

# Suggested 4-H Garden Exhibits



What do you exhibit? Check in your county 4-H Handbook/Fair book for the garden exhibit requirements suggested by your 4-H Council as your exhibit requirement could be different than these listed.

NOTE: Each of the singles exhibits contain one type of vegetable and is judged as one (1) class. (Example: All tomatoes together, all onions together, etc.)

A collection consists of a group of different vegetables judged as one (1) exhibit. Example: A collection of three (3) could have one plate of tomatoes, one plate of potatoes, and one plate of green beans; a collection of four (4) would have four different vegetables; and a collection of five (5) would have five different vegetables.

See Table 1, *Standards for Preparing 4-H Vegetable Garden Exhibits*, or check your county 4-H Handbook/Fair Book for the number of vegetables required per plate. Also, read carefully the section on *Suggestions for Preparing 4-H Vegetable Garden Exhibits*. Now plan your exhibit and do your best!

## I. Produce Exhibit (All Levels)

Options:

- A. Single plate of a vegetable you grew (maximum of 5 different exhibits)
- B. Collection of three (3) plates, four (4) plates, or five (5) plates of different vegetables you grew
- C. A pot (10" maximum) of an herb you grew (unlimited number of exhibits)
- D. Any combination of A, B or C

## II. Special Activities (Judged separately) (Anyone may complete these, but members in Levels C and D of the garden project SHOULD exhibit one (1) of the following activities in addition to the Produce Exhibit.)

- A. Exhibit four (4) plates containing two cultivars of two different kinds of vegetables in your garden. For example: display tomato *Rutgers* and tomato *Roma* on two plates and spinach *Melody* and *America* on two plates. Label the cultivars you exhibit.
- B. Label and exhibit three unusual vegetables (may or may not be discussed in your 4-H Garden Manual) you grew in your garden this year. If not listed in the vegetable display chart, check with your Extension office. Example: spaghetti squash, head lettuce, cowpea.
- C. Make a poster of five commonly found diseases in vegetable gardens, the damage caused by each, and the control options for each.
- D. Make a poster of five commonly found vegetable garden insects: beneficial (good guys) and/or injurious (bad guys), benefits or damage caused by each, and the related management practices (how to keep the beneficial, and how to control the injurious insects).
- E. Make a poster of a maximum of ten pests (diseases, insects, weeds and/or rodents) you found in your garden this year, damage caused, control measures used, and results.
- F. Make a poster explaining a Computer Garden Program.
- G. Make a poster showing a picture story of what you did in your garden this year. Example: how you planned, planted, and maintained your garden.

- H. Make a poster showing your financial record.
- I. Make a poster of pictures showing your experiences in hydroponics.
- J. Make a poster explaining various career options working with vegetables/herbs.

### "JUST FOR FUN"

County Options (varies by county)

- 1. Largest (by weight) pumpkin/squash
- 2. Largest (by weight) watermelon
- 3. Largest (by weight) tomato
- 4. Largest (by weight) potato
- 5. Largest (by weight) onion
- 6. Largest (by weight) head of cabbage
- 7. Largest (by diameter) sunflower
- 8. Unusual growth forms

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING 4-H VEGETABLE GARDEN EXHIBITS

All produce exhibited must be that which you have produced in your 4-H garden project. County fair handbooks and the **State Fair Premium List** for 4-H garden classes all give helpful suggestions for exhibiting 4-H garden vegetables. Following are some additional suggestions.

- 1. For county fair 4-H garden exhibits, *read very carefully the rules in your own county 4-H handbook*. Entering too many or too few specimens per plate with respect to the numbers called for in your handbook will give the judge cause to lower your placing. Be sure to read the rules and follow them.
- 2. Some "do's" and "don'ts" in exhibiting vegetables (based on common errors noted in judging 4-H garden exhibits at county fairs) include:
  - a. DO exhibit exactly the required number of specimens per plate and number of plates per exhibit (see number one above).
  - b. DO harvest onions 2 to 3 weeks before exhibiting. This makes it easier to display clean, attractive specimens. Unpeeled onions will be judged more favorably than onions that have been peeled.
  - c. DO prevent damage to the skin of vegetables by harsh washing and brushing. If vegetables are dirty, particularly such vegetables as carrots, beets, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, wash them very carefully in lukewarm water with a soft cloth or sponge without rubbing. For caked-on dirt, allow vegetables to soak until dirt can be wiped off. After washing, rinse in cold water and place on paper toweling to dry. For other vegetables, gently wipe off dirt with a soft, moist cloth and allow to dry.
  - d. DO keep 3 to 4 wrapper leaves on cabbage. Judges will more likely give a lower score if wrapper leaves are removed than if leaves have a small amount of damage from insects.
  - e. DO NOT exhibit large size pickling cultivars of cucumbers as slicing cucumbers or exhibit very small fruits of slicing cultivars as pickling cucumbers.

