

# Some Help Getting Ready for the Show-2023

By Bobbie Reed, *Master Rosarian* and *Rose Show Junkie*, 770-979-4237, [berdks@mindspring.com](mailto:berdks@mindspring.com)

## 1. Understanding (and coping with) the Show Schedule

The show schedule is out, attached to this e-mail and posted on the GARS website, [www.atlantarose.org](http://www.atlantarose.org). That's the Bible for this year's show – it tells you all the rules and classes for the show – everything about how to exhibit. You're looking it over, and wondering what on earth all those classes are about, right? There are a lot – 64 classes for horticulture, 20 more for arrangements, and 10 more for photography. There aren't that many kinds of roses!

True, there aren't that many rose classes – the American Rose Society's **Handbook for Selecting Roses** lists 37 rose classes, plus their climbing forms. Instead, the show schedule includes many ways to display roses – hey, some of these classes would be good practice for displaying roses at home! The winner of each class is placed on the head table, and the exhibitor receives a certificate and award.

It is, however, important to know what rose, and what *kind* of rose you have, so you can put it into the right class. Always check listings in the latest ARS **Handbook for Selecting Roses, Official List of Exhibition Names**, or the **Modern Roses on-line** website at [www.ars.org](http://www.ars.org). If you can't find your rose there, look at a recent edition of the **Combined Rose List** or at **HelpMeFind.com**. Roses are often sold under different names, or sold as a different class than ARS recognizes, because they sell better that way or because the vendor just has different ideas about the rose; always double-check, and not on a vendor website. Look for the proper exhibition name: that light pink climber "*Eden*", for instance, should be exhibited as '*Pierre de Ronsard*'.

*Pierre de Ronsard* is classified as LCI, a large-flowered climber, so you could exhibit it in Class 21, Climbers, or Class 33, Climber Collection. Also, if you're a Novice (have never won a blue ribbon in a rose show) you could show it in Class 45; if you're 18 years old or younger, you could also enter it in Class 47, Youth. Other classes could allow you to enter it under "Bridesmaid", Class 46, New Members, Class 48, Small Gardens, Class 49, or No-Spray Garden, Class 50. And if you think it smells really good, you could put it in Class 36, Fragrance. You could also use it in any "standard" rose arrangement class. My, what a versatile rose!

Near and dear to my heart are those roses classified as **Old Garden Roses** (Classes 24-29). The American Rose Society (but not all vendors or bloggers) deem these to be roses belonging to a *class* that existed prior to 1867, although an individual variety may have been introduced later. There is a list of these classes at the front of the ARS **Handbook for Selecting Roses**. Some other roses that do not fall into these classes are often described as "historic" or "antique" roses. Our show schedule actually names the eligible rose classes for each show class; please read the schedule carefully. If you have a question about your rose, please ask me.

If you have a beautiful rose but you just don't know its name or class, bring it to the show and we'll try to help you identify it. No promises, but we'll try.

We have always emphasized the necessity for getting all the details right lest your rose be disqualified. And believe me, I've had roses disqualified. The judges don't do that nearly as

much as they used to, under the latest set of ARS rules. If they can figure out what name you are trying to write, if you have used any recognizable rose name, we'll take care of moving your rose entry to the right place so it can be judged properly. We'll try to leave notes if there is still a problem, so you'll know better for next time.

## Picking The Right Rose

Most roses must be shown at “**queen of show**” or “**exhibition stage**”. For hybrid teas, miniatures, minifloras, and many floribundas, that means that the bloom must be one-half to three-quarters open [right], with a tight, pin-point spiral center [left]. The Queen of Show for hybrid teas, minis, and minifloras is chosen from a rose with this form.



These roses **must** be **disbudded** – that means that side-buds or side-stems must be cleanly removed. It's best to do this a week before the show, but you can still do it during prep. Shrubs and Old Garden Roses may be “**naturally grown**” – that means side-buds are acceptable for them [right]. But you can improve the looks of your entry by removing the side-buds.



Another no-no for most roses is “**stem on stem**” [left]. This is what happens when a portion of the previous stem growth is still attached. Only OGRs and shrubs may be entered this way.



If the stamens can be seen, it's not at exhibition stage, it's “**fully open**.” Some classes, such as Class 9 and Classes 13 and 14, require a rose that is fully open, with all the petals open flat and the stamens fresh (usually bright yellow) and fully exposed. If there is a deformed petal (petaloid) in the center that obscures the stamens, you can remove it with tweezers – but do it neatly and completely.

