

Gardening

Tips offered for fair time

By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

Abundance and skill — that's what fairs are all about.

We just got back from our own Heath Fair and it really was a festive harvest celebration. The livestock barns were filled with handsome cattle and sheep waiting for the judges. Sleek and proud horses paraded around a field before other judges. The draft horses struggled mightily during the horse-drawing, noble and strong in their fancy harness and tassels. Forty-seven pair of oxen, ranging in size from young calves to a pair of giant lumbering Brown Swiss, paraded before the crowds and then waited to take their turns with the stone boat.

All the animals were cleaned, brushed and groomed to present a prize-winning appearance even if only some of them could take home a ribbon.

We gorged ourselves on homemade root beer and doughnuts, played the volunteer firemen's wheel of fortune, swayed to the live music being played and by noon on Saturday we joined the crowd that started to collect at the door of the exhibition hall — spectators and exhibitors who were anxious for the hall to open so we could find out "Who won?"

The tables were filled with fancy work, jars of sparkling jellies, jams and relishes, wholesome and sweet baked goods, the fairest blossoms from Heath's gardens and, of course, a long swath of perfect vegetables set out in abundant array. It was exciting to be part of the crowd in the hall, pausing over the exhibits, considering, and making our own judgments.

The fair is a tribute to the fertility of our soil and animals, and to the skill and industry of the people who nurture the fields and animals, and to those who cook, preserve and sew, creating utility and beauty.

The Heath Fair is over for this year and now I'm looking forward to the Franklin County Fair. Tina Smith of the extension service has some recommendations that might help you to win a prize or two with your fruits and vegetables.

The first reminder is to read the premium list carefully and prepare your exhibits accordingly. No matter how perfect your wax beans, they are going to be disqualified if you only set out a dozen and the



premium list says you must display 15.

Also be sure that all the vegetables on the same plate are the same variety. You don't want to mix Golden Beets and Detroit Dark Reds in the same exhibit.

Unless you are going to try and capture the prize for the largest squash or pumpkin, choose medium sized vegetables for your exhibit. The texture and quality of overgrown beets, beans and other vegetables is not that good. Tina says that in looking for quality the judges take "such things as variety, degree of maturity, smoothness, color, texture and freshness into consideration."

The judges will look at the condition of the vegetables too. The exhibits should be free from insect, disease or mechanical damage. It may be a wise precaution to take a couple of extra vegetables with you in case the tomatoes fall on the floor while you are arranging things in the hall. Clean your vegetables carefully. Never cut the tap root off root crops like beets and leave one inch of stem.

Leave stems on squash, cucumbers, melons and even your beans. Do not leave stems on tomatoes or peel your onions. Corn may be husked.

Exhibits on one plate should be uniform in size, color and shape. This probably means that if you are preparing a plate of five carrots, you'll have to pull up 15 or 20 in order to find a set that looks as much like identical quintuplets, as possible.

In addition to individual exhibits, there are collection and mixing bowl

classes to show a variety of vegetables in an attractive display. Quality will be the most important thing the judges look for. Quantity is not so important, so pick your most beautiful vegetables and arrange them in a well-balanced display.

You may want to exhibit some individual vegetables and also exhibit a collection, but remember that you cannot use any of the same types of vegetables in individual exhibits if you use them in your collection. For instance, if you put savoy cabbage, red beets, wax beans and corn in your collection, you will not be able to exhibit them individually.

A lot of thought, work and care goes into our gardens and it is fun to exhibit at the fair. We are literally showing off the fruits of our labors even if we don't win a blue ribbon.

Besides, there is always next year.

FALL AUCTION

Sun. Afternoon
Sept. 14, 1:30 p.m.
Preview From 9 a.m.
Auctioneer—Steve Meyers

AUCTION ITEMS INCLUDE:
Trees & Shrubs, Houseplants, Bird Baths,
Gardening Items, Fountains, etc.
(Cash & Carry—Please Bring Chairs)

at...
Stewart's
NURSERY

Garden Shop

Open Mon.-Fri. 9-8, Sat.-Sun. 9-5:30

HOG HOLLOW

Silver & Gold

Fine Jewelry

Custom Work

Repairs

209 Main St., Greenfield
772-0859

- Hotpoint
 - Speed Queen
 - Crosley
 - KitchenAid
 - Panasonic
- Dependable Appliances
and Service
We Welcome



King's Appliance

Sales & Service

Center

60 Bank Row
Greenfield

774-3073

IN STOCK
Ready For Immediate Delivery!



1980



Omega

Skylark

Don Lorenz, Inc.

369 Federal St., Gfld. 772-0234