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# How to Select and Prepare Vegetables for Exhibition

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Oregon State System of Higher Education  
Federal Cooperative Extension Service  
Oregon State College  
Corvallis

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# How to Select and Prepare Vegetables for Exhibition

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## Purpose

1. To show others the results of our efforts when they are good and to receive recognition.
2. To compare products and to learn what is good quality.

## Rules

Garden produce exhibits must be controlled by certain rules regarding the time and place of the exhibit and the kind of exhibit.

Each exhibit is listed in a catalog which tells: (1) Exhibit number, (2) Name of exhibit, (3) Number of specimens in each exhibit, (4) Awards. For example:

### Section I Vegetables

<u>Exhibit number</u>	<u>Name of exhibit</u>	<u>Number of specimens</u>	<u>Awards</u>		
			<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>
115	Beets	6 (with tops off)	\$5	\$3	\$2
116	Cabbage, Flat Dutch	1 head	5	3	2

## Labeling

Clear labels should be used to mark each entry. Labels should all be the same size and should all be attached to the exhibit in the same way. All of the exhibits should be displayed in the same sort of trays, plates, or other containers.

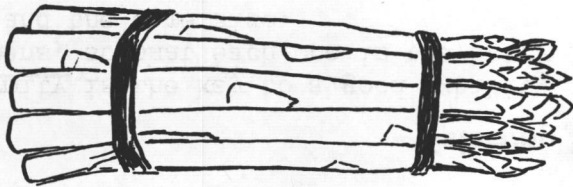
## Selecting Specimens

Uniformity is the key to a good exhibit. Choose entries from a large number of specimens, so that each one in the entry is true to type, at the same stage of ripeness, and the same size.

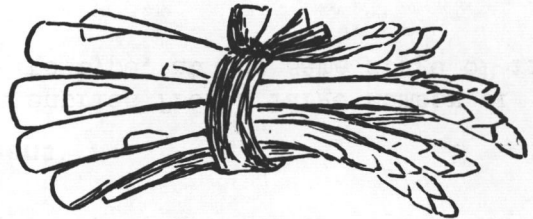
Except in the case of watermelon, citron, and pumpkin, do not show the largest specimens. Entries that are slightly above medium size are best. Those specimens with the deepest or most intense color are preferred; for example, pure white cauliflower, dark green spinach, and bright red tomatoes are most attractive.

Entries should be free from decay, dirt, disease, insect or mechanical damage.

**Asparagus:** An asparagus entry should be tied in a bunch of 1 pound, or 10 spears. Spears should all be the same thickness, unbranched, and with butts trimmed even, so that not more than 1 inch of white is showing. The bunch should be held together with a ribbon, cord or rubber band at each end. The base of each stalk should be more than  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in diameter and the length not less than  $5 \frac{3}{4}$  inches.



**RIGHT**



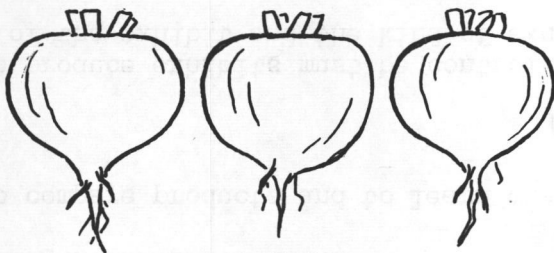
**WRONG**

**Snap Beans:** Pods should be well matched in all characteristics, brittle, free from strings, and at the best stage for eating.

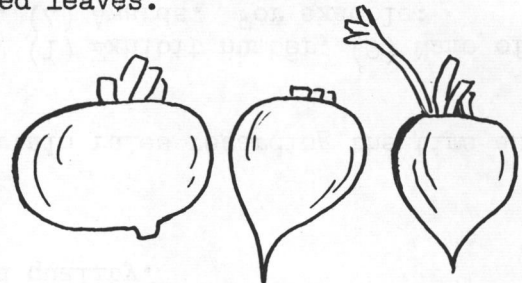
**Lima Beans:** Pods should be well matched in all characteristics, and well filled with beans at the best stage for eating.

**Beets:** If the catalog lists "topped beets" cut the tops off  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the crown. Cut each specimen exactly the same. Do not remove tap root. Beets intended for storage should not be washed.

When bunched (tops on), beets should be about half-grown and of good color. The leaves must be healthy; remove damaged leaves.



