

THE QUEENSLAND ROSE SOCIETY INC

Exhibitor's Handbook

July 2026 - 002 Revision



FOREWORD

THIS BOOKLET is a guide to exhibitors wishing to exhibit Roses in The Queensland Rose Society Inc Shows.

Showing roses involves a lot more than just shoving them into containers, but it presents a pleasant challenge for us to give them their best chance to woo the judges and please the viewing public. Members are invited to try their hand at showing their roses at QRS shows.

Seven monthly shows are held each year on the second Wednesday evening of the months February, March, April, June, July, September and November, using a standard monthly shows schedule. Additional shows may be held or dates altered as determined by the Management Committee and advised in The Queensland Rose - the Society's quarterly Magazine.

The venue for the Society's monthly shows is the Church of Christ Church Hall, 459 Annerley Road, Annerley Junction. The hall is open from about 7.00 p.m. and judging commences at 7.30 p.m.

Two annual Shows - the Autumn Rose Show in May and the Spring Rose Show in October - are highlights of the year's activities and are held at a special venue and use special show Schedules, published on our website <https://qld.rose.org.au>

All judging will be in accordance with the National Rose Society of Australia Inc "Judges Handbook Standards and Rules for Judging Roses (Version 3, 2024).

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SHOW RULES

SHOWS

1. The rules as set out in this booklet shall supersede all show rules previously published by the Society.
2. The standards of judging of The Queensland Rose Society Inc. are the current standards of the National Rose Society of Australia. A booklet setting out these standards can be purchased from the Chief Judge. All judges, trainee judges and exhibitors should have a copy for reference.
3. If a Show Schedule specification conflicts with the N.R.S.A. standards, then the Schedule specification shall prevail.
4. The Society may hold one or more shows in each year.
5. All exhibits to be staged in containers supplied by the Society, except as may be otherwise provided for in the show schedule.
6. All roses exhibited in all Classes except Floral Art must be from plants which have been grown by and are the exclusive property of the exhibitor.
7. All roses should be correctly named as far as possible, using the cultivar cards available from the Chief Steward, but misnaming will not cause disqualification. The exhibitor's number shall be written on the reverse side of this card to preserve anonymity when judging is taking place. It will be used later by the stewards to identify the exhibitor when filling out award cards.
8. All exhibition roses may be exhibited with or without own foliage attached. Side buds are not permitted in Exhibition classes. Wiring of stems of blooms is permitted only in sections or classes as specified by the schedule covering the show. Wiring must be used with care and without being obtrusive. A bloom dressed so as to alter its character shall count as a bad bloom.
9. No person except the Secretary, the stewards and judges shall be allowed in the exhibition areas whilst judging is in progress, unless with the express permission of the Chief Steward.
10. All blooms shall be considered the property of the Society until after the close of the Show, and no exhibit may be removed during the time of the Show unless in special circumstances by the permission of the Chief Steward.
11. All protests against exhibits (subject to Exhibition Rule 11 of these rules) or exhibitors, must be in writing and must be lodged with the Chief Steward on the day of judging no later than 4 p.m. on day shows and 9.30 p.m. on evening shows, and such protest shall be considered by the Protest Sub-Committee and the decisions of the Protest Sub-Committee shall be final and binding on both parties.

JUDGES

12. The Society will promulgate a list of judges currently approved by The Queensland Rose Society Inc.
13. The Committee retains the right to and may ask any qualified rose judge it deems fit to act as “guest” judge at any of its shows.
14. The judges shall be one or more in number and approved of by the Committee. Where there are three judges, the decision of the majority shall be final. Where there are only two judges, should a difference of opinion arise, they may call in a third judge whose decision shall be final.
15. Judges (except trainee judges) shall have no exhibitor’s interest whatsoever in the classes they are judging.
16. Judging should begin punctually at the appointed time.
17. Roses must be judged as they are at the time of judging. No other consideration whatsoever is admissible.
18. A judge must not touch an exhibit, but may pick up the container for closer examination of the entry to enable an accurate assessment. Judges shall have the power to disqualify any exhibit for any infringement of the conditions attached to the schedule, and to withhold prizes where any exhibits are considered by them unworthy.
19. In the event of an exhibit being disqualified, reason for the disqualification shall be given by the judge.
20. There shall be no disqualification if an entry is staged in the wrong class. When a judge considers an entry is incorrect, the Chief Steward must be consulted and will place the entry in its correct class, if necessary, in which case such class may be rejudged. The Chief Steward’s decision is final regarding the class in which an exhibit may be staged.
21. The steward will ensure that award cards, when marked, are placed facing away from the judge until Champion Exhibits are awarded.
22. The decision of the judge or judges regarding the relative merit of the exhibits shall be final.
23. Trainee Judges will be selected principally from successful exhibitors.
24. The requirements for trainee judges will be set by the Committee and, when a trainee judge fulfills those requirements, his or her name shall be added to the approved list of judges.

