



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETIES

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NAFAS Judges Bulletin April 2026

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Welcome

Welcome to the April 2026 Bulletin, ahead of the main Show season. We hope you have many opportunities to Judge this year. It's a privilege to be the first to enter a competition area... and a responsibility! We must constantly update our judging skills, so it's very encouraging to have such an overwhelming response to the Symposium. It's also important to continue as active competitors – when was the last time you exhibited?

Shining a Light on Still Life

Still Life classes prove to be very popular with competitors and the viewing public. Good Still Life exhibits are a delight to behold, but classes often have few exhibits of a really high standard.

Here we examine four exhibits from the Class 'Timeless Beauty' at the National Show in Gloucester last September, offering a "What's Good About It?" overview for each - highlighting positives and negatives. These are NOT Comment Cards; each exhibit includes more than one positive and one negative.

N.B.: Comments are based on 2D images, not how they appeared in 3D at the Show.

Thanks to the exhibitors who are credited and to Asaf Frank, courtesy of The Flower Arranger, for use of the images.

Still Life – Class Title: TIMELESS BEAUTY



Exhibit 1 – Michael Bowyer (placed 2nd)

Positive:

- Good use made of different planes
- A very harmonious colour scheme
- Textural contrasts used to good effect
- Interest created through variation of forms and sizes of the baskets and wicker covered bottle.

Negative:

- The front right placement is overfull, making it visually dominant—exacerbated by transparent glass containers placed on the left side.
- More space around the components would give a greater feeling of stillness.
- The negative impact of the straight edge of the base could be diminished by allowing plant material to cascade over it.

Still Life – Class Title: TIMELESS BEAUTY



Exhibit 2– Penelope Harrison (VHC)

Positive:

- The positioning of the groupings of fruit leads the eye diagonally across and into the design.
- The angular positioning of the wooden boxes adds depth and interest through the use of different planes.
- Good use of space around the components, allowing each to be appreciated.
- The choice of components gives good variation of height.

Negative:

- The blue glass has a more contemporary feel than the other components, causing a degree of disharmony.
- The taller pieces of glass are positioned to the back of the design in linear format which is distracting.
- The play of light on the taller blue glassware makes it visually dominant.

Still Life – Class Title: TIMELESS BEAUTY



Exhibit 3 – Susan Fairhurst (HC)

Positive:

- The pewter items, reminiscent of a bygone era, aid the theme of Timeless Beauty.
- The pewter items are of different heights, carrying the eye rhythmically around this area.
- Good colour association with the glaucous leaves of the plant and the pewter.
- The eye moves easily from the onions in the bowl, up to the loaf and a little higher to the wooden stopper.

Negative:

- The components to the left of the design tend to be placed as individual items rather than in groups, reducing the sense of stillness.
- An overuse of thin vertical lines and underuse of round forms on this side also reduces the feeling of stillness.
- There is a lack of harmony between the choice and use of the components on the left side with the rest of the design.

Still Life – Class Title: TIMELESS BEAUTY



Exhibit 4 – Dallas Taylor (not placed)

Positive:

- The choice of components elicits a strong sense of times past.
- Their beauty aids the interpretation of Timeless Beauty.
- The repetition of pink tones creates rhythm and leads the eye through the design.
- Variation of forms adds interest.

Negative:

- Components are scattered - grouping would create a greater feeling of stillness.
- A base would help draw the components together.
- Many components are laid flat rather than creating interest through variation of heights.

Common Faults in Still Life Exhibits

- Inclusion of a component(s) which detracts from an otherwise harmonious exhibit (e.g. wrong colour/era/ambience).
- No base used when one would have helped.
- Lack of effective grouping – dotting of components.
- Rhythm that moves the eye too quickly or, staccato rhythm, causing the eye to jump from one area to another.

Key Points for Accomplished Still Life Exhibits

- Harmony achieved between all components.
- Components grouped so as to lead the eye gently around the exhibit.
- Not overfilled – space around components to enable their appreciation.
- Components visually linked.

Salient Phrases from the Competitions Manual (pp. 18 & 19)

1. Aesthetic grouping
2. A feeling of harmony and stillness
3. The use of different planes
4. Space that allows all components to be fully appreciated
5. Components visually linked

Wide Horizons – National Show 2027

The spacious halls at Lincoln Show-grounds will be the amazing venue for the 2027 National Show. The venue is wonderful and will showcase the artistic creativity of our members in 16 competitive classes. Following a site visit in early February, the Schedule—due for release this summer—will inspire and provide for a diverse range of design styles and creativity which we hope will excite Competitors.

Judges Symposium at Tiverton 9-11th October 2026

We are delighted to report that the initial tranche of 40 places was booked out within 10 days. It's great to see such enthusiasm. Further places were made available and, again, these have all been taken up. We now have over 50 National and Area Judges attending!! Displacement, which is such an on-trend style, together with Meadow and Steampunk, both newly introduced in the 2023 Competitions Manual will be the main focus of design and judging discussions.

NAFAS Members Passing Area Judges Tests in 2025

Congratulations! We wish them well in their forthcoming judging assignments.

- Successful at a Test organised by the Devon & Cornwall Area of NAFAS:- Hanna Best, Heather Braunton, Angela Chanter, Avril Lashbrook. Also, Diane Pillioert from the Dorset & Guernsey Area
- Successful at a Test organised by the East of England Area of NAFAS:- Rachael Borenkova, Helen Evans, Naomi Wells. Also, Fiona Harrison, a member of BB&O and Home Counties Areas, Anne McPherson - Home Counties Area and Angela Woodley – L&O Area.

New National Judges in 2025

Seven Area Judges upgraded their Area qualification to become National Judges. Congratulations – we hope they enjoy this next phase of their judging careers.

- Carol Baker, Flower clubs of Cheshire
- Martina Coleman, Wessex & Jersey
- Pen Harrison, Mercia & N Wales
- Sionedd Hughes, Mercia & N Wales
- Elizabeth Murray, NIGFAS
- Linda Porrett, Surrey
- Donna Savage, Wessex & Jersey

Floral Quiz

Test Your Flower Knowledge in Our Floral World Quiz!

1. Where is Anigozanthos native to?
2. Where does Leucospermum originate?
3. Helleborus orientalis is native to which region?
4. Nigella damascena originates from where?
5. Eustoma is native to which continent?
6. Gladiolus originates from which region?
7. What is the common name of Nymphaea?
8. Waratah naturally grows in which part of Australia?
9. Grevillea belongs to which plant family?
10. Dahlias originate from where?

Quiz Answers

- 1. Western Australia
- 2. South Africa
- 3. Greece/Turkey
- 4. Southern Europe/North Africa
- 5. North America
- 6. Southern Africa
- 7. Water lily
- 8. Coastal NSW
- 9. Proteaceae
- 10. Mexico