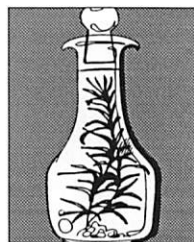


# HERBS AND VINEGARS



## QUICK HERB SPREADS

Try easy spreads to serve with crackers, melba toast, thin slices of baguette or cut up raw vegetables. Coat low fat or fat free cream cheese or a blend of equal parts ricotta cheese and cottage cheese with a chopped fresh herb mixture, or blend the herbs into the cheese. Try one of these combos, or create your own:

Chopped fresh basil and sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil, drained and chopped  
Chopped fresh parsley and grated lemon zest  
Ground black pepper and chopped fresh oregano  
Chopped fresh sage and chopped, pitted, oil-cured black olives  
Chopped roasted garlic and finely chopped fresh thyme

### Herb/Vegetable Combinations from A to Z

Asparagus:	chives, dill, lemon balm, tarragon
Brussels Sprouts:	dill, sage, savory
Cabbage:	borage, caraway, dill seed, marjoram, mint, parsley, sage, savory, sweet basil, thyme
Carrots:	chervil, mint, parsley
Cauliflower:	chives, dill leaf and seed, fennel, rosemary
Green Beans:	dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme
Lentils:	garlic, mint, parsley, savory, sorrel
Mushrooms:	basil, dill, lemon balm, marjoram, parsley, rosemary, salad burnet, savory, tarragon, thyme
Onions:	basil, marjoram in soup, oregano, sage, tarragon, thyme
Peas:	basil, chervil, marjoram in soup, oregano, sage, tarragon, thyme
Potatoes:	basil, bay, chives, dill, lovage, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme
Sauerkraut:	dill, fennel seed, lovage, savory, tarragon, thyme
Spinach:	borage, chervil, marjoram, mint, rosemary for soup, sage, sorrel, tarragon
Tomatoes:	basil, bay, chervil, Chinese chives, chives, dill seed, garlic, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, savory, tarragon
Turnips:	dill seed, marjoram, savory
Zucchini:	basil, dill, marjoram, rosemary, tarragon

## HERB GROWING

NAME	TYPE	PLANTING LOCATION
Rosemary	Perennial	Full/Part Sun
Sage	Perennial	Full Sun
Mints	Perennial	Full/Part Sun
Marjoram	Perennial	Full Sun
Oregano	Perennial	Full Sun (Replace when woody)
Parsley	Biennial	Full/Part Sun
Caraway	Biennial	Full Sun/Light Shade
Chives	Perennial (bulb)	Full Sun
Dill	Hardy Annual	Full Sun
Lavender	Perennial	Full Sun
Thyme	Perennial	Full/Part Sun
Tarragon	Perennial	Full/Part Sun

## JUDGING HERB VINEGARS

### Preparation:

- a.) Collect and read information about the category you will be judging.
- b.) Actually do what you will be judging so you know the category from A to Z.
- c.) Do not eat onions or other foods prior to judging that would weaken your sense of taste and smell.

### Arrival:

- a.) Familiarize yourself with the people in charge of the show.
- b.) Look over your classes.
- c.) Read the premium book for guidelines and rules.

### Dress Professionally

Have the tools needed to judge with you (ruler, magnifier, knife, reference books, listings of new cultivars in the category you are judging, etc.).

### Actual Judging Criteria

1. Must have a sparkling clean container
2. Vinegar must be crystal clear
3. Vinegars should be labeled as to ingredients
4. Labels should be dated
5. A ribbon seal is nice
6. Decorative bottles are nice
7. Vinegar should have a clean aroma, not strong, and a pleasing full taste
8. Herbs in the vinegar should look fresh without imperfect leaves (diseased or insect damaged)
9. Absolutely no insects in the container
10. Should be several samples of the herb in the container
11. Look for market value - would you purchase the sample if it was for sale

### Problems Seen In Exhibits

1. Sediment in bottom of container
2. Liquid not clear - cloudy
3. Not properly labeled or dated
4. Wrong herb listed on the label
5. Using other than glass container
6. Incorrect lids - should be cork, plastic or glass
7. Molds on the surface of the vinegar

