

# Move Up To Purple From “Judged”

By Jeff R. Kerr, Ohio

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to clerk a number of daylily shows and hear the judges discuss the entries. Clerking a show is a great way to hear what the judges are looking for and what they do not like. Here is a list of what I have heard from the exhibition judges that has resulted in lower scoring of flowers:

- Last bloom - no more buds
- Stains on sides of the flower from past blooms.
- Dirt on buds or scapes.
- Scape thin and wimpy - daylily only one or two years old.
- Flower smaller than described in registration. Flower is 2” and registration says 3.5”.
- Flower problems - holes, creases, color distortion, and reds with color breaks. For some flowers such as dark reds, it is just very hard to find a perfect flower.
- Buds with thrip damage.
- Live thrips walking on flower.
- Buds crowding the flower which will not open completely.
- Flower partially open. Some flowers just don't open properly unless you have a very warm morning.
- There is more than one flower and the flowers crowd each other and touch.
- There is one average flower and one excellent flower.
- Stamens or pistils are missing.
- The flower is incorrectly named.
- The flower is in the wrong class.
- The flower is displayed too low or too high in the vase and is not presented well.
- The flower normally has a 36” scape but is displayed as only 12” tall in the vase.
- The plant is a weak looking specimen - flower small and scape wimpy possibly due to bad growing conditions.
- Bent scape - will not fit in the vase properly without leaning.

Some cultivars are just not good show plants. They almost always open with color breaks or imperfections. Don't bring them to the show unless you have an exceptional specimen.

Pristine condition wins!! Green color and fresh first blooms are great. Too bad you rarely find them in your garden when you need them. If the scape has bloomed five or six times and has a lot of brown, don't attempt to groom it. You will not be able to remove all the brown. Some other good ideas are listed below:

Good ideas:

- Groom your plants at home, then bring them in and set them in the vases.
- Find plants in your garden that are in pristine condition- first bloom with no brown on scape.
- Use a cotton swab to clean the scape and remove excess pollen that has fallen on the petals and sepals. Remove all stains or dirt on the scape.



Joanne Larson

At the Central Illinois Daylily Society Flower Show the clerk (left) rotates the scapes for judges to inspect. Judges present are Randall Klipp, Kim Isaacson and Lu Dickhaut (left to right).

- Do not engage in excessive scraping of the scape to remove brown spots.
- Check the flower parts to make sure they are all there.
- Remove any buds that are touching the flower.
- Enter flowers with straight scapes if possible.
- Check your flower presentation. It should not look too low or high in the vase.
- Carefully evaluate any dark red or purple flower that you want to enter. Does the flower have any color breaks?
- Is loose pollen on the flower? If so, you may not want to enter the flower.
- If you have multiple flowers, keep the best one and remove any weaker flowers.
- Only enter fully open flowers. Don't gamble that it will fully open during the show.
- If you are entering a tall scaped flower, show it in the vase as a tall scape.
- Use cotton balls to support your scape in the vase so it looks straight and is not leaning.

As mentioned earlier, some cultivars almost never win. A top branching plant almost always loses out to a 4-way or 5-way branching plant. Dull color loses out to bright color. Weak scapes lose out to strong scapes. Newer cultivars may have a strong scape that is up to one half inch in diameter that will not fit in the vase. Older cultivars may have a thin scape that makes the plant look like it has encountered poor growing conditions.

Some cultivars win frequently. These are listed in the annual printed AHS show results found in *The Daylily Journal*. Pay attention to what is winning shows if you want to move up to that purple ribbon.