1961

Exhibiting Garden Fruits and Vegetables

Dean Martin

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exhibiting garden fruits and vegetables
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Exhibiting Garden Fruits and Vegetables

By Dean M. Martin, Extension Horticulturist
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The purpose of this publication is to guide 4-H members and others in growing, selecting, and preparing vegetables and fruits for display at Achievement Days or at the State Fair.

Enter only vegetables and fruits which will be a credit to the display. The display should be educational and, therefore, should include only specimens which are in prime condition. List the variety name on the entry tag.

**FOLLOW THE RULES**

Four-H members exhibiting vegetables and fruits should keep in mind the following general rules:

1. Select specimens of top quality and at prime maturity—the best stage for eating or storing as the case may be.
2. Have exhibits for table use as fresh as possible.
3. Clean and properly trim exhibits where necessary.
4. Select specimens free from disease, insect, or mechanical injury.
5. Specimens must be typical for the variety or type. Do not choose very small or very large specimens. Observe size limitations where listed.
6. Uniformity is essential in size, shape, maturity, color, and type. When a lot calls for a collection of specimens, be sure that all specimens are as nearly similar as possible for every requirement.
7. See that specimens are free from soil, dust and spray, or dust residues as well as any other foreign matter, including oils as polishing agents.
8. Avoid skinning and bruising specimens when cleaning them. The specimens such as potatoes, beets, and others which are easily skinned should be left in running water for a short time to avoid skinning and bruising before cleaning.
9. Follow the premium list so that the correct number of specimens will be selected for exhibiting. Exhibits with incorrect number of specimens are disqualified.

10. Specimens may be wrapped in plastic or saran when being placed, however this should be removed when judging, so the entire exhibit should be wrapped very loosely.

In order to prepare a specific exhibit properly, check the list which gives instructions for each lot listed in the Boy’s and Girl’s 4-H Club State Fair Premium List. To further help in preparing exhibits, photographs of several vegetables are included.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING EACH SPECIFIC CROP**

**LIMA BEANS**—Both small and large seeded lima beans should be dark green and well filled, as shown in the pictures. Pods should not be diseased or damaged. Seeds should be bright green. Stems should be $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. Exhibit 10 pods.
**Snap Beans**—Pods should be picked with ¼ to ½ inch stems. Pods should be well filled, firm, tender, and stringless, as shown in the picture. All specimens should be uniform, either straight or curved, not mixed. Exhibit 10 pods.

**Beet**—Large roots should be between 1½ to 2½ inches in diameter. Small roots should be less than 1½ inches in diameter. The tap root should not be removed. The tops should be trimmed to 1 inch in length. Specimens should not be blocky or angular. The neck should be narrow and shoulders should be smooth as shown in the picture. These points are indications of prime maturity. Flesh should be firm and crisp. Exhibit three large or five small beets. Be sure that right size beets are entered in the proper class.

**Broccoli**—Minimum diameter of head should be 3 inches. The stalk and head should be at least 6 inches long. Remove any leaves below the head. The flower bud cluster (head) should be compact and evenly colored with uniform buds of medium size as shown in the picture. Exhibit one head.
CABBAGE—There are two types of cabbage, pointed head type and round head type, listed in the premium list. Both types should meet the following requirements: head should not be too large; it should be firm and heavy for its size. The head should not be withered, cracked, or discolored and should not show evidence of worm damage. Do not remove wrapper leaves unless they are dirty or ragged. The stalk should not be longer than ¼ inch. Exhibit one head loosely wrapped in plastic or in saran.

CARROT—Short roots should be less than 5 inches in length. Medium roots should be 5 to 7 inches in length. Long roots should be more than 7 inches long. Do not remove tip of the root. Trim tops to a length of 1 inch. Shoulders should not be green or purple. Specimens should be straight and without side roots or root hairs. Color should be uniformly deep orange. Flesh should be firm and crisp. Exhibit five roots. Carrots should be entered in the exhibit according to their size.

