

Suggested 4-H Garden Exhibits

What do you exhibit? Check the county 4-H Handbook/Fair Book that your particular 4-H Council suggests for the garden exhibit requirements, because your requirements could differ from these guidelines for the State Fair.

Note: Each of the single-vegetable exhibits contains one type of vegetable and is judged as one class. Example: All tomatoes together, all onions together, and so on.

A collection consists of a group of different vegetables judged as one exhibit. Example: A collection of three might have one plate of tomatoes, one plate of potatoes, and one plate of green beans; a collection of four has four different vegetables; and a collection of five has five different vegetables.

See Table 1, *Standards for Preparing 4-H Vegetable Garden Exhibits*, on pages 3-7, or check your county 4-H Handbook/Fair Book for the number of vegetables required per plate. Read Table 1 carefully to make sure you display the correct number of specimens and properly prepare them for display. For herb exhibits, see Table 2, *Standards for Preparing 4-H Herb Exhibits* on page 8.

Now plan your exhibit and do your best!

Produce exhibit (all levels)

Options

- Single plate of vegetables you grew (maximum of five different exhibits).
- Collection of three plates, four plates, or five plates of different vegetables you grew.
- A pot (8-inch maximum) of an herb you grew (maximum of three exhibits).
- Any combination of A, B, or C.

Special activities (judged separately)

Any member may complete the exhibit options below, but members in Levels C and D of the garden project should exhibit one of the following activities in addition to their produce exhibit.

Produce options

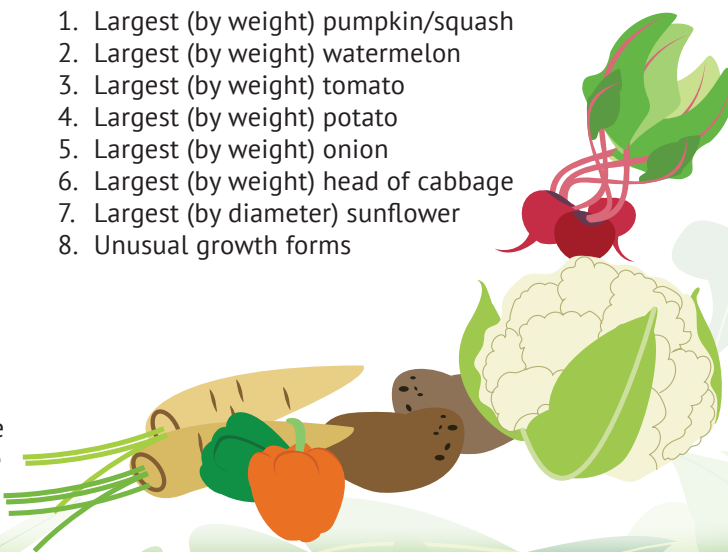
- Exhibit four plates containing two cultivars of two different kinds of vegetables from your garden. For example: Display tomato *Rutgers* and tomato *Roma* on two plates, and spinach *Melody* and spinach *America* on two plates. Label the cultivars you exhibit with the common, Latin, and cultivar names.
- Exhibit and label one unusual vegetable you grew in your garden this year. This vegetable may or may not be discussed in the 4-H garden manuals but should not be listed in the table on the following pages. Examples: spaghetti squash or head lettuce.

Poster options

- Five commonly found diseases in vegetable gardens, the damage each causes, and the control options for each.
- Five commonly found vegetable garden insects: beneficial (good guys) and/or injurious (bad guys), the benefits of or damage caused by each, and the related management practices—how to keep the beneficial and control the injurious insects.
- A maximum of 10 pests—diseases, insects, weeds, and/or rodents—you found in your garden this year, the damage they caused, the control measures you used, and your results.
- Explain a computer garden program or mobile application.
- A picture story of what you did in your garden this year. Example: how you planned, planted, and maintained your garden.
- Show your financial record.
- Pictures showing your experiences in hydroponics.
- Explain various career options that involve working with vegetables and herbs.
- Explain types of pollinators and their importance in vegetable and fruit production.
- Show the different types of plant parts that humans consume. Identify the fruit or vegetable and categorize it by root, stem, leaf, or flower.
- Different storage methods for vegetables.
- How to create a raised bed or container vegetable garden.
- Discuss how the herbs listed on page 8 of this publication are used and have been used throughout history. Include both culinary and medicinal uses as well as other unique uses, if any.

