

Judging Criteria for Specific Vegetables

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry September 2015

Asparagus stalks should be green with close heads of the same length tapering uniformly with the same diameter at the butt. Large size is desirable as it denotes quick growth and high quality.

Artichokes (French) specimens should be uniform in size, color and shape. Moderately large size usually means higher quality

Artichokes (Jerusalem) specimens should be uniform in size, color and shape. Medium size is best.

Beets tenderness and color are desirable qualities. Avoid oversize beets. It is difficult to give the most desirable size in inches, but as a rule, beets 2 inches in diameter are best. Color for the variety is important. Dark beets showing white streaks will be penalized. Tops should be trimmed to 1 inch. If tops are shown, they should be small and free of rusty, damaged or chewed leaves.

Beans (shell) should be shown with pods of equal size. The pods should not be dry. High color is required in horticultural strains.

Beans (snap) should be under rather than over mature. Long, straight specimens of the same length and color should be selected.

Beans (dry) should be completely dry. Avoid cracked or broken beans.

Broccoli with close heads, dark green and not over six inches of stem are preferable. Do not tie broccoli in bunches. Avoid yellowing or heads that are flowering.

Brussel Sprouts firmness and medium size are important. Avoid all soft and leafy specimens. Color should be uniform for the variety.

Cabbages type is important in judging.

Exhibitors should not peel the leaves too closely, but outer leaves that are damaged or harboring pests should be removed. Firmness is important.

Carrots should be kept to type, using short, half long and long in their places. Oversize is to be avoided. One inch in diameter for most varieties is best. Color is important. Avoid exhibiting greenish specimens. Irregular or coarse carrots will be penalized. Trim carrot tops to 1 inch.

Cauliflower should be solid with no leaves appearing through the head. The side leaves should be trimmed about 2 inches above the center of the head. Avoid yellow, chewed and discolored leaves.

Celery should be exhibited without roots, but avoid cutting roots too closely. Wash carefully. Avoid split and pithy stalks.

Cucumbers avoid extremes of immaturity, over-ripeness and size (especially oversize). Immature specimens are likely to be too spiny. Overripe specimens have a tendency to turn yellow. Type and color are important, do not mix types.

Eggplant specimens should not be too large. Maturity is largely determined by color. Avoid greenness in specimens. Give protection in transit to avoid bruising.

Endive plants should be of the same size, leaves uniformly curled and centers blanched.

Lettuce should be crisp, fresh and free of sunscald.

Melons should be of appropriate size for the variety. In general, melons that are large in size are of higher quality. Uniformity in size, netting and color are important. Melons for exhibition should be ripe.

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Onions should not be peeled down to the green. At late season exhibitions onions should be thoroughly ripened off with dry necks. Clean onion by brushing off dirt, but do not scrub.

Pepper specimens should have the same number of lobes. All specimens on a plate should be of one color and true to type.

Peas should be uniform and true to the variety type. Under, rather than over, mature pods are preferred. Pods should be of the same color and length.

Parsnips should be clean, white, smooth, tapering and true to type. Trim parsnip tops to 1 inch.

Parsley close curled varieties are best for exhibition. Select plants of about the same age for similar color. Avoid yellow leaves.

Potatoes select only specimens of medium and uniform size. Avoid oversize potatoes. Skins should be of the color for the variety, smooth and without scab, mosaic, bruises or other damage. Potatoes for exhibition should be dried carefully and the soil brushed off lightly, do not wash.

Radishes color and crispness are important. Choose small size, uniform specimens of the right color for the variety. Exhibit with foliage. Avoid pithy specimens.

Spinach plants should be cut close to the ground. Stalks should be short and the leaves broad and deep green. Wash spinach carefully, do not bruise the leaves.

Squash (summer) should be tender and of medium size, not over 8 inches long. Specimens must be of even color and true to type. Over large specimens will not be judged.

Squash (winter) should be of large size for the variety. A typical blue hubbard for exhibition should be around 35 pounds and other varieties in proportion to that. Specimens should be mature and the skin firm, free of blemishes and insect injury. Stems should be cut at the vine.

Sweet Corn should be shown only in the edible stage. Ears should be taken to the exhibition in full husk. Judges will strip off husk. Choose ears that are well filled out. Corn should be true to type. Kernels should be even in size and color. Each cob should be of the same length, thickness and color. Avoid over-ripeness.

Tomatoes should be firm and colored all over. Type is especially important. Do not mix varieties or types. Be sure there are no cracked specimens or green ends, blemishes or damage.

Turnips the type should be kept distinct. Egg varieties should have typical egg shape. White flat specimens should be selected for their conformity to type. Purple top varieties should be purple all the way around the top. Rutabaga should be exhibited with the fine roots as well as the main tap root cut off. All turnips should be firm, but not woody. Uniformity in size is important.