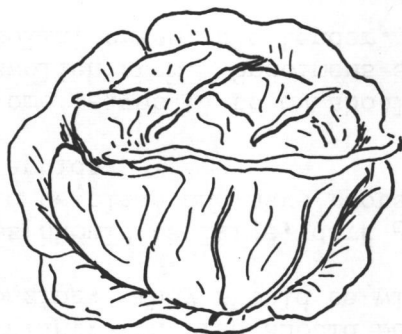
**RIGHT**



**WRONG**

**Brussels Sprouts:** Picked sprouts should be uniform, medium size, heavy, firm, round, compact, clean, and green.

Cabbage: Specimens should be solid, fresh, crisp, and tender. The stem should not be longer than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, and should be cut squarely across. Large, loose outer leaves should be trimmed off leaving only two layers of sound, green, outer leaves.

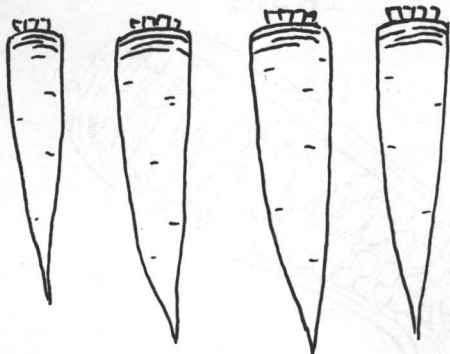


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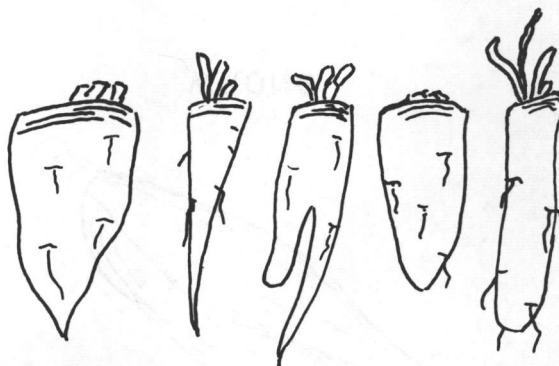


WRONG

Carrot: Specimens should be well matched, firm, smooth, with no side roots and no green color at the crown. All should taper evenly from crown to tip, and tap root should be left on. Fresh carrots should be gently washed. Stored carrots should not be washed. Topped carrots should have the tops removed  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the crown. Bunched carrots should be neatly tied and the tops should be healthy.



RIGHT



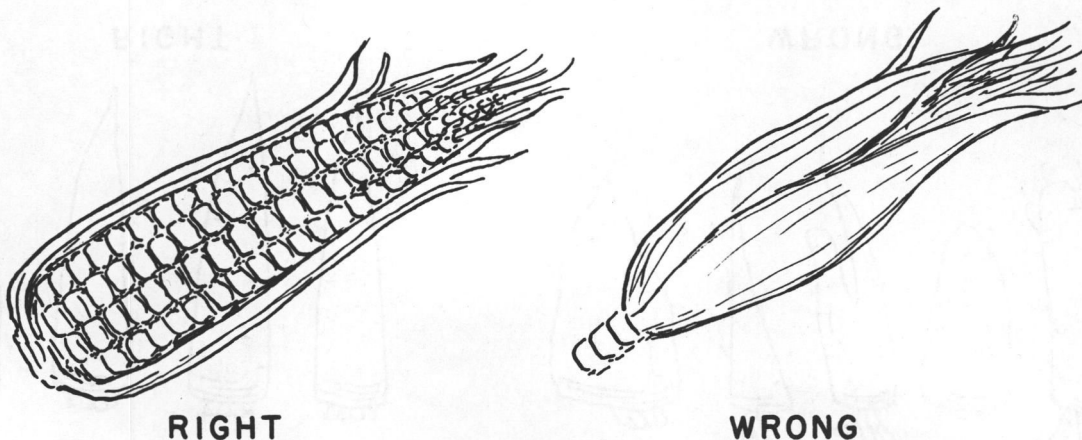
WRONG

Cauliflower: Head, or curd, should be white, smooth, clean and firm, free from fuzziness and small leaves. Remove all except 4 to 6 leaves. Cut stem off short. Trim remaining protective leaves squarely across so that they stick 1 inch above the head, or curd.