Some varieties have too few, or too many, petals to achieve that “queen of show” form. For some varieties, especially **single-type roses** (those with no more than eight petals) and old garden roses, exhibition form is fully open.



Some classes require a “**spray**,” which consists of two or more blooms (for this purpose, a bud is not a bloom). The flowers in a spray should be in a rounded cluster [left], evenly spaced (no hole in the center), and all at about the same level or gently mounded [right], with no individual florets jutting above or lurking below the main body of the spray.



The spray form is preferred for floribundas, and is required for polyanthas and special classes of other varieties. The Queen of Floribundas is a spray.

## Making Your Rose Right

Cutting a rose is just the start; be sure the rose bush is well-watered before you do so. Recut the rose stem immediately under water, and transfer the rose to a bucket of warm water where it will cool down until the show. Be sure to keep the rose away from drafts. I usually cut the evening before the show; some folks cut earlier and refrigerate their roses, while others wait for early morning of the show. The rose will continue to open after you cut it, so remember to cut it a little tighter than you think you’ll need. Cut the stem long enough to leave four or more sets of leaves; don’t strip leaves or thorns.

Keep track of the rose’s name! In the scurry of a show, we’ve all become confused. Many exhibitors use a strip of paper or masking tape with the rose name, secured around the neck of the rose.

Some exhibitors do some preliminary work the evening before the show. You can clean the foliage (dust, pollen, and spray residue aren’t pretty) with a paper towel or scrap of old t-shirt, and trim any foliage that shows insect damage. **You are allowed to remove things (torn leaves, etc.), but not to add anything** (oil to polish the leaves).

If you have **entry tags [left]**, complete one for every rose you cut, in pencil. The section and class numbers are in the show schedule, and you may want to wait on

those until the morning of the show, to see which rose fits which class best. If you don’t have tags, collect some address labels that you can use at the show to speed your efforts. Assemble your grooming kit, and perhaps compile a list of your roses. You will also need reading glasses, if you use them, and perhaps a sweater to wear in the show room.

**Early** on the morning of the show, put your roses in the car and head to the show. It always takes longer to get your roses ready than you think it will. With only one rose, you still need to plan for at least an hour of prep time. If you have more than one bucket of roses, you may come to the maintenance entry for the Atlanta Botanical Garden (see directions), to deliver your roses to the **preparation area**, then move your car to the parking garage. If you have just a few roses, park at the parking deck, then come to the prep area behind Day Hall.

Once you arrive, find some table space, vases, tags if you need them, some rubber bands, and plastic foam wedges. Grab a donut and a cup of coffee if you’d like. Put each bloom into a vase and double-check for clean foliage and appropriate form. Clean off the rose bloom, brush off any dead insects, polish the foliage, and trim if necessary.

Section <u>B</u> Class <u>17</u>			
Variety <u>Mother's Day</u>			
			
<u>Preparation</u>			
Name <u>Bobbie Reed &amp; Don Schwarz</u>			
Address <u>3388 Lennox Court</u>			
<u>Lawrenceville, GA 30044-5616</u>			
Ex. No. <u>5D</u>			
1st Award	2nd Award	3rd Award	4th Award
1st Award	2nd Award	3rd Award	4th Award
Section <u>B</u> Class <u>17</u>			
Variety <u>Mother's Day</u>			
Name <u>Bobbie Reed &amp; Don Schwarz</u>			
Address <u>3388 Lennox Court</u>			
<u>Lawrenceville, GA 30044-5616</u>			
Exhibitor's No. <u>5D</u>			

Now look at the bloom. How well does it match the forms described above? You may be able to coax a bloom that's too tight into suitable shape, using a paintbrush or Q-tips. You can pinch out a bad bloom to make a spray look better. You can remove a petal, or reposition it. If you have a

great bloom with lousy foliage, look for a class where you can float it in water, display it in a frame, or put it in an English box.

If you are entering a collection class, select a larger vase or carafe that's just big enough to hold the stems. Wedge the stems into the neck of the vase with foam, so that it stands tall and upright; if it's a collection, make it a pleasing bouquet.

