

AOS Judging Practice Survey

By Japheth Ko

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Orchid judging is subjective. A judge evaluates an orchid entered for judging against current standards, previous awards, and possible advancement of future direction. He or she then assigns a point score based on general guidelines described in the current edition of the *American Orchid Society Handbook on Judging and Exhibition* and its amendments. Within those guidelines, there is a lot of room for a judge to determine where a quality factor falls on a scale, and to assign a numerical value to that particular factor. The judge's experience plays a very important role in this process, and it is impossible to spell out exactly how this should be done.

Years of training and learning are essential before one becomes a fully accredited AOS judge, and a judge must continue learning throughout his or her judging career. As part of training and learning, a judge must observe, ask questions and learn from others continuously.

As part of my learning experience, I discovered that different judges practice a certain thing in different ways, all of which follow the guidelines described in the *Handbook on Judging and Exhibition*. One of my first questions a few years ago when I joined the AOS judging program was, "in a 10-point scale, what score should I award for what I believe is average flower quality?" I received different answers.

The purpose of this survey was to find out how judges do things differently in a given situation, and whether judges have experienced certain situations recently. It is not intended to find out what judges' perception of quality is, or whether judges do things "correctly"—the questions in this survey are more of the type of "In such and such situation, what is your most likely action?" or "You have determined that the quality of flower is such and such. What are your most likely actions?" Most of the questions involve situations I have encountered, heard of or discussed with other judges. While I tried to provide choices that included all possible actions people might take, it is clear in some questions I missed some actions people will take. I appreciate extra comments provided by some people to make it clear what actions they will take when it is not in the choices, and included some "none of the above" answers when they were provided by more than a few respondents.

Also, team dynamic was not taken into consideration in this survey. Judging is done in teams, and in many cases after some discussion with other team members, a judge may take a completely different action than the one he or she would have taken without discussion. The survey is trying to determine what a judge would do if discussion did not take place.

Except for four point-score questions (Q13 through Q16), if a respondent chose more than one answer in a question, they are counted as invalid answers unless comments by the respondent were unambiguous on what his or her intended selection was. On point-

score questions, if two or three consecutive scores were chosen, the average of those scores is used in the tally.

Hopefully this survey will generate discussions among judges and more rules on how certain things should be done at all judging sessions. It will help all current and future judges learn and practice orchid judging more uniformly, and therefore lead to less discrepancy in judging.

Copies of the survey were mailed to judging center chairs on January 9, 2003, for distribution to judges in their next meeting. Participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous. Judging center chairs had the option to indicate which judging center a completed survey is from, so that the survey result of a particular judging center could be reported to that center. One hundred thirty-four completed surveys were received by March 8, 2003, and are included in this report. Throughout the report, the section symbol (§) followed by a section number refers to the corresponding section in the *American Orchid Society Handbook on Judging and Exhibition, 11th Edition*.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT'S BACKGROUND

Q1. Which class of judge are you currently in?

- (A) Student (17.2%)
- (B) Probationary (16.4%)
- (C) Accredited (65.7%)
- (D) Senior (0.7%)
- (E) Emeritus (0.0%)

Q2. Are you a commercial orchid grower or hobbyist?

- (A) Commercial grower (27.6%)
- (B) Hobbyist (71.6%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (0.7%)

QUESTIONABLE IDENTITY

Q3. You are looking at a species that you believe is not the species it claims to be. It could be another species, or a hybrid resulting from repeatedly back-crossing to the species. The plant is nominated for flower-quality scoring. What will be your most likely action?

- (A) I will not score it. (14.9%)
- (B) I will score it as the species it claims to be, and give it an award if the score is high enough for an award. (3.7%)
- (C) I will score it as the species it claims to be, and insist on a provisional award, pending on identification by an expert in the field, if the score is high enough for an award. (64.2%)
- (D) I will score it as a species or hybrid that I believe it to be, and give it an award if the score is high enough for an award. (0.0%)

(E) I will score it as the species or hybrid that I believe it to be, and insist on a award, pending on identification by an expert in the field, if the score is high enough for an award. (16.4%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (0.7%)

Q4. You are looking at a hybrid that you believe is incorrectly labeled. The plant is nominated for flower-quality scoring. What will be your most likely action?