EXHIBITORS

25. New exhibitors may initially exhibit in any Section including Novice at any Society shows. Novice only Sections are restricted to exhibitors who have not won three or more major awards at major and monthly shows for up to three years.

PREPARING & EXHIBITING ROSES

Exhibiting roses is highly rewarding for rose growers. The personal challenge of preparing your best exhibits and the satisfaction of seeing your roses on the bench. Experienced exhibitors are available to assist novice exhibitors.

REGISTERING FOR COMPETITION

Contact the Chief Steward to obtain your Exhibitor Number.

1. Monthly Rose Bench – entries accepted on the night.
2. Annual Rose Shows – for Autumn Rose Show and Spring Rose Show refer to the Schedule for details.

CULTIVAR CARDS

Cultivar cards are available from the Chief Steward or may be downloaded from the QRS website to print as required.

1. On the front of the card write the Class you are entering and the Cultivar(s). If you do not know the Cultivar e.g. "Kardinal" write "Unknown"

THE QUEENSLAND ROSE SOCIETY

Class No.....

Cultivar(s)

.....



2. On the reverse side of the card write your Exhibitors Number.

Exhibitor no

3. Place the card on the exhibit container with the front side showing using sellotape.

PELLETING

Dressing roses with pellets has sometimes attracted comments from some casual observers such as: “It’s unnatural, etc”. It is likened by experienced exhibitors to a person arising from bed. One of the first things done usually is combing the hair. Show animals get their share of grooming also and nobody objects. Dressing roses is exactly that — “combing” the petals into their proper place just as nature designed. We weren’t meant to run around with our hair sticking every which way, nor are roses meant to have their petals sticking out of place — marring their potential beauty. We’ve gone to much trouble to grow the best quality flowers, so let’s realise their full potential.

A rose as it is first harvested will often be uneven in its opening depending on the direction to the sun from the flower’s position on the bush, wind, partial shadow and other factors. Dressing is an attempt to rectify problems created by these factors.

Other considerations are that even a naturally very well-formed rose is difficult to stage on the show bench “at its most perfect stage” at the time of judging. This is a question of timing. If it is not quite open enough, but would be later in the day or early the next day, then pellets will help. If a day or so before the show one looks like being a little too open at show time, then pellets and keeping the rose under cool conditions will help. Some blooms can be kept in the refrigerator (with suitable light plastic protection) for a day or so with good results. Some varieties don’t like this, so you have to experiment to find which ones are suitable. The result of all dressing or preparation of roses means that you are able to display more roses on a particular day than you would otherwise.

Basically, we usually only pellet exhibition roses. It is not a general practice with decorative roses. Exhibition roses usually have a lot more petals than the decorative roses and the best of them need at least 35 petals. Some can have up to 100 or more petals, but this is rare. Many of the old favourites average 40-45 petals. Some roses exhibited in the exhibition classes have less than 35 petals. Usually they have large, thick, very firm petals and can hold their form.

Many differing materials have been used for pellets. The main consideration is not to bruise the petals. I use plastic foam pieces cut into a range of sizes. Balls of tissue paper are sometimes used, but I won’t list all things I have seen, as I don’t recommend anything other than the (very soft) foam.

You need:

- 1) One or two medium size camel hair brushes, which are used to manipulate the petals without marking them. It is a good idea to wrap a small strip of sticking plaster around the sharp edge of the ferrule where it holds the camel hairs, in case this part of the brush with its sharp metal contacts the petals.

