

A Competitor's Guide to: Staging Camellias

1. Read the schedule-there are restrictions on various things and the judges will look out for them. Pay attention to height restrictions in particular and remember that 'a spray' means one single stem; and pay attention to size-miniature, for example, means 2-inch diameter or less.
2. Choose the best flowers you have, but remember they may be staged up to 24 hours before judging, so they should not be *quite* fully open so that they look their best on the following day.
3. Transport blooms carefully to avoid bruising. An old wives' tale suggests putting the stem of a cut bloom into a grape, to keep it fresh during transport.
4. Bring moss, scissors, secateurs and a pen or marker to fill in name cards.
5. If you have a lovely flower but are unsure of its name, don't worry bring it to the show anyway as there are stewards on hand to help identify entries and put them in the correct class.
6. Cut clean unblemished blooms, and remove dead and tatty leaves.
7. Wipe the leaves clean with a baby wipe or damp cloth to remove dirt, insects such as scale, and water streaks.
8. Choose a glass of an appropriate size for the bloom; smaller ones are available for miniature blooms.
9. Place the bloom or spray in water after making a cut to base of stem.
10. Make sure that the bloom or spray sits well in the glass or vase for the judges to see. Add moss/shredded paper to help a heavy spray stay upright in the vase but make sure the moss does not come above the top of the vase or points will be deducted. Decide how the bloom looks best and set it on the bench accordingly, to 'Catch the judge's eye'.
11. Make sure the vase or glass is clean and the specimen is well labelled.
12. Watch what others are doing, and ask help from the steward or show organisers