(A) I will not score it. (83.6%)

(B) I will score it as the hybrid it claims to be, and give it an award if the score is high enough for an award. (12.7%)

(C) I will score it as the hybrid that I believe it to be, and give it an award if the score is high enough for an award. (0.0%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

§5.5.2(6) “An entry that is misrepresented, is not in conformity with the rules or is accompanied by inaccurate or inadequate information (including notices of previous awards) may be disqualified by the judges.” §5.5.2.1(5) “Taxonomic verification of all previously unawarded species is required, no matter what award is granted. Awards will be held in a provisional status until identification is complete.” §5.5.2.1(6) “If any certified judge on the judging floor questions the identity of a species being considered for any award, then the award will be held in a provisional status until identification is complete.”

By rule, CBR, CHM and all awards to previously unawarded species are provisional, pending taxonomic verification. What if a species is previously awarded and judges have questions as to its identity, or believe that the plant is actually another species? Eighty and six-tenths percent of judges will grant a provisional award, and with a ratio of four to one among them, more judges will score the plant as the species it is claimed to be than as a species judges believe it to be. With more experience and greater confidence, accredited judges are more likely to score a plant in question as the species they believe it to be (23.9%) than probationary and student judges (0% and 4.3%, respectively).

There is no formal way to identify a hybrid, and awards should be given provisionally to a hybrid, except when its registration is pending. As a result, eighty-three and six-tenths percent of judges will not score a hybrid for an award if there is doubt as to its identity.

JUDGING FLOWER QUALITY

Q5. You are looking at a plant with 12 flowers on one inflorescence. A flower on the inflorescence is either missing or blasted, otherwise everything is well and the flowers are of award quality. Will you consider the plant for scoring?

(A) Yes, and I will not deduct any points for the missing flower. (11.2%)

(B) Yes, and I will deduct few points for the missing flower. (34.3%)

(N) No. (49.3%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (5.2%)

Q6. You are looking at a plant with 12 flowers on each of two inflorescences. A flower on one inflorescence is either missing or blasted, otherwise everything is well and the flowers are of award quality. (There is no missing or blasted flower on the second inflorescence.) Will you consider the plant for scoring?

- (A) Yes, and I will not deduct any points for the missing flower. (50.7%)
- (B) Yes, and I will deduct few points for the missing flower. (36.6%)
- (N) No. (9.7%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.0%)

§5.3, *“At the time of judging, flowers shall be in perfect condition unless the judges are unanimous in deciding that the unfavorable condition is an unavoidable accident of shipping or handling and is in no way confusing to their conception of its quality.”*

When there is only one inflorescence and a flower on the inflorescence is either missing or blasted, 49.3 percent of the judges will not score the plant, and 34.3 percent of judges will score the plant with deduction of a few points for the missing or blasted flower. Student judges are less likely to penalize the plant for a missing or blasted flower (21.7 percent) than are probationary and accredited judges (4.5 and 10.2 percent, respectively).

When there are two inflorescences, a flower on one of the two inflorescences is either missing or blasted, and flowers on the other inflorescence are in good condition, 50.7 percent of the judges will score the plant without deducting any points for the missing or blasted flower. Thirty-six and six-tenths percent of judges will score the plant and penalize few points for missing or blasted flower. As judges gain more experience, they are less likely to penalize missing or blasted flowers in this scenario. Thirty-four and eight-tenths percent of student judges, 40.9 percent of probationary judges and 56.8 percent of accredited judges will not deduct any points for a missing flower.

If a flower is knocked off or damaged in transportation to judging, and the flower is shown to judges with the plant, some judges will take that into consideration and score differently than without the detached flower.

Q7. For a phalaenopsis with six or more flowers and buds per inflorescence, how many of them should be opened before you consider it for a flower quality award?

- (A) One. (0.7%)
- (B) One third. (3.0%)
- (C) One half. (65.7%)
- (D) Two thirds. (22.4%)
- (E) Three quarters. (6.0%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (2.2%)

Q8. For a non-phalaenopsis plant with six or more flowers and buds per inflorescence that does not open sequentially, how many of them should be opened before you consider it for a flower quality award?