- 2) A good supply of soft plastic foam pieces of various colours. You always use a contrasting colour to the colour of the rose, so that the pellets are easy to see when the time comes to remove them in the final stages of benching the exhibit.
- 3) A pair of longish, blunt tweezers to assist in removing the pellets.
- 4) Preferably you should make yourself (or have made) a device to hold the rose stem just below the flower head to leave both hands free to pellet. A clothes peg attached to a suitable steady stand is often used for this. The height the rose is held should be where it is comfortably in eye focus to see and work without stooping.

If you are a smoker, I advise you not to smoke while you are dressing roses so you won't blow hot fumes into the rose. We must take all steps to prolong the rose in its best stage as long as possible - this is not helped by hot fumes being directed at it.

So to work: First, for exhibition rose dressing, the rose should be at least 1/2 open and just short of the 3/4 open stage before you start to dress it. What we are trying to achieve is a flower with the outer petals almost at right angles to the calyx, but not hanging downwards. This will give the bloom its maximum visual size. The centre should be well formed and unbroken with a cone shape or, in the case of a high number of petals, displaying tight concentric rings or spirals of inner petals. If the centre has an obvious malformation such as a tangled petal(s) causing a visible split, it is not really suitable material and would be severely penalised by the judges.

Next, study the outline of the rose while looking directly at its heart. It **should** be circular with the **circumference equidistant from the centre**. If not, then we must insert some pellets inside the outer visible row of petals to push the recalcitrant ones into place to achieve this balanced outline. To insert a pellet, you manipulate the petal with the soft camel hairs of the brush and drop the pellet inside the petal and press it downwards gently, until the petal is held in its place, taking care not to damage any petal's surface.

Sometimes a rose has an ugly, damaged outer petal or two which can be removed **without upsetting the balance** of the other petals or the **outline**. You can remove a bad petal by gently working it to and fro sideways until it releases from its attachment. You must not leave any visible remains for the judge to find and penalise.

Nevertheless, a small guard petal or two, which usually aren't handsome, if unobtrusive can be left there for support.

To achieve the best outline, you have to push the petals out a little more than desired because they will close slightly when the pellets are removed. Experience with various varieties is the best teacher in this regard.

Secondly, look for gaps caused by uneven opening in the intermediate petals and use

pellets to move petals to fill any obvious gaps to achieve even opening. It sounds simple enough, but each individual variety must be treated differently according to its own peculiarities.

Finally, when the intermediate rows are pelleted, the innermost pellets will also serve to help hold the centre petals in their tight formation (fingers crossed). Some roses have an almost perfect petal formation when they are cut, but, believe me, this is a rare event and roses to be shown will almost always be greatly improved by manipulation and pelleting.

When the pellets are removed you will notice the experienced exhibitors do some final “fine tuning” with their soft brushes in the search for just that little extra quality of form. Many a time I’ve picked up a rose to dress and almost immediately thrown it into the can as not even worth vase room. Yet I’ve relented and persevered with many of them and managed to improve them sufficiently to win awards — which proves the effectiveness of pelleting. You get far more value and beauty from your exhibiting by this means. The more rows of petals a bloom has, the more you can do to improve its form, which is why a good number of petals is so important in “exhibition” roses.

Pellets must be removed prior to judging. Ten points are deducted for each pellet remaining in a bloom.

WIRING STEMS

Some show classes allow wiring of stems. This is a recognition that some show varieties have very heavy heads which often are a little too much for the stem to hold more or less upright. The judge doesn’t want to turn into a knot to see what the flower really looks like – nor does the public. So, the show authorities have to decide whether to allow wiring in certain areas so that some of the best-looking flowers can be shown; else these would be virtually eliminated from competition if wiring is forbidden.

Wiring, properly done, need not be very noticeable. Florists’ supplies sell the various grades (thicknesses) of stiff wire for the purpose and have even got around to having it in a green colour to help it blend in with the stem.

When wiring, first determine which is the natural front side of the rose, i.e. the side it wants to lean or alternatively, the orientation where the bloom looks best. This is the side we will present to the judge — in presentation, we don’t want the rose on its stem to be bolt upright, but at a slight natural angle forward so that the heart of the flower will be easily viewed without the viewer having to strain to do so. Having determined the front of the bloom, we will aim to fix the main stiffening wire so that it is on the rear of the stem — out of sight.

