

IV. SHOW JUDGING AND ITS CONDUCT

Neither the AOS Judging Committee nor AOS judges regulate ribbon judging at shows. While AOS judges are frequently asked to perform this task because of their knowledge and experience, a society may actually invite whomever it chooses to conduct show judging. Where AOS judges are not utilized, these general guidelines will be useful. Judges must understand the classes that they are asked to judge. A competent judge will be familiar with the rules of the show and the specifications of the classes as given in the schedule.

Before judging begins, judges and clerks meet with the show judging chair for instructions. Team assignments are announced at this time. Judges should take this opportunity to clarify any questions they may have.

The teams for show judging usually consist of a minimum of three judges (one of whom is designated the team captain), the clerks, and if show policy permits, an observer. Many shows require that an observer send a written request prior to the show date. When judging teams are organized, one or more experienced judges should be placed on each team. If there is a large number of classes, they are divided evenly among several teams of judges. No judge shall judge a class in which he or she has an exhibit. A judge should look at all entries in a class and mentally rank them. An entry should be judged as it is when it is seen, not what it was the day before or what it might be tomorrow. Any entries unworthy of consideration should be mentally eliminated (this will include all in poor condition). A new plant or flower should not be considered to have extra value because it is a novelty but should be judged on its own merits.

Judges often feel an obligation to award all ribbons or other prizes in every class. This tendency frequently results in ribbons being given to plants of poor quality or condition. Judges should be advised that no prize need be awarded unless a plant is worthy. This does not mean that every plant that receives a ribbon must be of superb quality, but only that distinctly mediocre or poor plants should not be winners simply because they have no adequate competition. In this regard, it is generally customary for judges to allow greater leeway to the plants and exhibits submitted by growers in a novice division. Judges should have the right to award or withhold ribbons or trophies at their discretion, unless otherwise instructed by the show schedule.

If the show schedule permits, the judging team may disqualify or reclassify any entry that does not conform to the schedule. The reason should be written on the exhibitor's entry card. If a mistake has been made, this may prevent a repetition.

There are certain matters with which a judge is not concerned. Judges do not decide which persons are amateurs, or otherwise, or whether the flowers have been grown by the exhibitor. Such decisions are for the entry committee.

If customary, judges should sign the trophy list before submitting it. Judges should not leave the hall until granted permission by the judging or show chair.