
- Points will be awarded for: good colour, texture and shape appropriate to the vegetable in question. Extra points are available for vegetables that in the judge's opinion are particularly difficult to grow successfully.
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, blemishes, damage by pests or disease.

Fruit

3 cooking apples

- Any variety accepted.
- All three apples should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible
- Points will be awarded for: large, shapely, solid, intact stalk, undamaged eye, clear unblemished skin of an appropriate colour to the variety
- Points will be lost for: small, misshapen, overripe, soft, blemishes, damaged stalks, evidence of disease.
- Presentation tips: leave stalks on. Do not polish.

3 dessert apples

- Any variety accepted.
- All three apples should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible
- Points will be awarded for: between 60 – 80mm diameter, good colour (appropriate to the variety), stalk intact, undamaged eye, clear unblemished skin.
- Points will be lost for: too large/ small, misshapen, overripe, soft, damaged stalks, evidence of disease.
- Presentation tips: leave stalks on. Do not polish.

3 pears

- Any variety accepted.
- All three pears should be of the same variety and as similar to each other as possible.
- Points will be awarded for: large (for the variety), shapely, undamaged eye, stalk intact, clear unblemished skin, good colour (appropriate to the variety).
- Points will be lost for: small, misshapen, shrivelled, damaged eyes, damaged stalk, blemished.
- Presentation tips: leave stalks on.

6 blackberries

- All six blackberries should be as similar to each other as possible
- Either cultivated blackberries you have grown or wild blackberries that you have picked are accepted
- Points will be awarded for: large, ripe, rich uniform colour, free from blemishes, good condition, fresh calyces (leaves) and stalks.
- Points will be lost for: small, unripe, overripe, dull, poor condition, insect damage, blemishes.
- Presentation tips: leave stalks and calyces (leaves) on.

6 raspberries

- All six raspberries should be as similar to each other as possible
- Points will be awarded for: large, ripe, good colour, free from blemishes, good condition, fresh calyces (leaves) and stalks.
- Points will be lost for: small, unripe, overripe, dull colour, poor condition, insect damage, blemishes.
- Presentation tips: leave stalks and calyces (leaves) on.

3 of any fruit not in schedule

- "Fruit" (in this context) means a plant grown to be eaten usually as a dessert or cooked in a pudding. If in doubt whether your plant is a fruit or a vegetable, check with the organisers first.
- All three items should be the same fruit, and as similar to each other as possible.
- Points will be awarded for: good colour, texture and shape appropriate to the fruit in question. Extra points are available for fruits that in the judge's opinion are particularly difficult to grow successfully.
- Points will be lost for: misshapen, blemishes, damage by pests or disease.

Flowers and plants

1 rose in a vase

- Any variety of rose is accepted.
- The rose should be at least half opened (i.e. beyond the bud stage)
- Points will be awarded for: symmetrical bloom, unblemished, firm smooth petals, bright glowing colour, straight stem of an appropriate thickness to support the bloom, healthy foliage. Vase should be chosen so as to complement the colour of the rose, and be the right size to create a balanced appearance.
- Points will be lost for: irregular shape, missing petals, stained or damaged petals, immaturity or over-development of bloom, petals flimsy/ drooping/ rough/ creased/ diseased, bloom not fresh, faded colour, foliage lacking/damaged, untidy presentation.
- Presentation tips: leave enough healthy foliage on the stem to look attractive. Cut the stem to an appropriate length to balance the bloom. The bloom should be the focus of the exhibit. Water is the only substance that may be used to enhance the appearance of the plant.

3 dahlia stems of the same variety

- Any variety is accepted
- Points will be awarded for: fresh clean bloom, all florets intact, firm and unblemished. Good colour, either consistent or evenly shaded throughout the bloom. Clean, healthy, undamaged foliage.
- Points will be lost for: bloom that is malformed, damaged, facing downwards, immature, past its best. Florets that are missing (leaving a gap), limp, damaged, discoloured. Stems that are bent, weak, thick. Evidence of pests.
- Presentation tips: lay the three stems so that the blooms face in the same direction and do not touch. Keep some foliage on the stems.

A houseplant in a pot

- Any type of plant that you have grown indoors for decorative purposes is accepted. It may be a flowering plant or grown for its attractive foliage. Epiphytic plants such as ferns, bromeliads and orchids may be shown attached to a piece of bark/ wood instead of in a pot.
- Points will be awarded for: sturdy, shapely plant, healthy unblemished foliage and flowers (if present). All else being equal, preference will be given to plants that are harder to grow.
- Points will be lost for: unhealthy plant, deformed, undersized, scanty or diseased foliage, dull colour. Dirty or damaged container, staking/tying/wiring done so that it detracts from the overall appearance.
- Presentation tips: stakes, wires etc are fine as long as they are neat and do not look ugly.

A cactus in a pot

- Any species of cactus is accepted.
- Points will be awarded for: large (for the species), well-balanced, healthy, showing signs of flowering. Species that are harder to cultivate will be awarded more points.
- Points will be lost for: small (for the species), evidence of pest infestation, damaged or missing spines, distortion or scarring of body or leaves.

Plant(s) grown in an unusual container for overall effect

- Maximum base area of 50cm x 50cm
- Points will be awarded for: healthy, unblemished plants, interesting and imaginative choice of container, attractive overall effect.

Flower arrangement

- Maximum base area of 50cm x 50cm
- Arrangement may make use of any plants you have grown and natural items or materials you have found.

A table centrepiece, including a candle

- Maximum base area of 50cm x 50cm
- Materials, including candle, may be bought, but overall centrepiece must be of your own design and creation.

Home produce

- Labeling should be neat, straight, show contents of jar and date when made.
- All jars should be spotlessly clean, no finger marks.
- Cakes, scones and biscuits etc. should be displayed on a plate with a doyley and covered with cling film.
- No marks from cake rack should appear on top of cake.