

Judging Horticulture vs Judging Photography

Horticulture: 100% to the bloom (except in Challenge Classes)

Rose Photography: 50% to the Bloom and 45% to photographic excellence

What captures your attention and draws you in?

This area is at the heart of photography judging. Some of the more common areas are explained below, however other areas may be used in a rose photography show and these areas would need to be reviewed by the judge prior to judging to ensure that the expectations of the class are very clear before judging would start.

THE ROSE – 50%

When judging a photograph of a horticultural specimen, many of the rules that are used in the *ARS Guidelines for Judging Roses* would be utilized. The one aspect that cannot be utilized is scale and proportion. Since you are judging a two-dimensional object, scale can be almost impossible to judge. Many times, a judge cannot tell if they are looking at a hybrid tea or a miniature.

Color can be one of the most important aspects when judging photographs. Many times, too much light or not enough light can alter how the color is perceived by the camera. The use of editing software may be used, but excessive use, which can be interpreted by odd color formations, should be penalized. Brightness combines the properties of hue and chroma and is defined as a clearness of the color in the rose. Ideally, it is manifested by a freedom from cloudiness, darkening, or muddiness. It is best described as the evenness of the hue.

The photographer has ultimate control of all aspects when it comes to the photograph. Unlike in a horticultural display, the amount of light, dark, shadows, etc. are within the control of the photographer. Variations of these should be penalized based upon the degree of disturbance to the overall exhibit.

The color of the stamens is a consideration when judging open blooms and singles. In open blooms and singles, the stamens and the anthers they support often have distinctive color characteristics ranging from yellow to orange to brown, even purple, which must enter into the judging of the entire specimen. The color of the stamens should be typical of the variety and not browned or blackened with age. If the golden yellow anthers of a fresh specimen have blackened, a penalty as color fault must be assessed. Blackened stamens also generally indicate that the specimen is not fresh.

It is important to note that photographs of roses within a garden setting or taken outside of the rose show setting are strongly encouraged. Some photographs will look better with a more natural background than a plain black background. Beware the

“floating bloom” as it can be distracting for some exhibits. Seeing the rose framed by foliage is a more natural setting and should be rewarded.

Awarding of the points would be based upon the percentage that the exhibit would have earned if it was entered in a horticulture show. The example is that if you would give the same rose 90 points in a horticultural show, this is 90% of the points available to that rose. This would equal 90% of the 40 points in this section, or 36 points.

Macro Photography – Please Note: The use of a macro lens alone does not constitute a macro photograph. The term “macro” is generally used for any type of close up photography. The premise behind macro photography is to take something very small or detailed, and to make it life size. This will usually require the use of a tripod and some practice. The judge must be aware of what the main subject is for the photo and ensure that this main subject is in focus. Outlying areas of the photo may become blurred or fuzzy depending on the size of the actual object being photographed. This would not be penalized. Distractions in macro photography are accentuated due to the close-up nature of the photo. There should be a sense of originality in the photo and a sense of seeing something new since we cannot see these very small objects in this size with the naked eye.

The Rose Garden – The photography of gardens can be more artistic and a little more challenging to judge. There may also be subcategories of this class. There may be a class for public gardens, private gardens, formal gardens, casual gardens, or rose society activities. The judge must be sure as to the requirements for the class within the show schedule. Public gardens must be named. Failure to name the garden must be heavily penalized under conformance. Formal gardens and many public gardens tend to have a more polished and static placement of materials. Roses should dominate within the photograph, and the fact that the flowers are roses should be obvious. This means that a photo of a garden with flowers in the back of the photo does not necessarily mean those flowers are roses. Movement in a formal or public garden should be the goal, and the use of the thirds rule or other compositional elements may help with judging these types of photos.

Casual or private gardens tend to have more movement and flowing lines within the photograph. As with formal and public gardens, the roses should dominate and not be a guess that there are actually roses in the photo. The presence of sculptures or buildings within either type of garden (formal or casual) should not draw the eye but should be a blended part of the photograph and lend to the beauty of the photo. If the statue or building is the focal point of the photograph, then the movement of the rest of the garden around that focal point would be considered.

Rose society activities and the presence of people or animals in garden type pictures can be very tricky. The feelings towards the society, individual people present in the photo, or animals in the photo should not sway the judge to vote for or against the photograph. The same rules apply as judging any other type of garden photo and the

people or animals should not be a distraction to the photo. If they are the focal point, the rest of the photo should flow around that focal point.

Individual naming of the roses in a garden photo is *not* required. The name of public gardens however *is* required.

Creative Interpretation – This is where the exhibitor can allow their imagination to run free. Many times, the use of photo editing software for enhancement is utilized in this class. This can range from the use of different filters to color changes to fully composited images to camera-less photographic images such as those created with the use of scanners. The judge needs to remember that actual photographic excellence can also be used in creative interpretation with no use of photo editing software. These types of exhibits should be rewarded.

Another aspect to remember is that adding words or other images can also be a creative interpretation. The main aspect is that the photo should not become so “busy” or “cluttered” that it becomes distracting to the viewer. Some type of restraint can give a much bolder statement.

Individual rose varieties need not be identified on the entry tag for this class. The creative naming of the exhibit is part of the creative interpretation of the exhibit.

Novice – Many times when judging a novice class, the judge is a little more lenient with the rules, but the same principles as listed for any of the sections still apply in this area.