- (A) One (6.7%)
- (B) One third. (9.0%)
- (C) One half. (52.2%)
- (D) Two thirds. (19.4%)
- (E) Three quarters. (8.2%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (4.5%)

§7.1.7, on phalaenopsis, “*At least half of the flowers should be open so that their arrangement and presentation can be properly judged.*” §7.1.9, on vanda, “*Spray types should have half the flowers open for the judges to determine the arrangement of the flowers on the inflorescence; inflorescence should be mature enough to show the full potential of the flower.*”

For phalaenopsis, 65.7 percent of the judges follow the rule in the *AOS Handbook on Judging and Exhibition*. More than half of the judges also apply the same principle when judging other genera. Fewer student judges follow the rule (56.5 percent) on phalaenopsis than probationary and accredited judges do (77.3 and 64.8 percent, respectively). A few judges commented that they don’t have a particular number in mind, as long as there are enough flowers open to judge the arrangement and presentation.

Q9. You are scoring a plant with six or more flowers. How many of them need to be of award quality before you score them?

- (A) One (21.6%)
- (B) One third. (0.7%)
- (C) One half. (11.2%)
- (D) Two thirds. (7.5%)
- (E) Three quarters. (18.7%)
- (F) All. (35.8%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (4.5%)

There is no good consensus on the answers to this question. Thirty-five and eight-tenths percent of judges stated that they need all flowers of award quality, 21.6 percent of judges stated they need only one flower of award quality, and most of the remaining judges (37.4 percent) stated they need one half to three quarters of the flowers to be of award quality before they score the plant. Student judges tend to require only one flower (39.1 percent) instead of all flowers (21.7 percent) of award quality than probationary and accredited judges. We probably need a rule to be consistent on this.

Q10. You are scoring a plant with more than one flower. Which flower will you pick for scoring?

- (A) The best flower. (83.6%)
- (B) The flower that will show best on the award picture. (7.5%)
- (C) The typical flower. (6.7%)
- (D) The worst flower. (0.0%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (2.2%)

Eighty-three and six-tenths percent of judges will pick the best flower for scoring, and 7.5 percent of judges will make sure that the flower being scored will show well in an award picture. As judges gain experience, more of them will pick a typical flower for scoring. Nine and one-tenth percent of accredited judges, 4.5 percent of probationary judges, and no student judges picked a typical flower for scoring.

Q11. What does 8 out of 10 on a point scale for a factor in flower quality mean to you?

- (A) The flower quality for that factor is at 80 percentile (better than 80 percent of all similar breeding). (20.1%)
- (B) The flower quality for that factor is what I expect for an average AM-quality flower. (14.9%)
- (C) The flower quality for that factor is what I expect for a minimum AM-quality flower. (37.3%)
- (D) I use other criteria not described in the above, and the flower quality for that factor has flaws that is worthy of 2-point deduction on a 10-point scale. (23.9%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

While 37.3 percent of judges think the flower quality for a factor should be of minimum AM quality to score eight out of ten points on that factor, opinions of other judges are split among other choices. Probationary judges responded to this question differently than student and accredited judges—13.6, 22.7, 27.3 and 31.8 percent of probationary judges chose (A), (B), (C) and (D), respectively.

Q12. What does a 10 out of 10 on a point scale for a factor in flower quality mean to you?

- (A) The flower quality for that factor is flawless. (38.8%)
- (B) In my opinion the flower quality for that factor is as good as it could be for similar lines of breeding. (29.1%)
- (C) The flower quality for that factor is better than what I expect for a FCC-quality flower. (12.7%)
- (D) Because it is always possible for improvement in the future, I will never score 10 out of 10 on any factor. (16.4%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.0%)

To receive a perfect score, most judges think that the flower quality for that factor should be either flawless (38.8 percent) or as good as it could be for that line of breeding (29.1 percent). On the other hand, 16.4 percent of judges will never give a perfect score on a

given factor. Again probationary judges have different ideas as to what perfect score means—31.8, 36.4, 18.2 and 13.6 percent chose (A), (B), (C), and (D), respectively.

Q13. You are looking at a factor in flower quality that is worth 10 points. The plant in front of you has typical flowers for this factor. What score will you give to the plant for this factor?

Range: 4 – 10
Average: 6.2
Standard Deviation: 1.3
4: 3.7%
4½ – 5: 27.6%
5½ – 6: 20.9%
6½ – 7: 29.9%
7½ – 8: 7.5%
8½ – 9: 0.7%
9½ – 10: 3.7%
No answer: 6.0%

Judges may have different opinions on what a “typical” or “average” flower quality is, but should be fairly consistent on how they translate the quality they determine to points on the score card. On a 10-point scale, judges score a “typical” or “average” flower quality from 4 to 10 points, with an average of 6.2 and standard deviation of 1.3. Most of the scores (77.6 percent) are between five and seven.

