

JUDGING MATTERS

Newsletter of the Garden Clubs of Ontario Judges' Council
July 2024



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Welcome to Summer! In spite of having had an exceptionally mild winter, this summer brings its own set of joys. One of my favourite things is wearing sandals - that means the sock fairy can't steal socks for a few months. The variety of colours in our gardens adds a special grace note as they change throughout the season.

You've all received the notes in booklet form that Ursula Eley compiled. These were a result of questions from all of you. Thank you for your questions. And to the team of seven judges for their time, and thoughtful input.

The end of your current Executive's term is almost up - they have been a wonderful and supportive group. Beginning August 1st, your new Executive, co-chaired by Anne Harbord and Mary-Ann Vercammen will undertake the administration of Judges' Council. They are a wonderful and talented duo that I know will do a great job.

Please remember that your accreditation renewal is due this fall. Your new Executive will advise where to send your fees in the coming months.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you at various meeting and events.

Thank you all for your support over the last two years. And especially the Executive team - they have been a wonderful group to work with. It has been my pleasure to act as chair of Judges' Council.

Lil



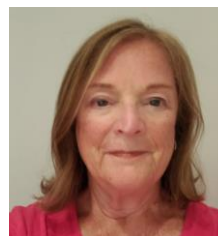
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SECRETARY



Pat Ware
TREASURER



Ellen Clark
DIRECTOR



Ursula Eley
DIRECTOR



Diana Kennedy
DIRECTOR

HOSTA LEAVES, THE SHOW SCHEDULE AND JUDGING by Heinke Thiessen

At American Hosta Society (AHS) sanctioned shows, sections are based on leaf size and classes on colour. All entries must include the species/cultivar name. Leaves should be representative of the plant as a whole and taken from plants approaching maturity. A leaf's size classification is determined by the total square centimeters of the leaf as measured by multiplying the length of the leaf from the leaf tip to the intersection with the petiole, by the width of the leaf at its widest point. Leaves are classified as miniature, small, medium, large, or giant.



Exhibits are judged in comparison to the registration data on record (see

<https://americanhostasociety.org/events-awards/hosta-judging/>) and what is typical for a well-grown specimen of the species/cultivar.

When the American Hosta Society's leaf size table (OJES 2019 ed., pg. 76) is used for the class descriptions in general/non-specialty show schedules, correct placement of entries and judging hosta exhibits can be challenging. Classes based on size may seem very straight forward, however consider:

- Cultivar names are rarely provided by exhibitors at these shows, mainly because they do not know them. With over 12,000 named and registered cultivars, not only is it impossible to 100% accurately identify a specific cultivar from 1-3 leaves, it is also impossible for the show committee and judge to know whether the unnamed entry is a mature or immature leaf.

For example, the image shows leaves that, according to their measurements, are considered large, medium, small and miniature. However, all are from a single plant, *Hosta* 'Aphrodite'. If left unnamed, an entry could be placed in any one or all four size classes notwithstanding that according to the AHS classification list/registration data, leaves of this cultivar are shown in the large leaf class.



- When specimens are named, the AHS classification list/registration data should be checked to determine the appropriate size class. Simply measuring and calculating the leaf size of each entry to ensure it is placed in the correct class is time consuming for the show committee and not always accurate.

For example, the leaf shown on the right measures 9.25" x 7" for a total area of 64.75 square inches, undersized for the cultivar *Hosta* 'Paradigm' but just large enough to be entered into the large leaved class (64 to less than 120 sq. inches) where it belongs. At judging, it would lose points for size. However, if the measurement is done quickly and said to be 9" x 7" for an area of 63 square inches, in a general show it would be placed in a medium leaved class, which is incorrect. In this case that quarter inch makes all the difference.



- If a specimen is unnamed, measuring leaves is pointless. It does not ensure an entry is placed in the correct class nor are judges able to determine whether the entry is a well-grown specimen of the species/cultivar.

For general shows, an argument can be made to skip the size consideration and base classes on colour:

- it is easier for the exhibitor to enter the correct class;
- subdividing is faster since leaves do not need to be measured; and
- with 3 solid colours, variegated types based on the colour of the margin, and a class for streaked or mottled hosta, ensuring the entry is in the correct class and subdividing can be done by anyone and quickly.