## GENERAL RULES FOR HERB JUDGING

1. Check the appropriate premium book for rules and regulations of the show or fair. Request a premium book when you agree to judge.
2. Acquaint yourself with information on the classes you will be judging. Get catalogs with examples of what is available on the market. Use resource materials at hand to answer your own questions and as a reference to reinforce your judging decisions.
3. Become familiar with show's geographic location in order to determine the herb's growing culture and locally available varieties.
4. Arrive early at the site and preview the classes. Now that the basics are covered, you begin to judge the herbs as exhibited.
5. You will be looking for:

cleanliness and freshness - look at stem, leaves, etc.

insect damage

diseases

greening - sunburn or shade

over mature

immature

not true to variety

poor general appearance

mold

too many/too few stems (specimens)

not labeled/labeled with botanical and common name

entered in correct class

container presentation - leaves removed below water level

**Showmanship is that something extra in presentation that makes the difference between a Champion and a Grand Champion.**

# JUDGING HERBS AND VINEGARS

INCLUDES MATERIAL FROM THE ONLINE MAAFS GUIDELINES



New Material Copyright 2010 by Elizabeth Olson

Saturday, April 24, 2010

## Look for Skill Level, Market Quality, and Showmanship

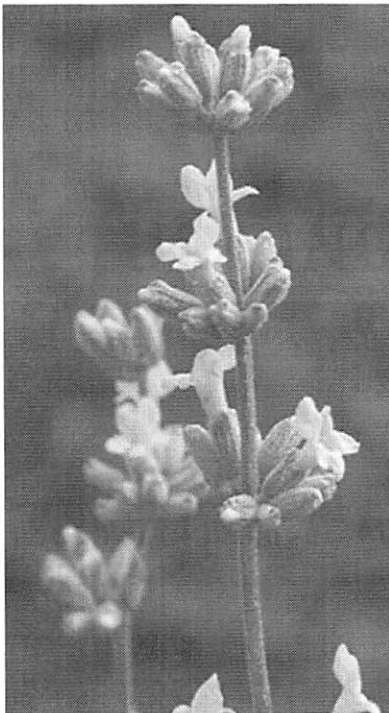


Photo courtesy of Mountain Valley Growers

*Lavandula angustifolia*  
'Jean Davis'

The selections of herbs and vinegars available in local garden centers and markets are no longer limited. Even more selections are available by mail order.

Judges need to be familiar with the many types of herbs and vinegars — and the standards of excellence for each.

Exhibitors should always start with healthy plants, commercially produced vinegars, and the best ingredients to add to the vinegars.

**Skill level** is reflected in the quality of the entry. Herbs and vinegars should be well produced and well presented.

**Market quality:** Would this product be salable on a market shelf?

**Showmanship** is that something extra in presentation that makes the difference between a Champion and a Grand Champion.

### *Special points of interest:*

- ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN. SEE PG. 2
- TOOLS FOR JUDGES ARE LISTED ON PG. 3
- MAY IS NATIONAL VINEGAR MONTH. SEE THE VINEGAR INSTITUTES'S WEBSITE:  
[www.VersatileVinegar.org](http://www.VersatileVinegar.org)

### Inside this Guide

PREPARATION AND ARRIVAL	2
POTTED HERBS	3
CUT HERBS	4
DRY HERBS	4
FLAVORED VINEGARS	4
CONTAINERS FOR VINEGARS	5
HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE IN INTAKE ASSISTANCE, CLERKING, AND JUDGING	6

## Where to Find Herbs and Vinegars at a Fair

Potted and cut herbs are usually placed in a different division than vinegar:

1. Cut and potted herbs might be grouped with vegetables or flowers
2. Vinegars will probably be grouped with preserved foods
3. Dried herbs might be grouped with either cut and potted herbs or with preserved foods

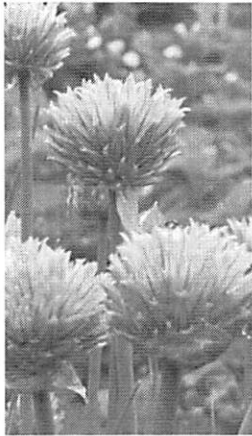


Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

Chives  
*Allium schoenoprasum*

LOOK OVER THE  
ENTRIES AND  
REVIEW THE  
CLASSES



Photo Courtesy of Seed Savers Exchange

Cilantro  
*Coriandrum sativum*

## Judging Herbs and Vinegars

---

### Preparation

Collect and read information about each category that you will be judging. Obtain a copy of the premium book in advance. Ask the supervisor to mail one to you, if necessary. Another option is to download the relevant sections of the premium book from the fair's website if the book is available online.