Celery: Show only large, firm heads that have outer stalks which are closely set, free from any disease or damage or seedstalk development. Roots should be removed by trimming base of celery squarely across. If the catalog requires

that leaves be left on, make certain they are healthy and green. If tops are clipped back all heads in the entry should be neatly cut to exactly the same length.

Corn, sweet: Specimens should be well matched, typical of the variety, and well filled from tip to butt. A portion or all of the husk should be removed from each ear so that the kernels are exposed from tip to butt.



Cucumbers:

Slicing: Specimens should be well matched, straight, dark green, typical of the variety. They should be firm and crisp and tender enough that the slicing knife will cut the seed.

Pickling: Specimens should be well matched, small, uniform and of even diameter (more or less cylindrical).

Eggplant: Entries should be solid, well matched, dark purple, and free from bronzing. They should be wiped clean but not washed.

Kale: Leaves should be large, dark green, closely set, and well curled. Specimens should be clean and have roots removed. Never exhibit specimens infested with aphids.

Kohlrabi: Some leaves (4 to 6) should be left on and root cut off just below the swollen stem. Specimens should be well matched, of even color, and solid, crisp, and tender.

Lettuce:

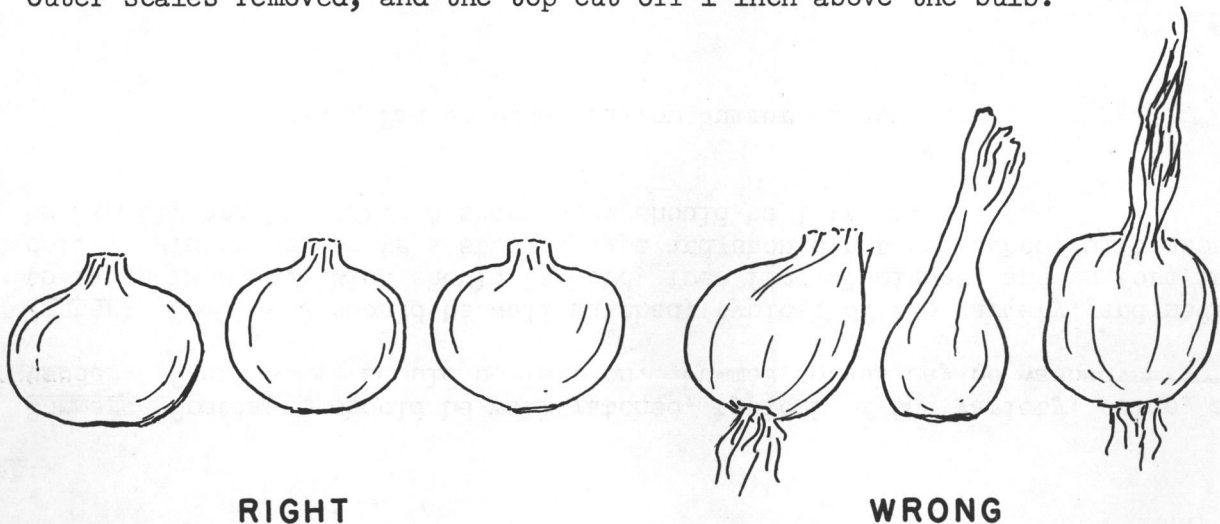
Head Lettuce: Specimens should be well matched, medium sized, firm, fresh, and crisp. Coarse or damaged outer leaves should be removed and the butt cut off close. Heads may be washed if necessary.

Leaf Lettuce: Plants should be well matched, crisp, tender, and fairly compact. Damaged or discolored leaves should be removed, dirt washed off, and roots cut off close.

Muskmelon or Cantaloupe: Specimens should be well matched, ripe, typical of variety, and well covered with coarse netting.

Onions:

Mature bulbs: Specimens should be well matched, with bright, clean, dry, outer scales. Large uniform bulbs are preferred. There should be no sprouting. Roots should be taken off just below the base of the bulb, broken or dirty outer scales removed, and the top cut off 1 inch above the bulb.



Pickling onions: Specimens should be well matched, firm, well cured, bright, and clean.

Green-bunch onions: Specimens should be fresh, clean, well matched with loose skin removed. Tops should be trimmed to an even length and neatly tied.

Parsley: Specimens should be clean, fresh, crisp, and dark green. Diseased or injured leaves should be removed and the entry bunched with stems evenly trimmed.