- f. DO NOT cut windows in sweet corn, but determine maturity and freedom from worms by "feeling" the ends of sweet corn and by taking samples for home use the day prior to selecting sweet corn for exhibit.
- g. DO NOT apply mineral oil or wax to vegetables. An exception is rutabagas which may be waxed.
- h. DO NOT exhibit sunburned vegetables. Slight yellowing of the shoulders of red tomatoes and whitish streaks on green peppers often are due to slight sunburning.

3. **Vegetables in a collection exhibit must be of different kinds.** Cherry tomatoes and large tomatoes are only one kind of a vegetable. Slicing cucumbers and pickling cucumbers are also one kind of vegetable, as are different cultivars of peppers. Therefore, if you want to display cherry tomatoes, you must select another vegetable other than tomato for the other plates in your collection exhibit.

Much confusion exists in exhibiting "summer squash," pumpkins, and winter squash. Summer squash are botanically true pumpkins and must be exhibited as pumpkins rather than squash. Pumpkin stems are hexagonal (6 sides); squash stems are round. Placing will be lowered if a summer squash and another pumpkin are included in the same collection exhibit.

4. The overall appearance of vegetables is very important. They must first be fresh, crisp (not wilted), free of any mechanical injuries such as cracks, cuts, or bruises, and free of any damage from insects and diseases. Of equal importance is the matter of UNIFORMITY. For example, the nearer 20 pods of beans are to the same length and diameter the better. Exhibits lacking uniformity can be seen at a glance and the judge may automatically rule out giving a blue or even a red ribbon.
5. When exhibiting herb plants, be sure to grow the plants in the container to be displayed. Plants that have been dug from the garden or transplanted from another container are likely to be in shock and may wilt. Choose a container that is an appropriate size for the plant (see Table 1).

Table 1. **STANDARDS FOR PREPARING 4-H VEGETABLE GARDEN EXHIBITS**

Kind of vegetable	Amount or number of specimens per plate <sup>1</sup>	Size and/or weight specifications	Special comments on appearances and maturity characteristics
<b>Basil</b> (all types)	1 plant per 6 inch diameter container	Compact, dense plant, not yet in bloom.	Color and size should be characteristic of cultivar.
<b>Beans</b> (snap, green, wax)	20 pods	Diameter pods: 1/4" to 1/3"; 3 1/2" to 5 1/2" in length.	Brittle, firm, free of strings; seeds not distinct in pods.
<b>Beans</b> (navy, kidney shell-out, etc.)	1/2 pint shelled	Select tender, plump seeds of uniform size.	Uniform in color by cultivar.
<b>Beans</b> (lima-large or small)	20 pods or 1/2 pint shelled	For shelled display select only green, tender, plump seeds of uniform size. Whitish seed indicates overmaturity.	For pod display select green, firm pods containing at least 3 seeds. Cultivars other than green judged accordingly.
<b>Beets</b> (round, flat and long types)	5	3/4" to 2 1/4" in diameter.	Firm, not fibrous. Top to 1/2". Trim side roots but not tap root.
<b>Broccoli</b>	1 head	Minimum head diameter 3".	All buds in head should be firm and tightly closed.
<b>Cabbage</b> (round, flat and pointed)	1 head	Heads 2 to 5 lb., round types; 1 to 4 lb., pointed types; flat types, 5 to 12 lb.	Heads should be solid, dense, crisp, and green or red in color. Leave 3-4 wrapper leaves for display. Must be free of insect damage.
<b>Carrots</b> (all cultivars)	5	4" to 10" long (depends on cultivar); 1/2" to 2" diameter at crown.	Bright orange to reddish-orange; avoid greening on carrot shoulder. Top to 1/2". Remove side roots.
<b>Cauliflower</b>	1 head	Minimum head diameter 5".	Curds tight, white, not discolored. Cut back leaves to 1" above top of head – that is, trim it as it is in stores. (Hard to grow high quality cauliflower in spring as it grows best in fall.)
<b>Corn</b> (sweet – yellow, white or bicolor)	5 ears	Minimum cob (part covered with kernels). Length 6".	Do not trim silks. Kernels should be plump and milky; ears well-filled. Do not remove wrapper husks or make windows. Remove shank from the ear.
<b>Cucumbers</b> (slicing)	5	Maximum diameter 2 3/8"; minimum length 6".	At least 3/4 surface medium to dark green; no yellow showing. Label cultivars.