COMPOSITION – 15 points

This area includes the point of interest, simplicity, color quality, contrast, balance, framing of the subject, viewpoint, direction of movement and diagonals where applicable. The point of interest in this case should be the rose. Many times, the best thing to ask is “what is this a picture of?” If the answer is not a rose, an arrangement, or garden, then that is what is known as the point of interest or the subject. This can also be due to improper framing. If you take the photo so that the rose is very small in the photo, then the rest of the frame is filled with other items. Is it a rose photo or a foliage photo?

Simplicity is the distractions or lack of distractions in the photograph. One area of debate in the rose photography world is the practice of spraying water droplets onto a bloom before taking a photo. Some love it, some hate it, but the correct answer for judging is how much does it distract? Many times, water droplets, especially when excessive, catch the surrounding light and cause major distraction. Smaller drops or a few drops can be less distracting. Another aspect of simplicity is the background. While the use of leaves is desirable, they should be free of diseases and they should frame the bloom. Extra blooms in the background can be distracting because the color catches the eye. This can work if the movement of these blooms moves the eye around the photograph. The presence of other textures can be distracting as well and decrease from the simplicity. The presence of dirt, mulch, animals, stones, bricks, etc. can disturb the

rhythm of movement within the photo and make the photo seem “busier” than it needs to be for that specimen.

Contrast and Balance relate to the bright and dark parts of a photo. The overall photograph should be clear and bright and have sufficient contrast between the dark and light areas so that items in the photo are well defined, but it should not have so much contrast as to look unnatural. There should be no significant overly bright "blown out" areas, which show no detail, as a result of over-exposure. There should be some details visible in the shadow areas. The use of shadows can give depth to a photograph and should not be the sole reason for penalization.

Direction of movement, diagonals, rule of thirds, and others refer to composition. For entry classes calling for one bloom, the general composition rule of thirds for off center placement may not be deemed desirable here, but rather the one bloom may be close to the center and fill much of the frame. No matter how the photo is framed, it should not have rose petals cut off at the edge of the photograph. The exception to this would be entries in Creative Interpretation and Macro classes

Color quality includes both the quality and the accuracy of the color. Does the color catch your eye and pull you with interest into the photograph? Is the color of the rose representative of what one might see in the rose garden or at a rose show or some other display that includes the actual physical rose? It must be remembered here that a variety of rose may have different colors when grown in different environments including shady locations versus sunny locations and spring, summer and fall seasonal variations. For example, 'Dublin' loses its dark edges when grown in the shade and 'Double Delight' has more red color and less white in the summer. All of these rose variety color variations that are seen in nature are acceptable. Note, that if it is a black and white photograph, then the quality and range of the black, white and shades of gray should be evaluated in how well the various tones of gray are used along with textures and patterns to portray an impressionistic image of reality. Color quality should not be enhanced by photo enhancement software unless the schedule specifically allows for this. This could lead to penalization.

TECHNIQUE – 15 points

This area includes correct exposure, depth of field, lighting, and other relevant technical factors. Focus is often used by the photographer to provide a realistic effect that makes the viewer feel that he or she can reach out and touch this "real thing" in the photograph.

Selective focus is also often used to help draw the viewer's attention to certain areas of the photograph. Sharp focus is one of the essential technical elements in most photographs. The range of apparent focus, the "Depth of Field" (DOF) which is the portion of the photograph (from near to far) that appears to be in focus and the proper positioning of DOF in the image so as to enhance the appeal of the photograph, is a significant indication of good quality in a photograph. However, it must also be taken into account that the photographer may actually be trying to purposely blur portions of

the photograph intentionally in order to enhance certain artistic or other photographic effects in the picture. For example, the photographer may be intentionally blurring the background” or other portions in order to get the viewer to pay more attention to the areas that are in focus or he or she might blur the whole photograph for photo art or abstraction or impressionism purposes. The judge has to ascertain if the photograph has good focus in the areas where he or she deems sharp focus is called for.

The use of flash, indoor, or outdoor lighting can alter how a photo appears. Too much light can cause a washed-out appearance of the subject, not enough light can make it very difficult to see aspects and details of the subject, and certain types of flash can cause shadows which can be very distracting. The use of light on a subject should be considered when judging the photo exhibit.

The use of black and white photography as well as the use of sepia can be a part of technique when judging. Black and white (B&W) photography can be difficult since the dark and light areas need to be very distinct so as not to fade into an overall “gray” look to the photo. The crispness of the subjects and blurring of other areas are essential techniques in a great B&W photograph. Sepia is the use of browns and yellows within the photo. Many newer digital cameras can be set to shoot photos in sepia. This is NOT necessarily a photo software enhancement; however, most software will allow the user to switch between color, B&W and Sepia.

DISTINCTION – 15 Points

Distinction indicates that everything about the photograph is well done, but in addition, there is something about this photograph that sets it apart from others in its class. Something that at first may be intangible - something we may call the "wow" factor. This includes the presentation of the subject and the composition of the photograph. Is your overall impression a good one? Is the photograph eye catching, and does it attract and hold your attention? Does it draw your eye into the picture, and is your eye led through the photograph to particular points of interest? Is the subject well represented in the photograph? Is the subject appropriate for the Entry Class? Do you want to keep looking at the photograph? Is it a "pretty picture"? Would you want this photograph hanging on your wall, and do you feel that you would never get tired of looking at it? If the answer to all or most of these questions is yes, then this photo should score high with regard to distinction.

CONFORMANCE – 5%

Fill out the entry tag correctly. No date stamps on the photo. Photographer name must not be visible. Etc.