



ENTERING AN EXHIBIT AT THE SHOW

1. THE BASICS

- There are several classes for displays. Class 1 (one to five plants) is where most people start, or you can go straight to Class 2 (6 to 15 plants).
- Decide which class you will be entering and let us know well ahead of time. Entry forms are available in the OOS website, as well as the rules for the show. Read all the rules carefully so you know what is allowed, and remember that some rules may change from one year to the next.
- You can request a table for your display, normally against a wall, or you can request a space in the middle of the floor if you want people to have an all-round view. Standard tables are 6ft x 30", but if you prefer to bring your own table, no problem.
- You can request to have access to hydro if you want to have lights. Power outlets will be fairly close (within about 10ft) but you should bring your own extension cord.
- Whatever you request, that is all we provide. It is up to you to bring your own table covering as well as all materials for your display, lights, etc.
- Set-up is on the Friday afternoon of the show weekend. You can come to the RA Centre any time after about 1PM and you are advised to come early as setting up always takes much longer than you expect. The well-known "80-20" rule applies: you get the first 80% of the setup done in 20% of the time but the remaining 20% takes 80% of the time, as there are always a lot of fine details to take care of.
- There is plenty of parking in front of the RA Centre. There is access to the curling rink through the front doors or through a back door (overhead garage style). Parking is very limited outside the garage door so it may be easier to use the front doors unless you have a lot to carry.
- One of the important rules is: no flowers other than orchids, no dyed or artificial flowers and no artificial greenery. So, if you are wondering about using those blue phals or dendrobiums from Home Depot – **don't even think about it!** And leave any plastic ferns or plastic ivy at home!
- Unless you are a vendor, you must be a member of the OOS in order to enter an exhibit. If you are not already a member, sign up now!

2. PLANNING AHEAD

Most of the work involved should be done in the days or weeks before the show, so you have everything ready and you know exactly what you are going to do at the show.

2.1. Prepare your plants

Choose which plants you will use for the display. Clean them up as necessary, clean the pots, clip any dead leaves, make sure they are well staked and of course make certain there are no bugs. Prepare them for transport and try to avoid any possible damage to flowers or leaves.



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2.2. Decide on the style of your display

There are no set rules about the style of displays, but most people go for a natural look using driftwood, bark, moss, fir cones and similar items to create a natural-looking scene. Use your artistic sense to decide which plant goes where, and try to have a focal point to unify the whole display. Whatever style you choose, remember the orchids should be the stars and any other items are just the “supporting cast”. When you look at the display the orchids should stand out and the rest should be the backdrop. It is best to use subdued colours for the table covering (most people use black but you could use brown or dark green) and for other items in the display. Don’t use too much decoration - overall, the KISS principle (Keep it simple, stupid!) applies and usually “less is more”.

2.3. Collect materials you will need

Collect/buy suitable pieces of cloth for your table covering, and for covering the pots. Remembering that the standard tables are 6ft, you will need a piece about 12ft long x 3ft wide (4m x 1m) to cover the front and sides, as well as a piece about 7ft x 3ft (2 ½ x 1m) to cover the top. Most people use black cloth and arrange it to hang down to the floor. You may also want several smaller pieces to drape around and cover the pots.

If you plan to use pieces of driftwood, collect suitable pieces and make sure they are clean and free of bugs. Usually, one or two larger pieces look better than a lot of small pieces. Make a test setup at home to see how the pieces will fit together and how the plants will fit into and around the wood. Tie or screw pieces together if needed to make a stable setup. Collect moss and other items for finishing the display. You can also use small greenery plants – ferns, ivy, etc – but do not use any flowering plants other than orchids (the rules do not allow any other flowering plants).

Collect a number of empty pots that you can use upside down to support your plants in the position you want them. Generally it is best to have a focal point where one of your larger plants is raised above the others so it stands out. You may also want some crumpled newspaper to support the cloth around the pots.

