

Preparing Plants for Orchid Shows

1. Make sure that the plant is clean, and that you have removed unsightly dead leaves and bracts. Clean dusty leaves with soft cloth or paper towels, dipped in soapy water. Squeeze until just moist. Clean calcium deposits with: lemon juice, milk, or horticultural oil.
2. Be sure the pot is clean and the plant is stable in it.
3. Check plant for any sign of disease or insects. If you find insects, clean them out. Any sign of rot should also be removed and the area treated. If you think the plant is virused, don't submit it.
4. Staking is one of those tasks that should commence (but rarely does) early in the development of the flower spike. If staking is left too late the results can look rather peculiar, as flowers can be twisted out of position. To a large extent staking is now at the individual's discretion. The judges have the right to remove the stake if they so wish. As a general aesthetic comment, be sensible with your staking, and try to keep the stake shorter than the raceme of flowers it supports: this avoids the unsightly phenomenon of the 'tomato stake syndrome', a rich and varied forest of stakes, with the occasional flower.

By all means, use additional stakes and ties to help support your flowers and racemes while you transport them to the Show but remove the 'transport stakes' once you have the plant safely benched.
5. Plant labels should be clean and easy to read. If the plant is a hybrid and you know the parents, have the names on the tags. Be sure the tag is small enough to be hidden in the plant at set-up time.
6. Water your plants well the day before you bring them in because it will not be possible to thoroughly water them for the duration of the Show.
7. Label your box (es) with your name, and include a list of the plants you are sending to the show.

Note: I like to place the plant's name & my initials on a piece of tape placed on the pot. I've seen situations where people who put up a display can't remember which plant is whose, especially if there are duplicates. And it is easier to return them to the correct owner at the end of the show.