Parsnips: Specimens should be well matched, with even taper and no side roots. Dirt should be soaked off with water without rubbing the skin, and all side rootlets trimmed off. Tops should be cut off  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch above the crown.

Peas: Specimens should be well matched and deep green in color, with the bloom still on the pods. Long pods are considered better than short ones. Pods should be closely filled with tender peas of good size.

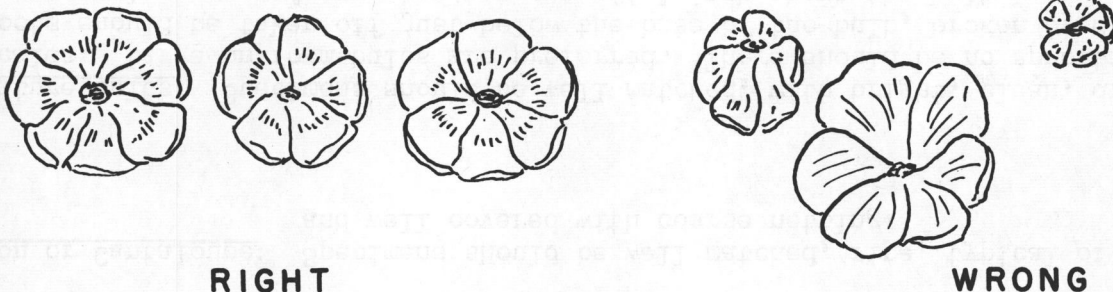
- Peppers: Specimens should be well matched, typical of the variety, thick fleshed, and uniform in color.
- Potatoes: Specimens should be well matched, typical of the variety, bright, clean, and smooth. Potatoes should not be washed. Dirt may be removed by brushing lightly.
- Pumpkins: Specimens that are large and heavy are preferred. Stem should be left on. The entry should be washed. Pumpkins should be firm, and uniform in color, and should preferably not have a flat side.
- Radish: Specimens should be well matched, neatly bunched with tops and roots left on. They should be of medium size, firm, and crisp.
- Rhubarb: Specimens should be well matched, fresh, and neatly tied. Stalks should be straight and crisp. Leaves should be trimmed back to prongs 1 inch long and any growth at the base of the stalk should be removed. In harvesting, stalks should be pulled out, not cut.
- Spinach: Specimens should be well matched and fresh with leaves attached to the crown. Plants should be typical of the variety. Spinach may be washed.

Squash:

Summer: Specimens should be well matched, typical of the variety, crisp, and tender. Short stems should be left on. Summer squash may be washed.

Winter: Specimens should be well matched, typical of the variety, and medium to large in size. Rind should be hard, free from blemishes, and uniform in color. Winter squash is a storage type and should not be washed; dirt should be lightly brushed off. A short stem should be left on.

Patty Pan or Bush Scallop Summer Squash



Tomatoes: Specimens should be well matched, firm, free from cracks and scars, and of a bright, even color typical of the variety. Stems should be removed. The same standards apply to green tomatoes. Stems are left on greenhouse tomatoes only.

Turnips: Specimens should be well matched, medium sized, smooth and clean with tops cut back to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and tap root left on. If the catalog calls for bunched turnips, the tops should be left on and neatly tied; damaged leaves should be removed.

Watermelons: Specimen should be typical of the variety, firm, smooth, sweet, and mature. The ground-spot should have a yellow tinge.

#### Vegetable Collections:

A vegetable collection is a number of different kinds of vegetables grouped together in an attractive arrangement. Any product commonly classed as a vegetable may be used, including all those listed above. Generally speaking, vegetables are those annual plants of which the tender roots, stems, bulbs, blossoms, leaves, seeds, or fruit may be eaten, as well as some perennial nonwoody plants such as asparagus and rhubarb.

### Check List

Do your entries measure up?

1. Attractive: Have you kept in mind that the judge is going to select only fancy, high quality products?
2. Uniform: Are all the specimens in your entry exactly alike in shape and color? Did you pick your entry from a large number of specimens?
3. Typical shape or form: Is your entry typical of the variety?
4. Medium size: Is your entry top quality produce that is attractive and only slightly larger than average?
5. Free from blemish: Have you removed specimens that are scraped, bruised, punctured, cut, discolored, diseased, or damaged by insects?
6. Clean: Have you removed dirt and dead or injured leaves and trimmed with great care and exactness?
7. Mature: Are your entries at the best stage for eating or are they too old and tough?