Kind of vegetable	Amount or number of specimens per plate <sup>1</sup>	Size and/or weight specifications	Special comments on appearances and maturity characteristics
Cucumbers (dill)	5	Minimum diameter 1 1/8"; maximum diameter 1 3/8"; minimum length 4 1/4"; maximum length 5 1/4".	Firm, crisp, medium green to dark green. Label cultivars.
Cucumbers (pickling)	5	Minimum diameter 7/8"; maximum diameter 1 1/4"; minimum length 2 3/4"; maximum length 4" long.	Firm, crisp, medium green to dark green. Label cultivars.
Eggplant	1	3 1/2" to 5" diameter for round types; 2" to 4" in diameter, and 4" to 10" long for long types.	Must be uniformly colored, firm, and dense. Cut stem to 1/2".
Kohlrabi	5	1 1/2" to 3" in diameter.	Crisp, not woody. Cut leaf stems back to 1/2" above enlarged stem and remove root.
Mint (all types)	1 plant per 6 inch diameter container	Compact, dense plant, not in bloom	Color and size should be characteristic of cultivar.
Muskmelon (cantaloupes)	1	2 to 8 pounds.	Full-slip means melon can be completely separated easily from stem. Well-netted, free of cracks.
Okra	5 pods	Pods 1 1/2" to 5" long.	Crisp, tender, not woody.
Onions (white, yellow, red)	5	1 1/2" to 4" in diameter.	Outer scales dry; bulb firm, free from sunburning. Allow leaves to dry; top to 1/2" of stem.
Oregano	1 plant per 4 inch diameter container	Compact, dense plant, not in bloom	Plant has a trailing growth habit.
Parsley	1 plant per 4 inch diameter container	Compact, dense plant,	Leaves can be either flat or curled.
Parsnips	5	Crown diameter 1 1/2" to 2"; length 8" to 12".	Roots should be firm and crisp, not woody. Top to 1/2".
Peppers (banana type, 5 sweet)		1" to 2" in diameter; 5" to 8" in length.	Sweet, bright, and waxy yellow. Includes 'Long Yellow Sweet,' 'Sweet Banana' and 'Dutch Treat' cultivars.
Peppers (bell type, green)	5	3" to 4" diameter, 4 lobes preferred, but 3 acceptable.	Green, firm with thick walls, smooth, not wrinkled. Purple splotches acceptable. Clip stems to within 1/4" top.