Just for fun, or additional county options (Varies by county)

- Largest (by weight) pumpkin/squash
- Largest (by weight) watermelon
- Largest (by weight) tomato
- Largest (by weight) potato
- Largest (by weight) onion
- Largest (by weight) head of cabbage
- Largest (by diameter) sunflower
- Unusual growth forms



Suggestions for preparing 4-H vegetable garden exhibits

If you choose to display your produce at the county fair, you must have produced all of it in your 4-H project. County fair handbooks and the State Fair Handbook (available at www.in.gov/statefair/fair) for 4-H garden classes give helpful suggestions for exhibiting 4-H garden vegetables. Here are some additional ones.

1. For county fair 4-H garden exhibits, read the rules in your own county 4-H handbook very carefully. Entering too many or too few specimens per plate compared to what your handbook calls for causes the judge to lower your placing. Be sure to read the rules, and follow them.
2. Some “dos” and “don’ts” for exhibiting vegetables (based on common errors noted in judging 4-H garden exhibits at county fairs) include:

Do

- Exhibit exactly the required number of specimens per plate and number of plates per exhibit (see 1, above).
- Label exhibits as required. Your exhibit should include both the common and Latin name.
- Harvest onions two to three weeks before exhibiting. This makes it easier to display clean, attractive specimens. Unpeeled onions are judged more favorably than onions that have been peeled.
- Prevent damage to the skin of vegetables by harsh washing or brushing. If vegetables are dirty—particularly carrots, beets, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes—wash them carefully in lukewarm water with a soft cloth or sponge without rubbing. For caked-on dirt, allow vegetables to soak until the dirt can be wiped off. After washing, rinse them in cold water and place on paper towels to dry. For other vegetables, gently wipe off dirt with a soft, moist cloth and allow to dry.
- Keep three to four wrapper leaves on cabbage. A little insect damage on wrapper leaves is okay.

Don't

- Exhibit large fruits of pickling cultivars of cucumbers as slicing cucumbers, or exhibit very small fruits of slicing cultivars as pickling cucumbers.
 - Cut windows in sweet corn. Instead, 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.
 - Apply mineral oil or wax to vegetables.
 - 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 species (kinds). Cherry tomatoes and large tomatoes are only one species (kind) of a vegetable. Slicing cucumbers and pickling cucumbers are also one species (kind) of vegetable, as are different cultivars (kinds) 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. Placing is lower if two vegetables of the same species are included in the same collection exhibit.

A lot of confusion exists in exhibiting summer squash, pumpkins, and winter squash. Pay close attention to what you grow and what species it is. Note that there are four species of *Cucurbita* vegetables included in Table 1: *Cucurbita pepo*, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Cucurbita moschata*, and *Cucurbita argyros-perma*. Collection exhibits can include members from the different species, but not from within a species. For example, if you include a pumpkin (*C. pepo*) in your collection, you cannot include an acorn squash (*C. pepo*); you could, however, combine a pumpkin and butternut squash (*C. moschata*).
 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. Uniformity is just as important. For example, the closer 10 pods of beans are to the same length and diameter, the better. Exhibits lacking uniformity can be seen at a glance, and the judge might 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 dug from the garden or transplanted from another container immediately before exhibiting are likely to be in shock and may wilt. Your container should be no larger than 8 inches in diameter.
 6. When displaying leaf vegetables—chard, collards, kale, spinach—cut the stems long enough to secure them in a bundle with string or a rubber band. Lay on a plate for judging. Leaf crops likely won't last long and need to be disposed of soon after judging.