Decide which class it's going into (see below), and **complete the tag**, top and bottom. Fold the bottom of the tag up and slip it under the tab to hold it closed [left]. Slip a rubber band through the hole at the top, and loop it around the neck of the vase. Take your rose to the "**Classification**" table, and they'll check your tag and put your rose in the right place.

Section <u>B</u> Class <u>17</u>			
Variety <u>Mother's Day</u>			
			
Special Awards _____			
_____			
1st Award	2nd Award	3rd Award	4th Award

## Picking the Right Class for Your Rose

Get a copy of the show schedule and read the whole thing. It will be posted on the GARS website, [www.atlantarose.org](http://www.atlantarose.org). If you're still confused about what it means, call me to talk about it.

The "**perpetual challenge classes**" (1-10) are limited to GARS and/or Deep South District members (you can join as late as the morning of the show), and each has a silver trophy associated with it that the winner may keep for one year. All are collections of roses, usually in a single vase or container (except Classes 5, 6, and 8). You may only make one entry per class, so make it a good one. Some of these classes are rarely entered, which makes them a good place for you to compete.

Class 2 is example of a "**cycle of bloom**" class. The entry consists of one bud, with sepals down, petals just starting to unfurl; one bloom at exhibition stage; and one bloom fully open (don't forget to groom the center). All must be the same variety of rose.

Class 6 is one you should consider entering. Those **All-America Rose Selections** winners are the very ones you're most likely to grow. They are marked in the **Handbook** with @; the full list is available at [www.atlantarose.org](http://www.atlantarose.org) under "AARS winners". Included are favorites such as '*Peace*,' '*Queen Elizabeth*,' '*Tropicana*,' '*Mister Lincoln*,' '*Europeana*,' '*Double Delight*,' '*Living Easy*,' '*Hot Cocoa*,' and '*Knock Out*.' Other eligible roses include those that are **American Rose Garden Selections** winners (this testing replaced AARS in 2015) and the **ARS Members Choice** awards, selected during the Roses in Review process. I'll bet you grow three of these!



Class 8 has been revised to target other award-winning roses, including the **ARS Award of Excellence** winners, the **ARS Miniature Rose Hall of Fame**, and again the **ARS Members Choice** roses. These will include '*Bees Knees*,' '*Green Ice*,' and '*Jeanne la Joie*'. If you grow minis, you may have some of these.

Class 11 is the **Queen of Show** class for hybrid teas [near right]. Other classes under Standard Horticulture go through all types of roses, each displayed one stem at a time.



**Collections** classes [far right] may be mixed varieties or all the same.

Exhibition stage isn't required for all of these, but judges will look on them with more kindness if the roses are at this stage.

**Special Classes** are lots of fun. **Bowls, English boxes, and frames** allow you display roses without foliage – but you need fabulous blooms to make these classes look their best. When they call for multiple blooms, be sure the forms are the same, and the colors blend well. **Fragrance** is the public's favorite, so be sure to enter your most heavenly roses here.



Special ways to exhibit roses [from left to right] – bowl, English box, and in a frame.

Then there are classes for **Special Exhibitors**: novices have never won a blue ribbon in an ARS rose show, exhibitors who never made it to the head table, or folks who don't spray, have small gardens, etc.; youth who are 18 or younger; and the judges have a special place to exhibit, too. All the other classes (except Section A) are open to everyone, whether they're a member or not. And you can show in these classes as well as in other classes.

## 2. Got Hope (Chest)?

**Start** to collect a few tools from around the house for spiffing up your roses. You'll need some **small scissors** – cuticle scissors or microtips work well, and you'll probably want your **pruners**; for the finest work you may need an X-Acto knife. For trimming damaged leaves, **deckle-edge scissors** are good; they are available at craft stores like Michael's or JoAnn's in the scrapbooking section.

Bring sharp **pencils** for completing **entry tags**, and **address labels** to speed completion; if possible, fill some out before you arrive at the show. **Tweezers** are useful for removing stray petaloids, an old **toothbrush** helps with dead aphids on the stem, and a soft artist's **paintbrush** is handy for removing thrips and dust from the petals. You'll need **something to polish foliage** – old T-shirts, nylons, a chamois, paper towels, etc. **Q-tips** are used by some to primp the rose bloom.



