

## Judging Collections Using the RHS Method

Judging Method Overview. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) uses a simple method for evaluating and ranking collections. Their method involves assigning a numerical value to each bloom in the collections. Summing the point-values assigned to the blooms in a collection gives a score for the **quality of blooms** in the collection. Then, assigning and adding a second (smaller) score for the **effectiveness of the presentation** (aka staging) gives the **total score** for the collection. Total scores for the collections are ranked to determine the placings in the class. The method has proven quite useful where there are closely-matched entries.

Judging Method Application. The judging panel chooses a representative bloom from one of the competing collections and awards it a point value of "7," establishing the "baseline" for the comparison process. Each bloom in the competition is then compared to the baseline bloom. If deemed about equal in quality to the baseline bloom, a bloom is given the same point value, 7. If deemed to be somewhat better, a bloom is assigned a value one-half point higher, 7.5. If markedly better, it is given 8 (or possibly even higher). Similarly, a somewhat inferior bloom is given 6.5; if markedly inferior it is given 6 (or possibly even less). For a competition among twelve-stem collections (eg, the Engleheart Cup), the panel awards up to a maximum of an additional 10 points for the effectiveness of presentation.

### Adapting the Judging Method to the ADS

Overview. In the RHS Shows, blooms in contending collections could conceivably range from pristine to wilting. Therefore there must be a wide range for values to be assigned to allow for occasional weak blooms. In the ADS Shows, no collection can be considered for first-place that contains a bloom that is not of blue-ribbon quality. Since contending collections will have been screened to assure that all their blooms are of blue-ribbon quality, the range of quality of the blooms in the contending collections will be relatively small.

For ADS usage, the baseline point-value of the *chosen typical bloom* is set at "2." Blooms that are about equal to it in value receive this score. Blooms that judges feel are better than the baseline bloom receive values of 2.5 or 3; blooms deemed of lesser quality receive values of 1.5 or 1. Numbers are small and tallying is not difficult. The total point-score for quality of an *average* collection (ie, a collection of blooms having typical quality) would be twice the number of blooms it contains: 10 for a collection of five stems; 18 for a collection of nine stems; 24 for a collection of twelve stems; 30 for a collection of 15 stems; 48 for a collection of 24 stems.

The importance of *presentation* to the effectiveness of a collection is recognized by awarding an additional value up to 10% of the point-value of an average collection (rounded to the nearest half-point): one point maximum for Five Stems, 2 points maximum for Nine Stems, 2.5 points maximum for Twelve Stems, three points maximum for 15 Stems, and five points maximum for 24 Stems. The *sum of the scores for bloom quality and for presentation* would be the *collection score*. For example, if a 12-stem collection scored 28 for quality and 2 for presentation, its total score would be 30. That score would be compared to the scores for the other collections and the collection with the highest score should be the winner. (Note: a panel of judges is always allowed to override the ranking of scores when their group judgment indicates the need.)

Application in the 2016 National Show. Only single-stem collections having 12 or more blooms will be judged using the point-scoring method. Judging proceeds in the normal progression until two or more collections are identified as being close competitors in the decision for first-place award. If the decision among contenders is not close, then point-scoring is not necessary. (Rarely, with a clear first-place, the method could be used to separate second- from third-place).

The Clerks have tabular forms to record the assignment of point-score made to the blooms and presentation in the contending collections. When the score tallies are completed and the total scores are agreed upon by the panel, the class ribbons are marked on the entry cards, and the respective tabular forms are initialed by a Judge and left in front of the collections.