**Pointed Head Cabbage**

**Round Head Cabbage**

**Short Root Carrots**

**Medium Root Carrots**

OBSERVE GENERAL RULES LISTED ON PAGE 3
Cauliflower—The head includes the stem, trimmed leaves, and the white edible part called the "curd." The curd should be at least 4 inches in diameter and uniformly pure white. The surface of the curd should be smooth, not fuzzy or granular. Leave the upper leaves surrounding the curd on and trim about 1 inch above the outer edge of the curd, as shown in the picture. Exhibit one head.

Cucumber—Pickling types (two lots—under 3 inches in length and between 3 inches and 6 inches in length). Specimens should be uniformly straight and of even maturity.

Slicing type (over 6 inches long with a diameter not exceeding 2 inches). Specimens should be uniformly dark green. Specimens should be fairly straight with blunt ends.

Stems on all cucumbers should be attached. Fruits should be firm and free from damage. Exhibit five pickling type or three slicing type fruits.

Eggplant—Stems should be attached. The color should be deep purple or nearly black. There should be no bronzing and no green or white streaks. General appearance should be glossy, not dull. Exhibit one fruit.

Kohlrabi—Specimens (the enlarged stems are the edible portion) should be between 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Specimens should be firm and tender rather than woody or pithy. Remove stem 2 inches below ball. Remove all but 4-6 top leaves and trim to 1-2 inches. Exhibit three specimens.
**Kohlrabi**

MUSKMELON—Fruit should be evenly netted and free from injury or disease. Specimens should be ripe. Muskmelons are ripe when the stem separates from the fruit with very little pressure. (This is called the “full slip” stage.) Exhibit one fruit without stem.

**Dry Onion**

DRI Y ONIONS—Select specimens that are well matured. Necks should be thin, dry and about 1 inch long. At least one dry outer scale should remain on the specimens, as shown in the picture. Trim roots neatly, close to the base. Exhibits may be in two lots—five specimens or a 10 pound bag. Exhibit yellow, red, and white onions all in the same manner.

**Green Onion**

GREEN ONION—Specimens should not be less than ¼ inch nor more than 1 inch in diameter. Trim tops to even length. Trim roots close to the base. Remove outer skin to expose clean white edible part as shown in the picture. Exhibit five onions in a neat bunch.

**Muskmelon**

Parsnips

OBSERVE GENERAL RULES LISTED ON PAGE 3
Parsnip—Trim tops to a length of 1 inch. Do not remove the tip of the root. Specimens should be straight and without side root hairs. Shoulders should not be green. Color should be uniformly light cream. Exhibit five roots.

Green Pepper—Pointed or tapering types should have fairly straight sides. Blocky types should not be tapered or pointed. Stems should be left on and trimmed level with the shoulders. Color should be a uniform medium to dark green. All specimens in the exhibit should have the same number of lobes, as shown in the picture. Specimens should be firm and evenly shaped. Exhibit three specimens, being sure they all have the same type shape.

Green Pepper

Potato—Specimens should be typical of the variety. Tubers should be mature and without skin damage. Tubers should be free from greening (caused by exposure to intense light). Tubers should be very clean—brushing with a soft brush or wiping is more satisfactory than washing. Exhibit five tubers or a 10 pound bag. Variety names should be accurate. (Soaking in water will soften hard soil.)

Early Ohio—Medium to large, spreading plants with thick, medium reddish purple pigmented stems and medium long, wide, open type, green leaves. White blossom. Round-oblong, somewhat cylindrical tubers with smooth, pink skin and numerous medium-deep eyes and white flesh sometimes with color in cortex.

Early Ohio

Irish Cobbler—Early to medium early maturity. Medium, erect to spreading plants with medium to thick, prominently angled, slightly reddish purple pigmented or mottled stems and light bluish green leaves medium in length, breadth, and type. Lilac colored flowers. Tubers roundish with white, smooth skin and shallow to rather deep eyes. White flesh.

Irish Cobbler

Kennebec—Medium to late maturing plants with large, spreading vines, thick, prominently angled stems without pigmentation and long broad, dark green leaves. White blossom. Tubers eliptical to ob-
long with shallow eyes, white skin and flesh. High yield and good cooking quality, keeps well, and widely adapted.

**Kennebec**

**RED LA SODA**—Medium early. Plants very upright with medium to small leaves. Purple flowers. Semi-round to slightly oblong tubers with bright, pinkish red skin, very smooth. Eyes medium in depth to shallow. White flesh. Good yielder.