As judges gain more experience, their average scores tend to get lower with less variation, although the range remains unchanged. Student judges have the average score of 6.8 with the standard deviation of 1.6, probationary judges have the average score of 6.5 with the standard deviation of 1.2, and accredited judges have the average score of 6.0 with the standard deviation of 1.2.

We probably need a rule on what score should be given for “typical” or “average” flower quality.

Q14. You are using the general scale to score a plant with only one flower on one inflorescence, which is what is expected for this line of breeding, what score will you give it for floriferousness?

Range: 0 – 10
Average: 7.1
Standard Deviation: 1.5
0: 0.7%
2½ – 3: 0.7%
3½ – 4: 1.5%
4½ – 5: 11.2%
5½ – 6: 6.7%

6½ – 7: 30.6%
7½ – 8: 30.6%
8½ – 9: 4.5%
9½ – 10: 5.2%
No answer: 8.2%

How will judges score when they are faced with a difficult task of scoring floriferousness on a single flower, which is what is expected for the species of that particular line of breeding? On a 10-point scale, scores range from 0 to 10 points, with the average of 7.1 and standard deviation of 1.5. Most of the scores (59.7 percent) are between 7 and 8.

We probably need a rule on what to do when floriferousness is not applicable to a particular plant.

Q15. You are looking at a first-blooming plant with two inflorescences from two growths, one with three flowers and the other with four flowers. Previous awards of the same grex, all HCC, all have three flowers on one inflorescence. What score will you give it for floriferousness?

Range: 6 – 9
Average: 7.8
Standard Deviation: 0.6
6: 1.5%
6¼ – 6½: 5.2%
6¾ – 7: 7.5%
7¼ – 7½: 17.9%
7¾ – 8: 41.8%
8¼ – 8½: 16.4%
8¾ – 9: 4.5%
No answer: 5.2%

Q16. You are looking at a first-blooming plant with three inflorescences from three growths, two with three flowers and the other with four flowers. Previous awards of the same grex, all HCC, all have four flowers on one inflorescence. What score will you give it for floriferousness?

Range: 4 – 9
Average: 7.4
Standard Deviation: 0.9
4: 1.5%
4¼ – 4½: 0.0%
4¾ – 5: 0.7%
5¼ – 5½: 1.5%
5¾ – 6: 4.5%
6¼ – 6½: 6.7%
6¾ – 7: 22.4%

7¼ – 7½: 20.9%
7¾ – 8: 18.7%
8¼ – 8½: 11.2%
8¾ – 9: 6.0%
No answer: 6.0%

When considering floriferousness, judges have to consider three factors: the number of inflorescences, the total number of flowers, and the average number of flowers per inflorescence. In the first scenario, judges were given a better plant than previous HCC plants on all three factors; in the second scenario, judges were given a plant with more inflorescences and total number of flowers, but with lower average flower count per inflorescence, than previous HCC plants.

The average score in the first scenario is 0.4 point higher than the second scenario, which is expected. The standard deviation in the second scenario is 0.3 point higher than the first scenario, with wider range on lower scores, an indication that more judges place more weight, if not all, on average number of flowers per inflorescence. Most of the scores (76.1 percent) are between 7½ and 8½ in the first scenario, and between 7 and 8½ in the second scenario (73.1 percent).

In the first scenario there is no difference on scores among different classes of judges. In the second scenario, the average score given by student judges, 7.1, is lower than the average score given by probationary and accredited judges (7.6 and 7.5, respectively).

Q17. You are looking at a plant that you strongly believe is not good enough for a flower-quality award. By researching past awards you find out that a plant of the same grex was awarded a HCC of 76 points last year, which you also believe should not have been awarded. The plant in front of you is at least comparable to, or slightly better than, this awarded plant, after all factors are considered. What will be your most likely action?

- (A) I will not nominate this plant for scoring. (86.6%)
- (B) I will nominate this plant for scoring, and score this plant slightly higher than 76 points. (1.5%)
- (C) I will nominate this plant for scoring, and score this plant 76 points. (2.2%)
- (D) I will nominate this plant for scoring, and score this plant 75 points. (1.5%)
- (E) I will nominate this plant for scoring, and score this plant 74 points or lower. (3.0%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (5.2%)

Eighty-six and six-tenths percent of judges will not consider a plant for quality award if they believe that it is not good enough for an award, even if it is comparable to, or slightly better than, a recent low-HCC awarded plant. Fewer student judges (73.9 percent) will not nominate this plant for scoring than probationary and accredited judges will not (95.5 and 87.5 percent, respectively).

