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Circular No. 13 - Fruit for Exhibition

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SELECTING THE FRUIT. The basis of a good fruit exhibit is necessarily good cultural conditions to produce good fruit. Then it depends on the exhibitor’s ability to select his best fruit. Do not wait until the crop is picked to select show specimens. The successful exhibitor makes his prize selections in the orchard while the fruit is still on the tree. By viewing the fruit as it hangs naturally on the tree, and by carefully surveying the different trees in the orchard a good comparison of a large quantity of fruit can be made. The prize fruit is generally on the outermost branches, where it gets sufficient light to be of proper color for the variety, and is enabled to grow without injury or deformity. The tree or actual specimens may be selected any time during the season, but they should remain on the tree until fully mature. Thoroughly thinning the fruit on the selected tree early in the season will help materially in producing prize winners. The vital points to be considered in the selection of the specimens are; freedom from blemishes, uniformity of the individuals, good color, and typical size and shape for the variety. This will be treated at length under Score Card.

STORING THE FRUIT. Although many of the exhibits occur just as the fruit is normally harvested it is often desirable to hold some of the early varieties in storage. And again many of the fall and winter varieties of apples are held over for winter exhibits. The specimens should be carefully packed in relatively small packages. While ice storage will be necessary for keeping some of the stone fruits until the fall fairs, most of the
varieties of apples and pears can be kept in good shape in an ordinary house cellar. There should be sufficient ventilation so the air does not become musty and damp. Experiments show that apples and pears will keep much longer when each specimen is separately wrapped in paper than when packed unwrapped.

**THE ARRANGEMENT OF EXHIBITION FRUIT.** The artistic arrangement of the fruit is of inestimable value to the show as a whole. If the tables can be covered with some material such as green crepe paper the red and yellow fruit will show up much better by contrast than by the use of plain white or brown paper covering. The number of specimens per plate is usually regulated by each individual show association. In the case of the larger fruit five specimens are usually required and ten to twenty specimens of the small fruits such as plums, to make an exhibit. Five bunches of grapes usually constitute a single plate exhibit.

When fruit is exhibited in boxes, as in case of car load lots, clean standard apple boxes should be used. The fruit should be carefully sized in each box and a first class commercial pack should be presented. Poorly graded, loosely packed, or “jumble” packed fruit is seriously handicapped when compared with well staged fruit. Frequently superior fruit is placed second or third in a competition because of lack of care in arrangement.

**SCORE CARD.** The following score cards, or very similar ones which are in use, will give the exhibitor a general idea of the important points for consideration in show fruit. The score cards are as follows, for **single plates:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Apples &amp; Pears</th>
<th>Plums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from blemish</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniformity</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FREEDOM FROM BLEMISHES.** This important point in judging fruit is too often overlooked by the exhibitor. Judg-
ing fruit is primarily a process of elimination. More fruit is disqualified on account of blemishes than any other point on the score card. Freedom from blemishes means that each individual specimen shall be free from bruises, worm holes, limb rubs, frost blemishes or any evidence of the presence of insect enemies or disease, such as San Jose scale, apple scab, peach blight, grape mildew, etc. Each specimen must have its stem intact and show no unusual conditions. Some Exhibit Associations disqualify entirely insect infested fruit. That is, if one apple on a plate of five shows a worm hole, the entire plate is disqualified from competition.

**UNIFORMITY.** Uniformity refers to the appearance of several specimens as they are brought together on one plate. To score high on this point the specimens should be of the same size, color, shape, and degree of ripeness. Four large apples and one small one would not score as high on this point as five medium size fruit.

**COLOR.** Color is a very important factor in the sale of fruit, thus it is given an important place in judging exhibit fruit. The color should be bright, clear and characteristic of the variety. It should not be yellow if the variety is usually blushed in the case of well grown specimens, neither should the specimens be streaked with red if well grown specimens of the variety are normally solid red.

**SIZE.** The size should be medium to large, but the advantage is not given to "overgrown" specimens. Whereas good size is one indication of good cultural conditions, each variety has a typical size which is perfection for the particular sort under consideration. Thus in selecting Winesaps, Ganos and Wolf River apples for exhibit a different size standard is used in each case.

**FORM.** Form has to do with the general shape of the fruit, it should be smooth, regular, and typical of the variety. Most orchardists are familiar with general shape of each variety, and should by all means select specimens true to type.

**FRUIT MUST BE CORRECTLY NAMED.** Another point of importance is the correct naming of the fruit. Any fruit exhibited under a false name should be disqualified. If the grower is not sure of the variety names he can have them named free of charge by sending typical specimens to the Horticultural Department.