**Norland**

**RED PONTIAC**—Late maturity. Plants upright, vigorous and spreading growth, thick, slightly pigmented stems with dark green long, broad to medium, rough-textured leaves. Blossoms have reddish purple color. Tubers round to oblong with smooth to flaky light red colored skin, medium deep eyes, and white flesh.

**La Soda**

**Norland**—Very early maturity. Medium large, spreading vines with thick prominently angled green stems and medium large, slightly closed green leaves, ovate, broad, and lobed at base. Purple blossom. Ob-

OBSERVE GENERAL RULES LISTED ON PAGE 3
RUSET BURBANK—Late maturity. Plants large to medium in size, spreading with thick, prominently angled, slightly reddish purple pigmented, finely mottled stems and long leaves, medium in breadth and type, light green color. White blossom. Tubers large, long, cylindrical or slightly flattened with russeted, heavily netted skin and numerous well distributed, shallow eyes and white flesh. Good cooking quality, particularly baking.

PUMPKIN—Specimens should be well-matured with a hard shell. Stems should be attached. Diameter of small sugar type should not exceed 8 inches. Large field type or Jack O'Lantern should be 8 inches or more in diameter. Exhibit one fruit.

SUMMER SQUASH—Stems should be attached. Do not exhibit hard mature specimens. Specimens should be immature, young, and tender, which is indicated by tender skin. All except Patty Pan (a flat type) are best for table use when 6-10 inches long and 2-3 inches in diameter. Specimens should be typical of the variety. Exhibit three fruits.

OBSERVE GENERAL RULES LISTED ON PAGE 3
CocoZELLE—Fruit straight, tapered; skin smooth, dark green with light green to yellow stripes; tender when immature; 6-8 inches long.

Early Prolific Straightneck—Fruit straight, tapered; skin fairly smooth, lemon yellow, tender when immature; 6-10 inches long.

Zucchini—Fruit cylindrical; skin smooth, solid, dark green color, no striping or mottling, tender when immature; 6-8 inches long.

Winter Squash—Specimens should be well matured with a hard shell. (A hard shell is usually not easily punctured by the thumb nail.) Stem should be attached. Exhibit one fruit. Exhibit three fruit of Acorn or Table Queen.
Sweet Corn—Ears should be husked and trimmed and be uniform in length and thickness. Ears should be well filled to the tops. Kernels should be tightly packed and in the milk stage. Rows should be straight. Trim shanks uniformly to less than 1 inch in length, as shown in the picture. The entire exhibit should be loosely wrapped in plastic or saran to retain freshness. Field corn or frozen sweet corn will be disqualified. Exhibit five ears.

Tomato—Diameter of specimens should be at least 2½ inches and size should be uniform. Color should be uniform red without green streaks. Shoulders should not be green or yellow, which indicates uneven ripening or sunscalding. Remove stems to prevent bruising injury to other specimens. Blossom end scar almost invisible. Specimens should be firm and free from cracks and scars. Exhibit five fruits.

Turnips—Specimens should not be over 2½ inches in diameter. Do not remove tap root. Trim tops to 1 inch in length, as shown in the picture. Specimens should not be blocky or angular. Neck should be narrow and shoulders should be smooth. Exhibit three roots.
Watermelons—Specimens should be ripe. The stem should be attached. The rind should be firm. The color should not be dull appearing and the ground spot should be yellow. Exhibit one ice box variety (about 8 inches in diameter) or one standard type fruit (no size limit). List variety name on entry tag.

Ice Box Type Watermelon

Currant and Gooseberry—Exhibits should be in good condition. Pick and prepare for showing carefully to avoid injury. Exhibit ½ pint of currants. Exhibit 1 pint of gooseberries. May be loosely wrapped in saran.

Raspberry—Berries should be clean, plump, and bright or fresh appearing. Berries are exhibited without stems or cores. Exhibit 1 pint of berries. May be loosely wrapped in saran.

Raspberry

Strawberry—Berries should be clean, plump, bright, and fresh appearing. Exhibit berries with stems attached. May be loosely wrapped in saran. Exhibit 1 pint of berries.