Q18. You are looking at a plant that in every aspect is equal to another plant that was awarded last year. What score will you most likely give to the plant?

- (A) The same score as the awarded plant. (43.3%)
- (B) A point or two lower than the awarded plant. (16.4%)
- (C) Three or four points lower than the awarded plant. (1.5%)
- (D) Five or more points lower than the awarded plant. (0.0%)
- (E) No award since there's no improvement since last year. (23.1%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (15.7%)

Q19. You are looking at a plant that in every aspect is equal to another plant that was awarded 10 years ago, and there was no plant of the same cross awarded since. What score will you most likely give to the plant?

- (A) The same score as the awarded plant. (21.6%)
- (B) A point or two lower than the awarded plant. (11.9%)
- (C) Three or four points lower than the awarded plant. (9.0%)
- (D) Five or more points lower than the awarded plant. (2.2%)
- (E) No award since there's no improvement for the past ten years. (38.8%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (16.4%)

In Q18 and Q19, I was trying to find out how much influence a past award and age of the most recent award have when considering a quality award on the same cross. More respondents (15.7 and 16.4 percent, respectively) didn't answer these two questions, or selected more than one answer, a clear indication of the flaws in these two questions. Among the comments from these respondents, many stated "it depends," "I judge against current standard," or "I cannot answer because I have to use the score sheet and see how the score comes out."

Among the respondents who selected one and only one answer in the first scenario, where an award was given in the previous year to another plant of the same cross equal in quality, 51.3 percent will give the same score, and 19.5 percent will score it a point or two lower than the previously awarded plant. On the other hand, 27.4 percent of judges will not give an award because there is no improvement since an award was given last year, indicating that they believe an award should not be given to a plant if it doesn't show improvement since a previous award on the same cross.

Among the respondents who selected one and only one answer in the second scenario, where an award was most recently given ten years ago to another plant of the same cross equal in quality, 25.9 percent will give the same score, and 25 percent will score it one to four points lower than the most recently awarded plant. 46.4 percent of judges will give no award if there is no improvement since an award was given to the same cross 10 years ago.

In both scenarios, student judges are more reluctant to award a plant if there is no improvement since the last award to the same cross. 47.6 percent of student judges who

selected one and only one answer stated that they would not give an award if there is no improvement since last year, comparing to 22.7 and 23.2 percent, respectively, for probationary and accredited judges. Sixty-eight and two-tenths percent of student judges who selected one and only one answer stated that they would not give an award if there is no improvement for the past 10 years, comparing to 38.1 and 42.6 percent, respectively, for probationary and accredited judges.

CULTURAL AWARD

Q20. When scoring a plant for a cultural award (CCM or CCE), do you consider it a flaw if some leaves of the plant were cut?

- (A) Yes, it is a major flaw. (28.4%)
- (B) Yes, it is a minor flaw. (61.9%)
- (C) No, it doesn't bother me at all. (7.5%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (2.2%)

Ninety and three-tenths percent of judges think that it is a flaw if some leaves of a plant being considered for a cultural award were cut. Among these judges, about two thirds think that it is a minor flaw and the other one third think that it is a major flaw. More student judges (47.8 percent) think it is a major flaw than probationary and accredited judges do (22.7 and 25 percent, respectively).

Q21. You are looking at a plant being considered for a cultural award (CCM or CCE). The plant's condition is not as good as any other cultural awards given to the same cross previously. However, this particular cross is very difficult, if not impossible, to grow in your judging area. How will you score this plant?

- (A) I will not consider this plant for a cultural award because it is not as good as other previous cultural awards. (40.3%)
- (B) I will score this plant for a cultural award based on previous awards, without considering the difficulty of growing it in my judging area. (18.7%)
- (C) I will score this plant for a cultural award based on previous awards, taking into minor consideration for the difficulty of growing it in my judging area. (26.9%)
- (D) I will score this plant for a cultural award based on previous awards, taking into major consideration for the difficulty of growing it in my judging area. (9.7%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (4.5%)

Thirty-six and six-tenths percent of judges think that difficulty of growing a particular plant in their judging areas should be taken into consideration when judging the plant for a cultural award. On the other hand, 59 percent of judges don't take difficulty of growing a particular plant in their judging area into consideration. As in Q18 and Q19, more student judges (65.2 percent) will not consider this plant for a cultural award than probationary and accredited judges will not (40.9 and 33 percent, respectively), because there is no improvement since the previous cultural awards.