In Atlanta wedges are provided, but may not be at other shows; I always bring some **Styrofoam** and a **knife** to cut more as needed. **Rubber bands** to attach tags to vases are also provided in Atlanta, but it always helps to have some of your own. A little **first-aid** equipment may be helpful as well, at least a Band-Aid or two. Don't forget to bring your copy of the **show schedule** (which you've studied!) and maybe a **list of your own roses** (mine are in a spreadsheet for ease of updating) for those senior moments when you can't remember a name or class, and a recent copy of the **ARS Handbook for Selecting Roses**. You'll want your **cell phone/camera**, maybe a **sweater**, and your **reading glasses**. Have all this ready in a box or bag so you're ready to go early on Saturday morning.

### 3. The Other Side of the Rose Show

**When** visitors come to a rose show, they don't distinguish between horticulture and arrangements, or between single blooms and collections. No, they're just looking at beautiful roses. But do you know what they always like the most? Arrangements! So let's give them a lot to look at this year.

Our show theme this year is "Fairy Tale Roses", with 20 classes (and titles) to choose from. Most have specific rules, but one even saves us from that. Pick one that appeals to you!

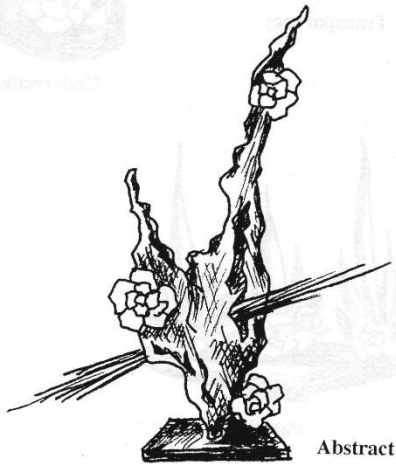
It will be important to understand the differences among traditional, modern, and Oriental arrangements. **Traditional arrangements** are the kind you're used to seeing at banquets, at churches, etc. They stress smooth transitions, harmonious relationships, and natural lines of growth. Forms progress logically in size and shape, and there is a gradation of color. Plant material usually extends over the container's edge. Balance, both visual and physical, is important. We've selected three kinds of traditional arrangements for this show: **mass**, **line-mass**, and **line**, illustrated at the [right](#).



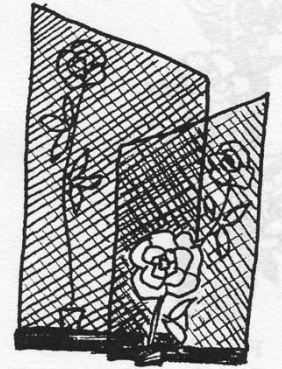
**Modern arrangements** take a fresh approach. Arrangers have the freedom to express their ideas in creative designs, where the keynote is simplicity with emphasis on color, form,

texture, and space. Arrangers may contort, manipulate, or abstract any plant material except the rose blooms. The arrangement need not have an observable container. Modern arrangements

come in many flavors; we'll be offering classes with **abstract** (multiple emergence points for plant material, altered or distorted plant material placed in an unconventional manner), **underwater** (focal area of the design, at least one-third, is placed under water in a clear container), **transparency** (some components are seen through others, such as netting), and other styles of designs. [Abstract arrangement is shown on left; underwater and transparency arrangements shown at right]

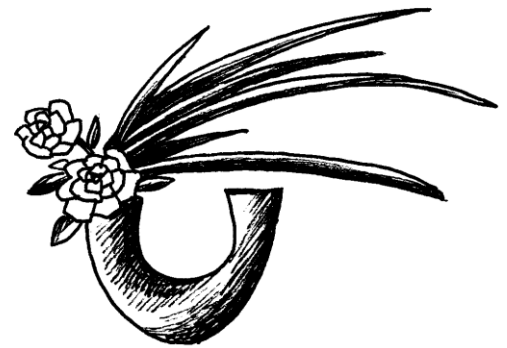


Abstract



Transparency

**Arrangements in the East Asian style** show an appreciation of nature. They are based on an asymmetrical triangle, with three main lines of differing heights, which represent the re-creation of nature in a container. Key to Oriental designs are simplicity in construction and restraint in the use of plant material. We will have classes for designs in **low containers** with water showing [left], in **tall containers** [middle], and **freestyle** [right] designs.



There are several special classes, each of which may be in any of the above design styles. These are **Princess** (all plant material must come from the rose bush); **Mini-Duchess** (apart from roses and rose foliage, only dried/treated plant material may be included); **Duke** (the entire design may be no larger than 20"x20", and no smaller than 10"x10"); **Novice** (for those who have never won a blue ribbon in rose show arrangements), and **Judges** (for you-know-who).