For small shows, consider including the following broad classes on the show schedule:

- Hosta, solid colour - 3 leaves, same species/cultivar
- Hosta, variegated - 3 leaves, same species/cultivar
- Hosta, streaked or mottled - 3 leaves, same species/cultivar

Depending on what entries are received, classes could be subdivided as follows:

- Solid: green, blue, yellow
- Variegated: dark margin with lighter center and light margin with darker center or by margin colour - white, yellow or green/blue



green, blue, yellow



dark margin with lighter center



light margin with darker center

Classes based on leaf colour, however, do not address the issue of determining whether an exhibit is representative of a well grown specimen when the cultivar/species is unknown. In the absence of this information, a judge can only evaluate a leaf's quality and using the standards by which unregistered seedling and sports are evaluated by the American Hosta Society makes sense:

Form: Leaves should be graceful and attractive (not abnormally crumpled, creased, crimped, sagging or twisted). Margins without defects - lobes even (blade equal and balanced along the midrib). A pleasing and harmonious relationship of leaf and petiole dimensions.

- Colour:** Fresh and clear. Dingy, muddy, flat and dull color are faults as are discoloration due to sunburn or irregular light exposure over the leaf surface. In variegated specimens, the markings, patterns and contrasts should be clean, clear and the blending smooth. The pattern should be balanced and the margins consistent if a different colour.
- Texture:** Pleasing and in harmony with the total overall appearance of the leaf. Marred 'bloom' on blue leaved cultivars is a fault.
- Substance:** Pleasing and sufficient to support good plant form, overall freshness, and resistance to damage.
- Condition:** Turgid and free from pest, disease or mechanical damage.
- Grooming:** Free from dirt, insects, sap and other foreign matter on leaves or petioles.

WAFA WORLD EVENT: BLOOM OMAN, January/February 2024 by Ellen Clark

5 members of the Garden Club of Toronto travelled to Oman in January for a week of friendship, flowers and fun. The latest WAFA event (World Association of Floral Artists) was Bloom Oman, held in Muscat, and organized by Madhvi Khimji and her team. We were there as Canadians representing GCO.

Garden Clubs of Ontario is one of the WAFA member organizations, and we are thrilled that in Muscat, the WAFA Board, soon to be including our own Bev Hargraft, accepted the Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs (CWAFAAC) as the second WAFA member group from Canada. They were well represented by Cindy Tataryn, their President from Vancouver, and the vote for admission was unanimous. The five of us from GCO presented lapel pins to Madhvi Khimji and the Bloom Oman organizers, and pens labelled GCO to other delegates.

It is almost impossible to condense our week of activities into anything less than a book, but I'll try. Oman is a safe country ruled by a hereditary and beloved Sultan. Its landscape is dramatic - beautiful seaside, lush gardens near the coast and a dramatic background of spectacular mountains. Further inland is sand - lots and lots of sand. Our venue was the National Museum of Oman - imagine being surrounded by national Omani treasures for 5 days.



From left: Cindy Tataryn, CWAFAAC, with Heather Fuller, Joyce Johnson, Ellen Clark, Beverley Hargraft, and Linda Alcock, GCO.

We had workshops using new techniques - with Madhu Shah from Australia, and Phubast Chesdmenthee from Thailand, who gave us a new idea for creating a hand-tied bouquet. We saw demos from people whose mandate it was to showcase a design representing their country. The format was different than any that had been used before. There were 3 demonstrators at a time on stage, each working on finishing their design and speaking about their country and their design in turn. I was the demonstrator from Canada. The flowers I ordered never arrived, perhaps due to the fact that Linda and I missed our flight and the flower guy had been and gone by the time we got there and wasn't coming back. What to do? I had preserved maple leaves and paper structures representing Canada from sea to sea to sea, and was able to talk about the creativity and innovation and resilience of Canadian floral artists. I began with greetings to the audience in English, French, Italian, Cree, Haudenosaunee and Inuk, acknowledging indigenous groups who were in Canada when settlers came mostly from Europe several hundred years ago, and how Canada is vast, and a relatively young country that welcomes people from around the world. My design also started some discussion about the use of paper in design as I hoped it would. Paper is welcomed in Australia and the UK, not so much in the US. Other country honorary demonstrators used national symbols (harps by Ann Clifford from Ireland, native wood representing Indigenous people by Leigh Greenstreet from New Zealand, an Italian scene including snowmen created by Carla Barbaglia from Italy.)