Also find out if the fair provides: 1) Any food or refreshments, 2) An honorarium or mileage reimbursement, and 3) Tickets and parking passed to the fair.

Plan your wardrobe. Many fairs do not have air conditioning. Fairs take place in hot weather, frequently in buildings with little air circulation. You must dress professionally, but you need to be practical.

Assemble a tool kit. See Page 3.

Be a competitor in your home county fair! Actually do what you will be judging so that you know the categories from A to Z and are familiar with the entire competition process.

### Arrival

Arrive early.

Prior to and during judging: DO NOT SMOKE or eat, drink, or consume anything that could adversely affect your senses of taste and smell.

Familiarize yourself with the people who are in charge of the show.

Look over the entries and review the classes. Read the premium book for fair guidelines and rules. Ask the supervisor if there have been any last minute changes. *If you have any questions about whether an entry is in the correct section or division, immediately talk to the supervisor.*

### Accidents can—and Probably Will—Happen

Be prepared for accidents and spills:

- Containers might chip or break
- Soil and liquid can spill over the exhibit area
- Corks can break
- Plant material might break or tear

## Tools and Supplies for Judges

Judges have to supply most, if not all, of their own tools and personal supplies. These are very useful:

- Ruler
- Magnifier
- Sharp parrot-beaked shears and sharp scissors
- Jar opener
- Space pen
- #2 pencils and hand-held pencil sharpener
- Reference materials
- Microfiber towels
- Moistened hand wipes, such as Wet Ones™
- Paper towels
- Drinking water and white bread or plain crackers

Also consider using:

- A portable light — such as an Otlite
- An extra-long, heavy duty extension cord

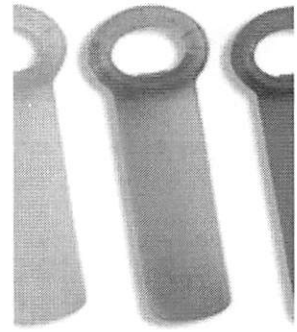


Photo Courtesy of The Container Store

A Jar Pop™ will break the vacuum on a two-piece canning jar lid

## General Rules for Judging All Herb Classes

Be familiar with the show's geographic location to determine the growing season, cultural conditions, and available herb varieties.

- Property of the exhibitor
- Correct class
- Any label requirements usually include the name(s) of the herb(s)
- Each herb is true to variety
- No pests or disease
- There should be no visible damage, including: sunburn, mechanical, storm, chemical, pest, disease, etc.
- Well groomed entry
- Clean container of the correct or appropriate size and style. Do not give extra points for fancy containers or decorations

A MISCELLANEOUS or NOT LISTED ABOVE class **cannot be used to exhibit:**

- 1) An entry of a class that is already listed in the fair book
- 2) A second entry of the same class for the same exhibitor

### POTTED HERBS

SHOULD BE  
HEALTHY, WELL  
GROWN, CLEAN,  
AND FRESH

## Potted Herbs

- Plant(s) must be owned by the exhibitor for a set minimum amount of time and be healthy, well grown, clean, and fresh
- Correct or appropriate number of plants
- Appropriate maturity level, well shaped; balance in volume with multiple varieties
- Inspect all parts of the pot as well as the top of the soil to check for hidden pests. **If you find any pests, talk to the supervisor about the department's protocol, and make a note on the entry card**
- Well-groomed entry includes container presentation — free of weeds.