For consistency, we probably need a rule on this.

PAPHIOPEDILUMS

Q22. For sequential-flowering paphiopedilums, such as *Paphiopedilum victoria-regina*, which usually have one or two flowers blooming at a time, which point scale do you use for scoring?

- (P) Paphiopedilum. (50.0%)
- (G) General. (46.3%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

Q23. It is not unusual for some paphiopedilum hybrids using single-flowering parents to have more than one flower per inflorescence. For example, *Paphiopedilum Armeni White* usually has two flowers per inflorescence. Which point scale do you use for scoring?

- (P) Paphiopedilum. (59.7%)
- (G) General. (34.3%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (6.0%)

§7.1.6 “The majority of judged paphiopedilums are those having a single flower on an upright stem; these are scored using the Paphiopedilum point scale in Section 7.2.7. Those having several flowers on an upright or arching inflorescence are commonly termed multiflora paphiopedilums and should be scored according to the General Point Scale in Section 7.2.1, as their floriferousness and arrangement of inflorescence are of substantial importance.”

Judges will generally agree that by rule, General point scale should be used to score paphiopedilums in subgenus *Polyantha*. Opinions are split 50 to 46.3 percent on which point scale should be used for paphiopedilums in subgenus *Cochlopetalum*, which bloom sequentially, usually one, occasionally two or three, at a time. More student judges (65.2 percent) use the paphiopedilum point scale than probationary and accredited judges do (50 and 45.5 percent, respectively).

Although more judges (59.7 percent) use the paphiopedilum point scale for paphiopedilums that mostly have a single flower on an inflorescence, many will argue that floriferousness and arrangement of inflorescence are important for paphiopedilum species and hybrids, particularly those in subgenus *Parvisepalums*, that may have two or three flowers on an inflorescence. There are *Paphiopedilum delenatii* plants with three flowers on an inflorescence in Taiwan. It doesn't seem right if their floriferousness is not considered as quality merit if they are entered for judging. More student judges (65.2 percent) use paphiopedilum point scale than probationary and accredited judges do (54.5 and 59.1 percent, respectively).

A more definite rule is probably needed on which point scale to use in judging paphiopedilums.

Q24. For paphiopedilum subgenera *Parvisepalum* and *Brachypetalum*, where dorsal sepal is not the most dominant part of flower, do you follow the scoring sheet and give sepals 10 points each for consideration for form and color?

- (Y) Yes. (61.9%)
- (N) No. (31.3%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (6.7%)

§7.2.7, Paphiopedilum point scale, calls for 10 points each for flower form and color for sepals, and 5 points each for flower form and color for petals. While for most paphiopedilums, of which dorsal sepals are more dominant, it makes more sense to weigh twice as many points for sepals than petals, 31.3 percent of judges adjust the point scale for paphiopedilums in subgenus *Parvisepalum* and *Brachypetalum*, to give them less weight on sepals. As judges gain more experience, they tend to give less weight on sepals in this case. Thirty-six and four-tenths percent of accredited judges, 27.3 percent of probationary judges, and 17.4 percent of student judges give less weight on sepals.

Q25. Do you feel that it is easier to get a flower-quality award for paphiopedilums and phragmipediums than other genera?

- (Y) Yes. (32.8%)
- (N) No. (63.4%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

More flower quality awards were given to paphiopedilums than any other genus, and we all heard comments, particularly from those who don't grow paphiopedilums, that it is much easier for paphiopedilums to get an award. Thirty-two-point-eight percent of judges agree, and many of them agree very strongly by adding many exclamation points after "Yes" or circling "Yes" many times.

There are many plausible explanations on why paphiopedilums received more awards than other genera. Among them are that more paphiopedilum hybrids are made every year and the perceived "average" quality are lower than other genera, both because paphiopedilums cannot be mericlones. When mericlones of awarded or award-quality plants flood the market, the perceived "average" quality is based more on these awarded mericlones, and hybridizers have fewer incentives to make new hybrids, most of which will have worse flower quality than those readily available awarded mericlones.