Ellen's demonstration design, representing Canada



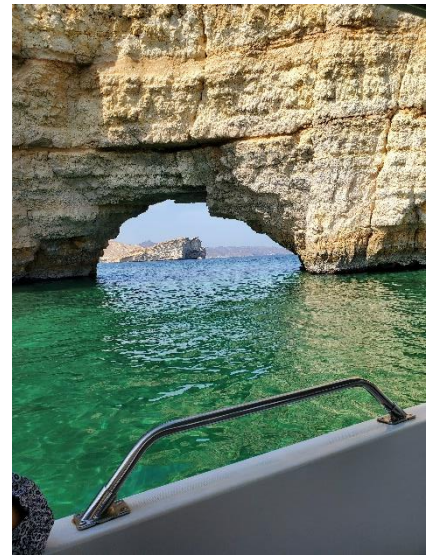
Leigh Greenstreet, New Zealand

The ever creative and indefatigable Madhu Shah, Chair of the incoming WAFA group from Australia, presented more than 10 designs for her demos. She and her Australian team had been in Oman for 2 weeks leading up to the event, and placed their designs throughout our hotel. Kitty Gallagher, President of WAFA who is from Ireland, presented her ideas of a new take on old designs. There were 6 classes of competition judged by teams of international judges.

We went on excursions... to Qaboos mosque that holds 6000 men, the largest mosque in the world. Women have their own separate mosque. We saw lush gardens and well-maintained topiary on many roadsides. In private gardens the gardening is mostly trees around the outside of the property, and planters filled with plants that are taken inside or disposed of by the end of February when it just becomes too hot. We went to the vibrant,



noisy Muttrah souq, the vast marketplace where one could (and did) buy frankincense, saffron, and harem pants. While Heather and Bev attended to WAFA business one day, the rest of us went on a boat excursion out into the Gulf of Oman to an uninhabited island for lunch, and further out to watch pods of dolphins cavorting in the sea.



The gala dinner was at the National Museum, where the vibrant Phu had created an extravaganza of a show featuring models wearing 'gemstone' colours with flowers and feathers and more.

Every evening, we had dinner in the garden of a different generous host. On our final day we spent the day at Madhvi Khimji's farm - a lot bigger and a lot more glamorous than most farms we know. They grow most of their own fruits and



vegetables, and even grow the sugar cane that sweetened our (non-alcoholic) drinks.

We were placed in groups to create an imposed design in front of large posters with scenes of Oman. Linda Alcock and Cindy Tataryn from Canada were in the winning group, with Carla Barbaglia (Italy) and Peggy Moore (USA) directing that team.

People ask: Why WAFA? Getting together with flower friends every 3 years yields endless benefits. Participants connect with old friends and make new



friends, share ideas that come back with us to our home clubs for the benefit of all, keeping up to date with the latest floral trends and techniques, opening our eyes and minds and keeping floral art moving forward. Over meals we talk about our similarities and our differences with floral art and with judging. It was interesting to me talking to others about workshops and demos – how people want exciting demos and workshops with lots of flowers but are surprised to find out how much they might have to pay! That seems to be universal. One of the highlights of this trip was our introduction to a new totally natural and biodegradable floral foam substitute, made from jute ‘dust’, and developed by Preeti Sarda from India, a long-time GCT friend. Preeti made several samples of the product available for us to try. It will go into production in July – stay tuned!

And stay tuned also for the announcements about the WFA Australia seminar in August 2025 in Perth and Western Australia, and the WFA event in March/April 2027 in Sydney. Traditionally there is a seminar 2 years before the major event. The seminar introduces participants to the country so that they will go back and spread the word to others in their home country. Seminar numbers are usually restricted and Information about how many each country may send will be sent out this summer. For the main event in 2027, all are welcome. More pictures of Bloom Oman can be found on the Bloom Oman Facebook page.

Ellen Clark, on behalf of Linda Alcock, Heather Fuller, Beverly Hargraft and Joyce Johnson

We will be sending out photos and bios to introduce your incoming Co-Chairs of Judges’ Council, **Anne Harbord** and **Mary-Ann Vercammen**. They are busy preparing to guide all of our judges through the next two years. We wish them a successful, happy term!

Renewal of Good Standing Forms will be due this October. The summer is a good time to collect all of your activities for the last two years. The incoming Executive will let you know where to send your renewal forms and fees.

If you still need exhibiting credits, remember the CNE shows in August, where there are many classes in both horticulture and design that you can enter.

Please let your flower friends know about the **GCO 8th School for Floral Design Judges, Instructors, and Exhibitors**. The first session will be April 9 to 11, 2025 at Landscape Ontario in Milton.

For full information about the school, or to pre-register, please contact Marie Decker mardecker12@gmail.com.

Accredited GCO Floral Design Judges are welcome to attend the school sessions for a small fee. Information and cost will be sent out prior to each school session. We hope many of you will take advantage of the opportunity to update your knowledge about design.