Strawberry

Herbs—Herbs should be properly dried and mounted on five individual 8 x 12 inch cardboard cards. Identify specimens, giving common name. Also list special uses on the card. Exhibit five in a group as dried, pressed specimens.

Dill (mounted on card for exhibiting)
PLANNING YOUR VEGETABLE PLANTING

Many 4-H members who plan to exhibit vegetables at their County Achievement Days make two common mistakes.

Some plant all the garden at one time, hoping that some crops will be ready to exhibit on Achievement Day. Others may plan more carefully and plant a vegetable at a specific time in order to have it mature by Achievement Day, but may not consider the State Fair.

The first case shows lack of planning and relies mostly on chance. The second shows planning, but doesn't consider that if a purple ribbon is won at Achievement Day, another sample of that vegetable is eligible to be exhibited at the State Fair, usually at a somewhat later date.

During the time between many Achievement Days and the State Fair, a crop such as snap beans could very likely become too old to exhibit. Since optimum maturity or prime table quality is one of the most important considerations in judging vegetables, planting exhibition vegetables at the proper time is essential.

Many crops such as tomatoes and peppers bear over a long period (until frost) and there is usually an ample supply from which to choose good specimens. Squash (winter) and potatoes are examples of crops which remain in good condition for future use. However, there are crops like snap beans and sweet corn that do not remain at prime table quality very long and which have a rather short, concentrated harvest period. If only one planting is made, good specimens may not be available at the time they are needed.

With crops that are harvested over a long period, such as muskmelons or tomatoes, plant the crop early enough so it will mature 1 to 2 weeks before the date of your Achievement Day. This allows for variations due to weather and variety.

Planning for more than one planting of a crop not only provides quality vegetables for exhibiting at a particular time, but it also provides a supply of vegetables for the family over a longer period. With careful planning, a family can harvest a continuous supply of fresh vegetables all during the growing season.

In order to help 4-H members plan their garden better, so that vegetables will be available for exhibition at a particular date, a chart has been prepared as a guide.

How can you use the chart? Let's take sweet corn as an example. If your Achievement Day is August 17 and you want a good specimen, check the maturity date according to the variety in the column (ready for use from date of seeding). If it requires about 75 days to reach maturity and the harvest season is about 7 days, add 4 days to the 75 days to allow for variation in weather, totaling 79 days. Subtract 79 days from August 17 and you will find the date to be May 30. This is the date you plant sweet corn. Similarly, planting dates for the State Fair could be worked out. This could be for either a single or a successive crop.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

Ball—the edible enlarged stem of a vegetable. Example: kohlrabi.

Base—the lower portion of the edible part of a vegetable. Example: the base of an onion is the area from which the roots grow.

Bud—immature flowers or leaves. Example: flower head of broccoli and cauliflower.

Bulb—see Scale

Cap—the green leaf-like part surrounding the stem where it is attached to the berry. Example: strawberry.

Curd—the white, edible undeveloped flowering portion of cauliflower.

Flesh—the solid enlarged edible part of a vegetable plant. Example: beet and carrot roots and kohlrabi ball.

Ground Spot—the area of watermelon that rests on the soil. It is white until near maturity, when it turns yellow.

Head—the enlarged edible bud of flowering portion of a vegetable plant, borne at the end of the stem. Example: head of cabbage (composed of overlapping leaves); head of broccoli and cauliflower (composed of hundreds of undeveloped or immature flowers).

Ice Box—(as used here) a small type watermelon usually weighing less than 12 pounds.

Lobes—the more or less distinct divisions, rounded at one end, that make up certain vegetables. Example: most blocky or bell-shaped peppers have three or four lobes which are prominent opposite the stem end.

Milk Stage—the immature stage of sweet corn kernels when they are plump and filled with a thin milky juice.

Neck—area where the leaf or stem is attached to the root or the bulb of a vegetable. Example: the neck of an onion is just above the bulb; the neck of a beet is the small area at the top of the root from which the leaves grow.

Netted—corky raised markings on muskmelons.

Root—(as used here) the underground edible part of a vegetable. Example: carrot or beet.

