

Handbook For Judges and Show Officials

Ch 5 Best Specimen



Edition 8.0
July 2021

ISBN# 978-1-892400-07-9

Note: This chapter and others from the *Handbook for Judges* are available online. It is recommended that judges and other readers check out the Introduction and Table of Contents in the full version of the *Handbook* in order to know the full list of available resources, e.g., Glossary, essays, Judge's Activity Record, etc.

Chapter 5

SELECTING THE BEST SPECIMEN OF THE SHOW

Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, March 9, 2021

The selection of the Best Specimen of Show is the most important evaluation judges will make. This selection should be made carefully and conscientiously.

A candidate for Best Specimen of Show must be a variety with a registered or verifiable name, or a properly identified species (SPEC) or interspecies cross (SPEC-X) which best exhibits the characteristics most typical and nearly perfect in its classification. The choice is made from single specimen sections. The candidate for Best Specimen of Show must have won a first-place ribbon and a Best Specimen of Section Rosette (when the minimum section requirements are met: at least three exhibitors and at least five cultivars). However, outstanding first-place specimens in sections that do not meet the minimum requirements for Best Specimen of Section Rosette are still eligible for Best Specimen of Show. The candidate for Best Specimen of Show should meet the size limits described in its official registration. All youth horticultural entries are eligible for Best Specimen of Show. In the event that two specimens are judged equal, after point scoring all characteristics, the newer variety by year of introduction (or year of registration when no introduction date can be determined) should be placed higher because it represents to the public the closest current standard of perfection.

An iris with an AIS-registered name that has not yet been introduced (usually a new variety) is eligible for Best Specimen of Show if it is entered in the horticultural division. However, if such an iris is entered in the seedling division, it is not eligible for Best Specimen of Show.

The following exhibits are not eligible for Best Specimen of Show:

- Artistic and Educational entries
- English Box
- Single Blossom Entries
- Container-Grown Iris
- Bulbous Iris Entries

Seedlings

Iris from a section where another iris was awarded the Best Specimen of
Section Rosette

Misclassified or misnamed iris entries

Collection entries

“For Display Only” entries

For unique details on species (SPEC) or interspecies crosses (SPEC-X) in exhibition judging, see Chapter 18: Species & SPEC-X Iris. For unique “original registration” guidelines on historic iris in exhibition judging, see Chapter 22: Historic Iris.

If it is necessary that the top winners be chosen by the same judges who have evaluated the sections, the show chair should attempt to make the process as efficient as possible. One clerk on each panel could transport Best Specimen of Section winners to a previously designated table where they will be considered for higher honors. For those sections that did not qualify for Best Specimen of Section, the show chair or judges panel can decide which first-place winners will be considered for Best Specimen of Show along with the other specimens. With the first-place winners grouped on one table, the final selection is much easier.

In very large shows, one additional panel of judges can be assigned to select the better ones and send the others back to their proper sections. As the judging of the sections progresses, this elimination process is continued. The judges may retain as many first-place winners as they deem advisable for further evaluation. When judging of the specimen sections is finished, it should require minimal time to determine the top award winners. Such procedure often contributes to a timely show opening. The additional panel must be very careful to make consistent and accurate decisions, using point scoring as often as necessary.

It is recommended that a written ballot be used by the judges for selecting the best specimen of the show. This procedure prevents one judge from being verbally dominating and ensures a fair and democratic selection. The winner of Best Specimen of Show is determined by a simple majority of the judges’ votes.

Hybridizers serving as judges in the show may elect not to participate in this process when their introductions are under consideration. Likewise, if the show allows judges to enter exhibits, any judge whose entry is under consideration for Best Specimen of Show should not participate in the selection.