The base of the bloom (seed receptacle or calyx) can be held in two ways by the top of the wire: 1) A horizontal loop is formed with long-nosed pliers at the top to surround and grip the calyx; or 2) the top of the wire can be cut at a sharp angle with sharp side cutters to give it a point and then it is twisted in a boring action to penetrate the calyx sufficiently to give a firm hold. There is some danger in method 2, because some (but only some) stem tops can be quite brittle and if too much wire insertion pressure is applied, the calyx breaks off the stem. However, it is faster to use and gives a neater finish. In the first method, the loop is hidden beneath the open sepals (the outer covering of the young bud).

Next, the stem wire has to be attached to the stem at two or three places to transfer the stiffness of the wire to the stem. This is done with the finest gauge florist wire cut in short lengths and wrapped around both main wire and stem with several turns. A good place to hide these attachments is just below the leaf junctions on the stem. If the peduncle (the part of the stem between the topmost leaf junction and the flower head) is unusually long, one may have to have an intermediate attachment on the peduncle for extra support, but, if you are neat with your work, it will do its job without detracting from the exhibit.

Finally, cut or bend the bottom of the wire to match the stem's length and try the result in the show container. You may have to bend the stem-wire combination a little to get the best angle for the flower, as the wire may have made it too upright.

PRESENTATION

Presentation in any exhibit is important, so make the most of it. Try to ensure the exhibit faces the judge correctly, so it appears at its best at a normal viewing angle. In a multiple container exhibit, keep the units in neat line formation and put the larger flowers at the back so that perspective will tend to make them appear even in size; watch out for the best colour combinations where certain colours can clash in proximity.

Try to clean any visible spray residue gently from the foliage. A wipe with raw wool is ideal — support the leaflet with a piece of soft material while doing this — you have to be very careful so as not to split the leaflet. See that the foliage is arranged as naturally as possible and not caught up with itself, and neatly remove leaflets showing bad damage, if removal will make the exhibit look tidier. In other words, close attention to detail will make a vast improvement in the overall look of the exhibit.

REFRIGERATION OF ROSES

To collect sufficient roses from a few days harvesting and keep them in a fresh condition to add to your display efforts, we often keep the early ones in a refrigerator. The recommended temperature is 3 to 4 degrees Celsius. Refrigeration also helps to “set” some varieties so that they hold their dressed form throughout the duration of the show.

Some varieties do not like the refrigerator at all and will collapse and/or change colour, but that’s for the exhibitor to find out by experimentation depending on the varieties grown and being shown. Other varieties relish this treatment and will form better blooms as a result. The roses should be covered to prevent any condensation drips from marking them or loss of moisture. Suitable material for this is a plastic shopping bag or similar — the main thing is for it to be light, very flexible and non-sticky.



ROSE EXHIBITING DEFINITIONS

ALL ROUND: Presentation of Vase exhibitions that may be viewed from all directions.

BLOOM: The expanded stage of a rose flower. A bloom shall be taken to mean a rose with or without buds and foliage as cut from the plant. Side buds are not allowable in Exhibition Classes.

BOWL: A container, the height being less than the diameter, excluding the stand.

BUD: The unexpanded stage of a rose with no petals unfurling. In the Bud to Fully Open exhibit, colour must be showing.

CULTIVAR: The name of the specific cultivated variety e.g. the “Peace” Rose. When the name is not known the exhibit should be marked as “unknown”

CUT: An original new growth that carries one bloom and bud/buds or more than one bloom with or without side buds.

DISTINCT: Means different cultivar e.g. 3 distinct roses “Peace, Moonstone, Kardinal”

FRONTAL: Presentation of Vase exhibitions that is viewed from the front only.

NND: “Not Necessarily Distinct” allows the exhibitor to mix or match varieties in the exhibit to suit the available roses.

SIDE BUD: A lateral growth bearing a bud originating below the terminal bud/bloom.

STEM: An original new growth which carries 1 bloom or 1 bud and has received no check from pinching, stopping or pruning from the time of starting into growth to flowering. Disbudding is not regarded as a check to growth under this definition. The stem should be proportionate in thickness and length to the size of the bloom it supports.