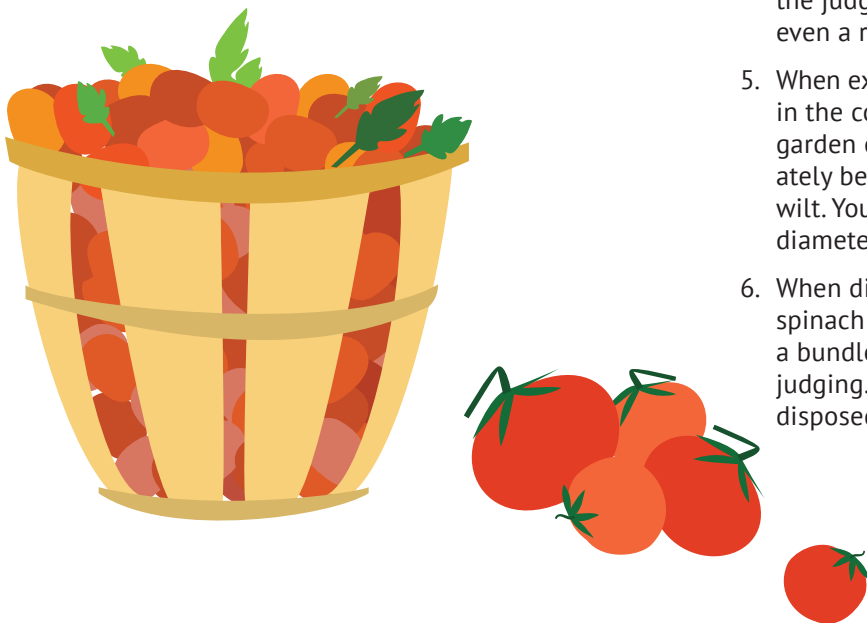


Table 1. Standards for Preparing 4-H Vegetable Garden Exhibits

Vegetable	Latin name	Number of specimens per plate ¹	Size and/or weight specifications	Notes on appearance and maturity characteristics
Asparagus	<i>Asparagus officinali</i>	5 spears bundled together	Stems approximately 6-8" long and 1/4" to 3/8" in diameter at widest point.	Color is appropriate to cultivar and uniform throughout. Tips should be firm and compact. Not overly mature or "woody." Should snap crisply when bent. You may display cut spears in a shatter-resistant container of water.
Beans (cowpea, black-eyed pea, southern pea, etc.)	<i>Vigna unguiculata</i> subsp. <i>unguiculata</i>	10 pods or 1/2 cup shelled	In pod: pods 1/4" to 1/3" in diameter.	For pod display, select pods uniform in color for variety; should be uniform in size. Shelled cowpeas should be clear of debris and displayed on a plate.
Beans (snap, green, or wax)	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	10 pods	Pods 1/4" to 1/3" in diameter, 4-1/2" to 8" long.	Uniform, brittle, firm, free of strings; seeds not distinct in pods.
Beans (navy, kidney shell-out, etc.)	<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	1/2 cup shelled	Select tender, plump seeds	Uniform in color by cultivar. Display of uniform size on plate or in shatter-resistant container.
Beans (lima, large or small)	<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>	10 pods or 1/2 cup 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.
Beets (round, flat, and long types)	<i>Beta vulgaris</i>	3	3/4" to 2-1/4" in diameter.	Firm, not fibrous. Top to 1/2". Trim side roots but not taproot.
Broccoli	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>	1 head	Minimum head diameter 3".	All buds in head should be firm and tightly closed.
Broccoli raab	<i>Brassica ruvo</i>	3 heads	Stem length varies by cultivar; should be thin, no more than 1/2".	All buds in head should be firm and tightly closed.
Brussels sprouts	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gemmifera</i>	5 heads	Snap cleanly off of stalk, heads should be up to 1" diameter.	Heads should be solid, dense, crisp, and heavy for size. Leave 3-4 wrapper leaves.
Cabbage note: If a powder form of insecticide was used on your cabbage, thoroughly wash and rinse your cabbage deep down inside the leaves to remove any accumulated insecticide. Leave 3-4 wrapper leaves. Minor insect damage is tolerable only on wrapper leaves.				
Cabbage (round, flat, and pointed)	<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>	1 head	Heads to 2 to 5 lbs., round types; 1 to 4 lbs., pointed types; 5 to 12 lbs., flat types.	Heads should be solid, dense, crisp, and green or red in color and must be free of insect damage.
Cabbage (Chinese type – Bok choy or pak choi)	<i>Brassica rapa</i> var. <i>Chinensis</i>	1 head	Appearance similar to celery, petioles and leaves should be 8" to 18" long.	Heads should be compact, dense, crisp, green or white in color, and free of insect damage. Remove soil that may have accumulated at petiole base.
Cabbage (Chinese type – napa cabbage)	<i>Brassica rapa</i> var. <i>pekinensis</i>	1 head	Heads oblong or cylindrical shaped, 8" to 18" long.	Heads should be compact, tightly wrapped, dense, crisp, green or white in color, and free of insect damage.

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