

# JUDGING MATTERS



Newsletter of the Garden Clubs of Ontario Judges' Council  
April 2018

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It appears spring is here as is the deadline for your accreditation renewals. In order to facilitate the transition to the incoming JC executive in early June, please ensure you submit your renewal documents and payment by April 31<sup>st</sup>.

Discussions are currently underway with the RBG who sponsors the *School for Horticulture Judges and Exhibitors* and accredits graduates. It is our hope that a School will begin in Spring or Fall 2019. If you would like to be placed on the list of interested individuals, please let me know as soon as possible. Spread the word, we need sufficient numbers to make the School happen.

You may have remarked that the May 29<sup>th</sup> date of our spring seminar is much later than usual. This later date allows for the use of garden plant material in the program. If you've ever had a horticultural entry or flowers/foliage in your design wilt or your design fall apart due to poor mechanics, attending the spring seminar is a must. Also not to be missed is the afternoon program on Alliums.

As this is my last newsletter, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their support the past two years. A special thank you goes to my fellow JC Executive for their dedication to organizing events of interest, introducing new programs and their friendship. You're a fabulous team!

*Heinke*

## JUDGES' COUNCIL EXECUTIVE 2016 – 2018



Heinke Thiessen  
CHAIR



Elizabeth Schleicher  
SECRETARY



Cathy Faber-Rowlands  
TREASURER



Judy Zinni  
DIRECTOR



Michael Erdman  
DIRECTOR

**SPRING SEMINAR**

**MAY 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**The Atrium, Royal Botanical Gardens**

***'Remain Standing, Mechanics from A to ...'***

presented by Lil Haworth

***'Standing Tall, Conditioning Garden Flowers & Foliage'***

presented by Lizzie Matheson

***'Alliums: Elegant & Edible'***

presented by "Michael Erdman"



**FALL SEMINAR**

**OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018**

Program to be determined.

**JUDGES' COUNCIL HOSTS**

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Judges' Council hosted a GCO General Meeting at the RBG. Ninety-one GCO members attended, 8 from Judges' Council. Following the business meeting, speaker Catherine Kavassalis presented 'Herbs – from the savoury to the sensual .... to deadly poison.'

The day's "just-for-fun" activities included a plant ID challenge, a gardener's alphabet quiz and a floral designer's alphabet quiz. These activities and the table centerpieces reflected who Judges' Council is – accredited floral design and horticulture judges. Pictured below are some of the 8 simple floral designs and 9 plant centerpieces which were given as door prizes at the end of the meeting. If you were unable to attend and would like to try the quizzes, please contact Heinke, [heinkejc@gmail.com](mailto:heinkejc@gmail.com), and she'll send you a digital copy.



Photos: Elizabeth Schleicher



## CONUNDRUMS

**Q. A recent discussion concerning horticulture judging centered around how to take into account, if at all, the difficulty of growing a particular specimen. Should this be considered, or is cultural perfection of the specimen the end game regardless of the challenge to grow? If considered, under which area of the scale of points would you allot the points?**

Several horticulture judges were asked to weigh in on this subject.

A. Difficulty to grow a specimen, or perhaps even an unusual specimen, could be considered as a tie-breaker when two specimens are neck-in-neck in all other aspects; the important factor is "all things being equal".

As to where to consider on scale of points, this could be considered under "distinction" if the scale of points being used for that exhibit includes distinction (ie. container-grown plants/collection of container-grown plants as opposed to cut specimens). Dr. Leslie Laking, former director of Royal Botanical Gardens, felt that a well-grown pelargonium is equal in merit to a well-grown orchid and should not be down-graded in any way for being a pelargonium! Another option would be to honour such an exhibit with a "Judge's Choice" award, if that is available, as the exhibit would not have to be a first-place winner.

Writing a comment on the entry card, whether the exhibit placed or not, is definitely recommended as this is educational for the public and rewarding for the exhibitor.

**Judges' Council Executive have received several other judging questions. Give the following some thought, discuss them with fellow judges and email Heinke, [heinkejc@gmail.com](mailto:heinkejc@gmail.com), with your conclusions. All points of view will be brought to the spring seminar. For the purpose of the discussion, we are judging according to OJES.**

### DESIGN CONUNDRUMS

- 1) Is sand permitted? At a show, someone sprinkled sand on the table as part of their design. Is this ok or not?
- 2) How much paper can be used in a design?

### HORTICULTURE CONUNDRUMS

- 1) In tonight's show there was a 15 year old orchid with blade-like leaves. Two of about 10 leaves had splits up the middle of the leaf with brown edges around the split. If it was your plant, would you remove the damaged leaves? If you were the judge, would you have not penalized the plant for the damaged leaves knowing that it showed age?
- 2) Once cannabis becomes legal this summer, individuals 19 years and older, will be permitted to grow up to 4 plants per residence. Should plants or cut specimens be permitted in flower shows? If so, where do they go – houseplant grown for foliage? Annual grown for foliage? Herb? Educational class? If not permitted, does the schedule need to specify?