If you plan to use lights, you can either use the kind that clamp onto the edge of the table or else provide floor standing lights that you can position close to the table. Try to use lights with a natural daylight rating so they do not affect the colours of your flowers – LED or CFL lights are the best, and do not give off too much heat. Lighting in the curling rink is quite good, but adding lights to your display can give it that extra “pop”.

2.4. Prepare nametags for your plants

You will want to have clean, uniform-looking nametags for your plants rather than the nametags you have in the pots. You can make up nametags in whatever style you like – some people use hand written labels with gold or silver pen on dark cardboard, while others prefer printed labels. Support them using green or black florist wires or similar so they look good and are easy for the public to read.



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2.5. Register your plants and your display

Don't forget you have to register your plants if you want them to be judged, and you have to separately register the display itself. We encourage everyone to pre-register using the forms in the website. This makes it easier for our registration people as they know what is coming, and it makes it easier for you as you do not need to worry about it during your set-up.

2.6. Miscellaneous items for setup

Most people have a box that they use to store miscellaneous display materials such as paper, pens, masking tape, duct tape, string, elastic bands, wire, clips, etc. Make a checklist of what you will need and what you think you might need so you don't forget anything. You can usually borrow these items if you need, but it is much better to bring your own.

3. FRIDAY SET-UP

Your table will be shown on the floor plan with your name, and your name will also be on your table (or on the floor if you have requested a floor space). There are also some spare tables – first come, first served – that you can use to put your stuff on while you set things up. If you have pre-registered, you can collect your plant labels from the registration team and then focus on setting up your display. If you have not pre-registered don't forget to register with the registration people, and they can help you with plant names if necessary. Ask someone if you don't know where to go. Once you register they will give you the labels to put on your plants and your display.

First cover your table and make sure it is hanging nicely before you set up anything else, as it is very hard to fix it afterwards! Set up the bones of your display – driftwood, pot supports, etc and place your plants where you think they look best, as well as any greenery plants such as ivy or ferns. This will take a lot of trial and error but once you have them in place you can cover the pots and make sure everything blends in. Finally, once you are satisfied, you can add the finishing touches with bark, moss, fir cones, etc as well as any decorations you may want to include. Some people use small model animals – frogs, snakes, butterflies or similar – or you may want to use other decorative items. Remember, usually “less is more” and don't go overboard.

Finally clean everything up, remove loose moss and dirt from the table covering and make sure it looks perfect. Put in your own plant nametags and place the labels supplied by the registration team in the appropriate places. There will be one for the display itself as well as one for each plant you registered. Remember that these labels will be removed immediately after judging is finished on Saturday morning, so don't attach them too firmly and don't use tape to stick them to the leaves.

You can put your empty boxes or other items under your table and leave them there during the show but do not leave valuables such as cellphone or camera.



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A number will be put on your display by the committee, for the judges to refer to during judging. Once judging is completed, a sign with your name will be placed on your display so everyone knows whose exhibit is whose. You do not need to worry about these points as they are done for you.

4. DURING THE SHOW

During the show you can look around at other displays and see what they have done, to give you ideas for your next show. Make notes of anything interesting – you will not be able to remember otherwise!

Mist the plants in your display if necessary, preferably before the show opens to the public .

5. SUNDAY TAKE DOWN

The show closes at 5PM on Sunday. As soon as it is closed everyone starts taking down their displays and things move very quickly. Take apart your display and re-pack everything you want to keep – don't leave anything behind! Don't forget to take your table covering as well as the rest of the display.

If you won any ribbons or rosettes they are yours to keep. Some of the trophies are only awarded for one year, but this will be explained to you if you are the winner.

6. CONCLUSION

We welcome individual displays entered by our members and we strongly encourage you to participate. All you need to enter in Class 1 is one plant! You will find that entering an exhibit is an enjoyable experience, and makes you feel an integral part of the orchid community in a way you cannot get by just coming as a visitor. It gives you a chance not only to show off your orchids but also to show off your artistic talents. Everyone who comes to the show appreciates the displays and we wouldn't have a show without you!