Scale—a thickened leaf. Example: bulbs such as onions are made up of many thickened overlapping scales. Several of the outer scales become dry as an onion bulb matures. These protect the onion from disease, injury, and drying out.

Shank—a short branch of the main stem. Example: the ear of sweet corn is borne at the end of the shank.

Shell—a hard, tough outer skin of a squash or pumpkin.

Shoulder—area below the neck or the point of attachment to the stem. Example: shoulder of a beet, shoulder of a pepper, etc.

Specimen—one sample of any vegetable entered in an exhibit. Example: one snap bean, one beet, one muskmelon, etc. (Many exhibits require several specimens.)

Stalk—(as used here) another name for stem. Example: the heads of broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage are borne at the end of the stalk.

Sunscaul—a whitish area, usually on the shoulder of a vegetable, caused by direct exposure to the hot sun. Example: sunscald of tomato, pepper.

Tuber—enlarged underground stem. Example: Irish potato.

Type—a classification which may include several varieties of a vegetable similar in at least one major characteristic. Example: round head, flat head, and pointed head cabbage are three distinct types of cabbage, differing mainly in head shape.

Variety—a classification of plants which are alike in all characteristics. This is a more specific classification than type. Example: Irish Cobbler potato, Sioux tomato, Tendergreen bean, Little Marvel pea, etc. (Notice that variety names are always capitalized.)

Wrapper Leaves—the loose outer leaves of the head of a vegetable that serve to protect the tightly packed inner leaves. Example: a head of cabbage has several wrapper leaves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of vegetable</th>
<th>Seeds for 100 ft. row</th>
<th>App. no. seeds per lb.*</th>
<th>Distance between rows hand cult.</th>
<th>Plants apart in rows</th>
<th>Depth of planting</th>
<th>Time of planting in open garden</th>
<th>Ready for use from date of seeding</th>
<th>Length of time good specimens can be harvested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beans (snap)</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>18-24 in.</td>
<td>2 in.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>April to July</td>
<td>50-75 days</td>
<td>3-4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beets</td>
<td>1 oz.</td>
<td>192,000</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>2-3 in.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>April to July</td>
<td>50-65 days</td>
<td>7-10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>¼ oz.</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>24-36 in.</td>
<td>18-24 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>90-100 days</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>¼ oz.</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>24-30 in.</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>90-110 days</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>6-8 ft.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>80-120 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>2 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to June</td>
<td>55-80 days</td>
<td>2-3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>¼ oz.</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>24-30 in.</td>
<td>14-18 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to June</td>
<td>65-76 days</td>
<td>2-3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn (sweet)</td>
<td>¼ lb.</td>
<td>3,520</td>
<td>30-36 in.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to July</td>
<td>55-90 days</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumber</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>4-6 ft.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>50-70 days Several weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>96,000</td>
<td>24-30 in.</td>
<td>18 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>90-130 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohlrabi</td>
<td>¼ oz.</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>18-24 in.</td>
<td>6 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>50-70 days</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lima beans</td>
<td>1 lb.</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>2-3 in.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>50-75 days</td>
<td>3-4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion, dried</td>
<td>1 oz.</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>2-3 in.</td>
<td>¼ in.</td>
<td>April to May</td>
<td>95-120 days</td>
<td>Can be stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion, green</td>
<td>½ lb. sets</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>18-24 in.</td>
<td>15 in.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>80-100 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato</td>
<td>10 lbs. or 100 pieces</td>
<td>3-4 ft.</td>
<td>12-18 in.</td>
<td>4 in.</td>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>100-120 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash (summer)</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>3-4 ft.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>60-70 days</td>
<td>2-3 weeks can be stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash (winter)</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>7-10 ft.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>100-125 days</td>
<td>2-3 weeks can be stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>½ oz.</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>3-4 ft.</td>
<td>2½ to 4 ft.</td>
<td>½ in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>60-100 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelon</td>
<td>1 oz.</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>8-12 ft.</td>
<td>4 every 4 ft.</td>
<td>1 in.</td>
<td>May to June</td>
<td>90-130 days</td>
<td>Until frost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number of seeds per pound varies widely between varieties and lots of same species, but figures given are approximately average.*