RECENT EXPERIENCE

Q26. Were you in a team that didn't give a plant an award because scoring range is over 6 points and team members failed to reach consensus, even though all scores were above minimum required for an award?

- (Y) Yes. (53.0%)
- (N) No. (43.3%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

§5.5.2.1(4) *“If the difference between individual scores exceeds six points ... each judge shall be asked to rescore the entry. If the individual scores still exceed a difference of six points, the chair of judging shall appoint a new team ... If the difference of scores again exceeds six points after consideration by the second team, the entry shall be considered judged and eliminated. Scores from the two teams may not be averaged to produce a common score.”*

More than half of the judges experienced the difference in individual scores of six points or more, and an entry was not awarded even all of the individual scores are high enough for an award.

I was quite disturbed when a plant was not given an award after each of two teams had a difference of more than six points among individual scores, even though all of the scores were over 75 points and the average is over 80 points. We need to do our best to keep the difference of more than six points to the minimum, and hopefully the result of this survey will help in that direction.

Q27. In the last 12 months when a plant with more than one flower was awarded, did your team tell the photographer which flower was scored?

- (A) Yes, always. (34.3%)
- (B) Yes, sometimes. (52.2%)
- (N) No. (9.7%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.7%)

In the last 12 months, only 34.3 percent of judges were in teams that consistently told the photographer which flower was scored, and 9.7 percent of judges were never in teams that told the photographer which flower was scored. We need to remind ourselves to always tell the photographer which flower is scored, so the award picture matches the description and score of the award.

Q28. In the last 12 months, did you, or did you observe other judges, exclude a plant for being considered for a flower-quality award just because its flower size was smaller than a certain size, even if considering all other factors it was good enough for an award?

- (Y) Yes. (56.7%)
- (N) No. (41.0%)
- (Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (2.2%)

Q29. In the last 12 months did you, or did you observe other judges, exclude a plant for being considered for a flower-quality award just because its flower count was lower than a certain number, even if considering all other factors it was good enough for an award?

- (Y) Yes. (62.7%)
- (N) No. (35.8%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (1.5%)

Q30. In the last 12 months, did you ever feel that you over or under scored a plant because you were overly influenced by a certain factor of flower quality?

(Y) Yes. (50.0%)

(N) No. (47.0%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (3.0%)

There is no rule in the *AOS Handbook on Judging and Exhibition* that states a plant should not be awarded just because it fails to meet a minimum requirement on any single factor. In the last 12 months, most judges experienced a plant being excluded from consideration of flower quality award just because it didn't exceed a threshold of a certain size (56.7 percent) or a certain flower count (62.7 percent). Furthermore, half of the judges felt that they themselves over or under scored a plant in the last 12 months because they were over influenced by a certain factor of flower quality.

As we all know, first impression is very important, and as a human being, we all will be impressed by something overwhelmingly good or bad, the so-called "wow" factors. As judges, we need to keep reminding ourselves to judge an entry on all factors, and not to be over influenced by superiority or inferiority on any single factor that results in giving this particular factor more weight than it is called for.

Q31. Size of flower counts for 10 points in point scale for flower quality. In the last 12 months, did you feel that some judges gave size more than what was called for?

(Y) Yes. (60.4%)

(N) No. (38.1%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (1.5%)

We probably all heard the comment like "size is everything" or "size is worth 50 points" in the past. Sixty-point-four percent of judges agree that some judges gave size more than its worth in the last 12 months. More accredited judges (69.3 percent) think that size was given more than its worth than probationary and student judges do (50 and 39.1 percent).

Q32. In the last 12 months, were you on a team that rescored a plant just because it scored 79 or 89 points?

(Y) Yes. (7.5%)

(N) No. (91.0%)

(Z) No answer, duplicate answer or none of the above. (1.5%)

One would expect that as the score increases, the number of plants receive that score decreases gradually. Most of the flower-quality awards were scored between 75 and 78 points, and each year no more than 15 to 20 plants were awarded 90 points or higher, the threshold for FCC. It is interesting, however, to observe that the number of plants scored

79 points or 89 points were well below the curve. One possible explanation is that when a plant received an average of 79 or 89 points, one or more judges in the judging team may try to add a point or two to their individual scores after the average score was announced to elevate the plant to a higher award. Only a small number of judges (7.5 percent) were on a team that did it in the last 12 months, not enough to explain this interesting phenomenon completely.

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