## IMPRESSIONS FROM WAFA INDIA SEMINAR, February 2018

by ELLEN CLARK

How can you possibly sum up India - a complex, multi-layered country, full of compelling but unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells? An almost impossible task for those of us lucky enough to go to the WAFA India Seminar, held in Hyderabad and Kochi. But a few key impressions might begin to tell "Floral Tales," the Seminar theme. WAFA, "A Grand Floral Affair" will be held in Jaipur from February 26 till March 1, 2020. 19 Canadians travelled to India for the Seminar; there were 147 men and women in total from all around the world.



Graciousness – our Indian floral hostesses were the epitome of graciousness. The WAFA team in India is amazing. They provided us with exceptional tours to historical sights, well-prepared workshops to show us new skills with typical plant material such as jute, shola (a spongy, pithy plant that can be manipulated to form flowers) and gota (fabric embellishment), fabulous local entertainment (drummers and dancers) and attention to detail that made our trip run smoothly. "Auntie" Kavita Poddar is the most charming and gracious of all.

History and Education – India is a blend of ancient and modern. Hyderabad is a centre of historical sites. We visited the historic Golconda tombs, soon to be a Unesco World Heritage site, where each huge tomb is dedicated to one person and then went to Golconda fort, an extensive fort built from the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A sound and light show at dusk entertained us with the local history. We visited the Chowmahalla palace, where rulers from the 18<sup>th</sup> century lived in luxury. In a nod to India when it was ruled by the British, we had high tea at Faluknama palace –



now an exquisite hotel. In Kochi we visited the old town, learned about the spices of Kerala which is the south western part of India, had lunch in a traditional village, and went for a houseboat ride on the backwater canals. Bustling street markets are everywhere. It was wedding season, and hotels were decorated extensively for the festivities. Many of us ended up with henna'd hands just like a bride.



Floral Fashion Show - Instead of each country presenting an honorary exhibit, we were asked to present models in floral fashions representative of our country. To "Something to Sing About" Canada's team dressed 4 models in flowers of our 4 seasons. Clockwise from the left: Donalda Kelk - Winter, Diana Kennedy - Spring, Joyce Johnson - Summer and Wendy Downing wears fall.

Scotland was a thistle, South Africa a Zulu dancer, Bermuda presented a vignette in Bermuda shorts, and the Indians were gorgeous in their native dress.

Traffic – You just can't believe it! 5 lanes of traffic but no one following their lane, buses passing within centimetres of other buses, a cacophony of horns, little tuk tuks (taxis) and masses of scooters, all trying to claim their share of the road. It made the 401 look like a country road.

Food – was varied and plentiful. You could "eat Indian" complete with the spicy food, at every meal, but there were options for those with more sensitive palates. Twice we had a traditional meal served on a banana leaf, and meant to be eaten with your fingers – right hand only please, as your left hand is reserved for other not-as-clean uses. Bottled water was plentiful. And Kingfisher beer made several appearances on our tables!



Judging – the judging seminar was presented by Valerie Best and Leslie Staple from the UK. They provided us with extensive written background information and posed questions for discussion.

Valerie's key points were these

- Wafa rules must be applied to all exhibits at a Wafa show; in 2020 judges must not apply individual country rules
- Wafa Judges do not eliminate or disqualify an exhibit, but can down point depending on the perceived seriousness of the fault (oversized?) No Awards should be withheld.
- No 'likes' or 'dislikes': keep an open mind; schedules may have titles that provide for a wide variety of interpretation
- Interpretation: think in a wider context. DO NOT go into a competition with a fixed idea of what the interpretation should be
- How should artificial plant material be treated, which begs the question of WHAT is artificial plant material – plastic grapes for sure, but what about re-formed paper products? A Wafa Seminar can not make the decision, the wider Wafa governing body must discuss and decide
- Only top qualified judges should be invited

And with these points in mind, Valerie reminded us that judging involves looking at

1. Artistic merit – the creative use of elements and principles
2. Interpretation – appropriate use of title
3. Practical merit – perfect mechanics, clean containers, accessories in scale, space used well?
4. Distinction – is the design innovative, emotive, uplifting, "outside the box"?

Leslie Staple presented a discussion of period designs and their containers, reminding us how important it is for Judges to keep up to date with education, including the history of design and contemporary designs.

While Judges were attending the Judges seminar, the non- Judges were creating designs that we then judged, in International teams. It was reassuring to me that we generally followed the same criteria and spoke the same language as Judges from other countries. Plus, there was general agreement on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd placements!

Bollywood – no Indian party would be complete without Bollywood! All our hostesses practiced their steps and presented authentic Bollywood dancing on our final night, a fitting goodbye to old and new friends.