Kind of vegetable	Amount or number of specimens per plate <sup>1</sup>	Size and/or weight specifications	Special comments on appearances and maturity characteristics
Peppers (pimento type, 5 red)		2 1/2" to 3 1/4" in diameter, cone or "top" shaped.	Firm, smooth, red in color. Clip stems to within 1/4" top.
Peppers (Hungarian wax type, hot)	5	1" to 1 3/4" in diameter; 4 1/2" to 7" in length.	Bright, waxy yellow to red color; firm; fruits straight to curved. Includes 'Hungarian Yellow Wax' and 'Jalapeno' cultivars.
Peppers, chili	5	Small types 1/2" diameter; 1 1/4" long. True chili 1" long, to 1 1/2" diameter; 3" to 7" long.	Small hot peppers including thick chili; long, slender cayenne, and the small, pointed Tabasco.
Potatoes, any color	5	Diameter 2 1/2" to 4"; weight 4 to 10 oz.	Free from skinning (peeling skin) and greening.
Pumpkin, butternut	1	Length 10" to 12"; 3 to 4 lb.	Dark buff-colored skin with hard shell when mature.
Pumpkin, cushaws	1	12 to 15 lb.; diameter 9" to 10" at blossom end; 20" long.	Striped white and green, hard and smooth skin. Stem length should be 1" to 4".
Pumpkin, field	1	Diameter 12" to 15"; weight 18 to 22 lb.	Skin hard, smooth, somewhat ridged, and deep orange color when mature. Stem length should be 1" to 4".
Pumpkin, pie	1	Diameter 7" to 9"; weight 6 to 8 lb.	Deep orange when mature. Stem length should be 1" to 4".
Pumpkin, table	1	Diameter 3 1/2" to 6"; length 3 1/2" to 7 1/2"; 1 to 2 lb.	Skin dark, glossy green and sharply ridged when mature. Orange ground color also denotes maturity. Stem length should be 1" to 4".
Pumpkin, scallops 'Patty Pan'	1	Diameter 3" to 5".	Exhibit while skin is still very tender (very young); white or delicate green-to-green skin.
Pumpkin, straight-neck or crookneck (summer squash)	1	Diameter 1 1/2" to 2 1/2".	Exhibit while skin is still very tender (very young); green, white, or green-to-yellow skin.
Pumpkin*, zucchini, or cocozelle	1	Zucchini types diameter 1 1/2" to 2"; length 5" to 7". Cocozelle types diameter 2" to 2 1/2"; length 7" to 9".	Exhibit while skin is still very tender (very young); delicate green, green, grey, black, to gold skin, and stripes of these colors.

Kind of vegetable	Amount or number of specimens per plate <sup>1</sup>	Size and/or weight specifications	Special comments on appearances and maturity characteristics
<b>Rutabaga</b>	5	Diameter 4" to 6".	Firm, smooth; side roots clipped but not tap root. Cream yellow or tan color (may be waxed).
<b>Sage</b>	1 plant per 6 inch diameter container	Compact, dense plant, not in bloom.	Size should be typical of cultivar.
<b>Squash, buttercups and turbans</b>	1	Diameter 6" to 8"; 3 to 5 lb.	Turban-shaped, blossom end marked with prominent button. Skin hard when mature. Stem length should be 1" to 4".
<b>Squash, 'Delicious' (green or golden)</b>	1	Diameter 8" to 9"; length 10" to 11"; 7 to 8 lb.	Hard skin (not tender); green or orange skin color when mature.
<b>Squash, hubbards (blue green or golden)</b>	1	Diameter 8" to 10"; length 12" to 16"; 10 to 15 lb.	Skin usually warty, hard, and tough when mature.
<b>Tomatoes (red canning, for canning)</b>	5	3 to 8 oz.	Firm, smooth, free of cracks, 90% deep red color. Stems off.
<b>Tomatoes (red for market)</b>	5	4 to 8 oz.	Firm, smooth, free of cracks, 30-60% of surface showing pink to red color. Stems off.
<b>Tomatoes (pink, purple, yellow, or orange)</b>	5	Yellow and orange types 4 to 8 ozs. Pink and purple types 6 to 12 ozs.	Firm, smooth, free of cracks, 50% surface colored. Stems off.
<b>Tomatoes (small)</b>	12	Any size, uniform.	Firm, smooth, free of cracks, fully-colored red or yellow. Stems off.
<b>Tomatoes, Italian (as Roma) (puree types)</b>	5	2 1/2 to 4 oz.	Firm, smooth, free of cracks, at least 90% deep red color; not puffy. Stems off.
<b>Turnips</b>	5	Diameter 2" to 3".	Firm, smooth, side roots clipped but not tap root. Top leaves to 1/2".
<b>Watermelons</b>	1	5 to 30 pounds.	Select only if sample melons are found to be ripe. Cut stem to 1/2".

<sup>1</sup>For county fairs, exhibit exactly the amount or number of specimens given in the county 4-H handbook.

\*Commonly called summer squash; botanically, these are true pumpkins and should be harvested at an immature stage.