Another very popular class is **table arrangements**. This year we have a functional tray for serving a tea party. The tray must be stable and functional, and include a rose arrangement and a dish for eating, a container for drinking, plus any other accessories such as napkins, etc., but no flatware.

Some arrangements will be "**standard**" – they may use any class of rose, and may use a space up to 28" wide. Other arrangements will be "**miniature**" – they may use only miniature or miniflora

roses, and may occupy a space no larger than 10"x10"x10". We have more freedom in arrangements than in horticulture – in arrangements we may borrow roses from someone else's garden (no florist roses, please!), and we may purchase other filler and line material. All roses must still be accurately named, and all plant material should be in good condition.

We have a class for **dried rose crafts**, in which no fresh plant material is used. And finally, we have a "no rules" class for a **fun bouquet**. Please make reservations in advance so we can be sure to have enough table space for your design.

Judges will be making their choices based on conformance to rules of the show, principles of design (balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and size), the perfection of the roses, creativity and expressiveness, and distinction.

Surely with all these classes there's something that inspires your creativity!

## 4. But Wait, There's More!

This year we are also offering a photography division. Again, all the rules are in the show schedule. Your photo source can be anything that's comfortable for you – film, digital camera, or your trusty cell phone. Indeed, many (most) winning photographs are being taken with cell phones these days. Whatever you do, FOCUS! Poorly focused photos don't win blue ribbons.

Many of us find that as the rose show approaches, our roses will be blooming too early or too late to make it to the head table. Instead, whenever we find that perfect rose, take a photo for future use. The roses we photograph don't have to be from your own garden, so look around you.

As always, your rose should be at peak beauty. The bloom should be fresh, clean, free of damaged petals, and hopefully in one of those ideal stages of bloom, exhibition or fully open. Foliage should be clean and disease-free. What's behind the rose counts, too: foliage is preferable to a solid backdrop, but the background should be evenly lit, free of clutter and other distractions like buildings, traffic, or telephone poles. Watch out for shadows and other uneven lighting that could be distracting.

Digital manipulation is allowed for basic image corrections – adjustments for brightness, contrast, and cropping are appropriate. However, don't get carried away by wiping out large sections of background, etc. Corrections should be subtle. Only in Class 5, "A Digitally Manipulated Image", should it be apparent to the judge that changes have been made to the image. In that class, use your creativity with an altered photo.

Move in close to your target bloom(s). Let the rose fill the frame, although you should not cut off the edges of all the petals. Class 1, a **single rose bloom**, should show just that, not a whole bush. Class 2 should be a **spray**, like the ones described for horticulture entries; this entry requires two open blooms, not a bud and a bloom, and both should be coming from the same stem. Class 3, a **garden scene**, should clearly include roses. A **macro image**, Class 4, is only a small portion of the rose (maybe ¼ of the open bloom), and may be some detail, stamens, petals, stem, etc. If you are fond of **rose arrangements**, you may have taken a picture of one at a previous show or special event – use that photo in Class 6. And hold on to your cell phone for that perfect **rose selfie**!



We have classes for special people. If you've never won a blue ribbon in a rose show photography contest, you can enter as a **novice**. If your children or grandchildren take rose photos, they can enter the **youth** section. And we'll let our **judges** show off in their own section, too.

After you've taken your photo, look at it closely to see if it meets these guidelines. Pick your best photos – no more than three per class, total of 18. Print your photos to 8x10 inch size, or slightly larger. Mount them onto 11x14 inch **black** mats, including a solid backing so light shows through, with a window cut to 8x10 inches for the photo. You should be able to purchase mats at JoAnn's, Michael's, or on-line (I found some on Amazon). Try to have them mounted before you get to the show on Saturday – it will be hard to keep them dry and clean among all those wet rose vases. Label your entry on the back side with your name, and indicate which way is up.

Use the **red-on-white arrangements tags** for photo entries. In the area marked "AG", check if you personally grew the rose(s) in your photo – if so, you could be eligible for additional awards. Fill out the tag completely, then fold up the bottom so the judges can't see your name.

We look forward to seeing your rose photos this year.

Adapted and expanded from the May 2014 issue of ***The Phoenix***.