STEM COUNT: Is determined at the point of emergence of the stem(s) from the top of the container and must be clearly visible (be careful to ensure it is free of any leaf matter that may obstruct the judges view) – this is not an issue for vase exhibits with multiple cuts or stems of roses that cannot be counted without dismantling the arrangement.

VASE: A container, the height being more than the diameter, excluding the stand.

JUDGING FLORAL ART

1. The main principles in judging floral art classes are: interpretation of schedule, design (includes balance, rhythm, proportion and scale), unity and harmony, colour, distinction or originality, condition of material used.
2. The exhibit must be judged as it is at the time of judging and should not be considered unless it conforms to schedule specification.
3. The judge must not touch the exhibits other than wire work.

It is desired the judge should, if possible, stay after the judging to give advice if requested by the competitors and be ready to explain the decisions.

FLORAL ART DEFINITIONS

ARRANGEMENT: Plant material so arranged in a design which follows floral art principles. It includes the container, the base on which it stands, and may include background.

ACCESSORY: Anything in the arrangement other than fresh cut plant material, container, background and/or base.

BASE: An item on which a container can stand (wood, metal, slate, mirror, material, etc.).

BASKET: Must have handle and be made of any woven material unless otherwise stated. Arranged to be viewed all round, unless otherwise stated. Stems must be in water or water-retaining material (oasis). About two-thirds of handle should be visible.

BOWL: A round vessel, the diameter of which is greater than its inside depth.

COMPOSITION: A planned design of plant material, container and one or more accessories. It may include background and/or base.

CONDITION: The physical state of plant material, such as freshness and freedom from injury or disease, which could detract from the beauty of the material.

CONTAINER: A receptacle of any shape or design in which flowers are exhibited.

DRIFTWOOD: Wood that has been weathered by any of the natural elements, i.e. air, earth, water, fire or wind.

FEATURING: To give prominence to — such as “featuring a figurine” or “featuring driftwood”; then these are the centre of interest. If used otherwise, these would serve as accessories.

FOLIAGE: Leaves of a plant, shrub or tree with or without stems.

FORMAL: A symmetrical arrangement viewed from all sides (free standing) or may be facing front only with equal balance each side of axis.

HORTICULTURAL MATERIAL: Plant material either living or dried, i.e. weathered wood, twigs, dried or preserved leaves, fruit, berries, seed pods, pussy willow, bulrushes, grain, etc.

INFORMAL: Balance achieved by asymmetrical placement — height and lightness balanced by weight of colour, form or texture.

OASIS: Water-retaining material. Its use is permitted.

WIRING: Permissible if used with care and without being obvious. It is considered an “aid” and should be concealed.

URN: A tall container with handles.

VASE: A container, the height of which is greater than the diameter of its circular opening.

WATER. All stems must be in water or water-retaining material unless otherwise stated.

TABLE ARRANGEMENTS

BUFFET: This is usually informal and, as guests are not seated, can be much higher than dining table arrangement.

DINING TABLE: Arrangement must be attractive from every angle. Height not to exceed 23cm. Candles may be used.

LUNCHEON: Should be less formal than dining table, viewed all round unless stated otherwise, and should not have candles.

CORSAGES

CORSAGES should be light and dainty, the back should be flat and not roll to the side when lying flat on the bench. Wires should not show, and be taped for preference. All material should be fresh and of good quality; neatly covered at back with leaves. Size 15 to 20 cm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Take off all leaves below the water line, otherwise they will foul the water.
2. Try recessing some flowers in order to get depth in your arrangement.
3. Place a base under a top heavy arrangement (informal only).
4. Crush or split ends of all woody material before placing in an arrangement.
5. Be sure to cover the rim of your container with drooping materials in order to make the flowers and containers appear as one unit.
6. Try cutting stem ends under water. The flowers will keep better, especially those with soft, hollow stems.

FLORAL ART TERMS

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN - Balance, Dominance, Contrast, Rhythm, Proportion and Scale.

BALANCE is visual impression. A well-balanced arrangement gives a feeling of stability. Balance is attained by the use of size, colour, line and texture and should be considered vertically, horizontally and in depth.

