

AT THE SHOW

What to Bring. What to Expect.

Erik Heden, Award Winning Rose Exhibitor

I entered my first rose show in the spring of 2014 and was bitten by the bug right away. I was very fortunate to have supportive friends both at my first show and throughout future shows. I hope the information below captures what to expect at a show and encourages you to enter. While the show is a competition, it is also to show what beautiful roses can be grown in one's local area and encourage others to join in our hobby. The roses are the show, not who or what wins the top prize. Share your love of roses by bringing them to a show!

What To Bring

Roses

Seems pretty simple but we wouldn't have any shows without them. Before you make any decisions it is very helpful to obtain the schedule of the show and see what categories they have. You may not wish to go for a "Queen" but perhaps you have plenty of fragrant roses for the fragrance category. Maybe you have holes in your leaves and your stems are wimpy, but the bloom is great. We may have two classes for you to enter, rose in a bowl or picture frame. Never been to a show before? Maybe they have a novice category? The point I am trying to make is this, there is a class in the rose show for EVERYBODY. Look at the schedule, see what you have in your garden and bring some roses!

You want to try to cut your blooms as close to the rose day itself so they are as fresh as possible. If you have a bit of extra room in your fridge, you can cut roses starting 3 to 4 days before a show and refrigerate them to prolong their freshness. While top exhibitors may dedicate a separate refrigerator for this purpose you would be surprised how much space you can make in your family refrigerator when that perfect bloom opens on a Thursday morning.

You want to transport your roses in water, whether that be cups filled with water or a few buckets

Rose Bag/Tote

In the bag or tote make sure you have the show schedule, tags that you will use to enter your roses and a few pens to write on the tags with. It's helpful to write at least your name and address on the tags prior to the show or better yet, use address labels! Include rubber bands, which are used to attach the labels to the vases. If you already have a few roses cut and know which class you are entering, writing up the label and putting the rubber band through the top can save time at the show. Regular paper towels and a spray bottle filled with water are good items to have in your bag. You can

use these to polish the leaves and remove any debris or residue from the leaves. Q-tips are another handy item to have in the bag if you want to try to open a bloom more if it is too tight (closed up). Small scissors can be used to trim any foliage or petals. I always like to have my rose pruners in the bag so I can recut my roses under water prior to placing them in the vase. Floral foam is another handy item to have that will help you steady the rose cane in the vase if you have any trouble. Lastly, have the latest handbook for selecting roses with you. As a member of the ARS you get a copy of this every year and you may have used this to look at the garden rating of roses in the past. This is helpful so that you get the spelling of your roses right in case of any questions.

A Friend

If this is your first show I encourage you to seek out advice prior to the show. Despite a rose show being a competition rose growers are more than willing to give out advice if asked. The morning of the show can become a bit stressful so this may not be the best time to ask a lot of questions. If possible try to seek out a table in the preparation area near somebody you know. Better yet bring somebody that isn't exhibiting this year along to help! Another good way to learn for the future is to ask questions after the show when the stress level is down or better yet, ask to clerk the next show! You will get a lot of helpful advice just listening to the judges that walk around the show itself (by clerking).

What To Expect

When you arrive at the show you will see a preparation area that is separate from the tables where you place your roses. This is where you can find water and vases for your roses, along with entry tags, registration, and programs. Plan to arrive early, especially if you have a lot of roses. Your rose schedule will be your best friend because it will outline when the roses have to be in by. If the roses have to be in by 10 AM top exhibitors may arrive by 6 AM, but an hour or two is good if you have a smaller amount of roses. This may seem like a lot of time but it goes fast, trust me!

In the prep area you will want to gather vases to put your roses into. Sometimes the vases already have water in them while other times you just have to fill them. If the later is the case keep your eye out for trash cans which may be filled with water for this reason. I like to get all of my roses into vases as soon as I arrive and arrange them on my prep table so I can see what I am working with. Work on your best roses first. Use the program as a guide and based on what you have in front of you, decide which roses will go in which classes. Using the rose tags put the name of the rose along with your name and address on it, and attach it to the vase with a rubber band. Look over the rose and clean up any dirty leaves with your paper towels, trim any damaged leaves or petals and then move onto the next rose. Once you have gotten your roses ready and labeled,

you are ready to enter them in the show! Take one last look at the tag and program to confirm you are entering the correct roses and classes. The entry tables can be in the same room as the preparation area, while at other times they are around the corner. As you place your vase on the table make sure the tag matches the class labeled on the table and do not disturb the other entries. You will notice the last 15 minutes prior to the rose entry deadline can be quite the race! Once you are done, clean up your area and offer help to others. Writing up entry tags or just running roses to the tables is quite the help for people with large amounts of roses.

After the entry for the roses is closed, now is a great time to grab lunch with friends. After lunch the judging is usually done (around 2 hours depending on the size of the show). It is always exciting to come back to see how your roses have done and to see the hard work of all the people that made the effort to enter the show. If you decided to stay for the awards, plan on waiting around awhile longer. Between waking up early, prepping the roses, lunch, and awards, it can make for a very long day!



Gemini. Queen of Syracuse Rose Show June 2014. Q tips can be used to help open a bloom. They usually help bring the outer two rows of petals down or open, while keeping the center pinpoint.



It may not be fancy, but a family refrigerator can hold roses up to a few days prior to a show, to keep the bloom from opening too much or too fast.



A bag or tote like this can be used to carry roses in cups, while the inner part of the bag or tote can hold paper towels, programs, scissors, rubber bands, and anything you need for the show.

Best of luck at the show!