SYMMETRICAL BALANCE is equal balance of weight on each side of central axis, an imaginary line through centre of arrangement. This balance is used for formal settings, churches, receptions, weddings etc. With symmetrical designs it should have a focal area in the centre of arrangement near the base, placed forward to give depth.

ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE is visual but it is unequal or off-centre balance of weight by placement of material. Though the two sides are dissimilar there is the same amount of visual weight on either side of the axis. This means that the greater amount of material (light in form or colour) is on one side, with the heavier flowers or darker colours placed well down on the other side to give stability and good balance. Often the centre of interest is off-centre.

DOMINANCE means more of one - more of one line direction - more of one hue and/ or value etc. There must be dominance of only one colour, one form or one line in an arrangement.

CONTRAST is achieved by placing elements together in such a way as to emphasise differences. Contrast of texture, forms or colours give variety to an arrangement. An arrangement should have a few contrasting lines, various forms spaced unevenly with no two stems the same length and no two voids exactly alike in shape or size.

RHYTHM is the organisation of design elements to create a dominant visual path. This may be by the employment of line or accent in such a way that the observer gets the effect of motion. Rhythm is usually attained by the use of repetition, gradation and line direction.

PROPORTION is the size relationship of one area of arrangement to another and to the space it occupies. It deals with areas and relative amounts. The general rule is that the plant material should be at least one and a half times as tall as an upright container and same proportion using width of a low container.

SCALE refers to relative sizes only, such as the size of arrangement to its placement, the size relationship of plant materials to each other, to the container and to the accessories, if used.

TYPES OF ARRANGEMENTS

FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS are bowl, vase, trough, basket, symmetrical triangle. They can be either all round or frontal. A horizontal arrangement is formal also, as it is equal on both sides.

INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS are asymmetrical triangle, vertical, diagonal, crescent, Hogarth curve etc.

MODERN ARRANGEMENTS still conform to basic principles of good design but differ from traditional in an absence of transition and graduation. The arrangement is bold with clear-cut plant forms with strong contrast materials and colour. Modern type of container should be used.

LINE ARRANGEMENTS: Mainly based on geometric forms: triangle, rectangle, circle. Stems to appear to emanate from one point (focal point).

SYMMETRICAL TRIANGLE: Isosceles triangle with focal point at centre of base line. Pyramid form is for depth.

ASYMMETRICAL TRIANGLE: Right-angle triangle with long side as base and right angle directly above the focal point.

CIRCLE OR ARC: Used for table arrangements in round or oval bowl.

OVAL OR FAN SHAPE: Line or mass.

CRESCENT: Three-quarter circle (12 to 4 o'clock) with top directly above focal point (asymmetrical) — focal point off-centre,

INVERTED CRESCENT: An upside-down crescent using a tall container (asymmetrical).

HOGARTH CURVE or **LAZY-S:** A gentle s-curve (asymmetrical) at any angle.

MINERVA: A downward curve with a peak above about 2/3rds of container height (symmetrical).

DIAGONAL: An asymmetrical arrangement.

NOTE: Never have blooms in a stiff, straight line - neither shoulder to shoulder nor directly under each other. Stems must not cross. Leave breathing space between blooms. Each bloom should have at least a pencil thickness clearance all around it.

CONCLUSION

Happy rose growing and best wishes for your exhibitions. See you at the shows!

POINT ALLOCATION FOR JUDGING ROSES

CLASS	FORM	CONDITION	SIZE	OVERALL BEAUTY	STEM & FOLIAGE	PRESENTATION	CORRECT STAGE
Exhibition Rose	40	30	20		5	5	
Decorative Rose		40		30	20	10	
Fully Open Rose	30	30	20		10	10	
Floribunda Rose		40		30	20	10	
Shrub Rose		40		30	20	10	
Polyantha Rose		40		30	20	10	
Single Rose		40		30	20	10	
Miniflora Rose		40		30	20	10	
Miniature Rose		40		30	20	10	
OGR & Species Rose		40		30	20	10	
Multi-Stage		40			20	10	30
Bunch/Bowl		30		30	20	20	

Extracted from The National Rose Society Inc 'Judges Handbook Standards and Rules for Judging Roses' (Version 3, 2024)