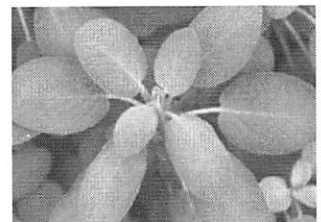


Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

MATURITY LEVEL OF POTTED HERBS:

- 1) Enough to demonstrate the growth habit of the species and cultivar, and
- 2) Not overmature





Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

Stevia  
*Stevia rebaudiana*

#### MOST CUT HERBS

THAT ARE  
DISPLAYED FOR  
THEIR LEAVES  
AND STEMS  
SHOULD HAVE  
VERY FEW, IF  
ANY, FLOWERS



Photo courtesy of Mountain Valley Growers

Egyptian mint,  
*Mentha niliaca*

## Judging Herbs and Vinegars

### Cut Herbs

- The herb(s) must be owned and grown by the exhibitor for a set minimum amount of time before they are cut. *Cilantro might be a possible exception*
- Correct or appropriate number and length of stems
- Appropriate maturity level. Consistency in size, shape, and length in multiple stems; and balance in multiple varieties
- Cut herbs should be healthy, well grown, clean, and fresh.
- No pests. Discuss this with the supervisor and make a note on the entry card. ***Parsley worms are especially voracious and need to be removed***
- No embellishments
- Well-groomed entry: includes container presentation — leaves removed below water level
- Most cut herbs that are displayed for their leaves and stems should have very few, if any, flowers. This includes cilantro, mint, and oregano

### Dried Herbs

- Produced by the exhibitor
- Dried herbs should have consistency in size in stems and leaves
- Well preserved
- Container should be of an appropriate size and style. Glass is best. It should be clean, clear, and colorless
- Lids should be clean and free of rust
- Correct or appropriate quantity of herbs
- Well-groomed entry, includes container presentation. There should be no debris in the container

### Criteria for Judging Flavored Vinegars

- **DO NOT SHAKE THE CONTAINER.** Carefully check for clarity of the vinegar. There should be no sediment on the bottom of the container.
- Correct class
- Approved container and closure
- Well groomed entry — includes no sleeve on the bottle neck and no dispenser in the bottle opening
- Correct fill line
- Flavored vinegar should be accurately labeled as to the ingredients and the production date
- The only ingredients allowed in flavored vinegar are vinegar, herbs, spices (inc. hot peppers and onion), edible flowers, and fruits
- There should be no salt, sugar, artificial sweeteners, flavor extracts, food coloring, etc.

### Criteria for Judging Flavored Vinegars, cont.

- The flavors should be well blended
- The original ingredients used to flavor and color the vinegar should have been strained from the product
- It is **OPTIONAL** to add small amounts of fresh ingredients to the flavored vinegar at the time it is bottled. Herbs and edible flowers in the vinegar should be clean and fresh, and be free of air bubbles and damage
- *If the fair or Health Department*

*does not allow vinegar containers to be opened, then extra weight must be placed on all other criteria*

#### CAUTION:

1. Excessive amounts of herbs, spices, and so forth in the finished vinegar adversely affect the product, and
2. Flavored vinegars should be kept cool — preferably refrigerated — before being entered in a fair. This is especially important for flavored vinegars made from rice and wine vinegars



Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

HERBS AND EDIBLE FLOWERS IN THE VINEGAR SHOULD BE CLEAN AND FRESH, AND BE FREE OF AIR BUBBLES AND DAMAGE

### Containers and Closures for Flavored Vinegars

All fairs require any flavored vinegar entry to be in an approved, sparkling clean, sealable glass container. NO cruet, mayonnaise jar, etc.

The size and type of a container for flavored vinegar might be indicated in the fair book, but if not, look for the following:

- The container should provide a good presentation. It should be made of **clear glass** that is colorless or that has a very pale tint. There should be no chips or cracks in it

- It should be easy to see through the glass to check the fill line as well as to check the clarity of the vinegar and to see any other ingredients
- Approved closures include:
  1. New air-tight plastic wine tasting stopper
  2. Vacu Vin™ stopper
  3. New food grade cork
  4. Plastic storage lid
  5. Rust-free metal lid — either a one-piece or a two-piece lid for canning jars

#### THE CONTAINER

SHOULD PROVIDE A GOOD PRESENTATION

### There are Many Types of Bottles and Jars

The following containers work well for flavored vinegars:

- Wine bottles in various shapes, 375 mL, 500 mL and 750 mL sizes
- Vinegar bottles, 500 mL size

- Selected canning jars, 16 oz., 24 oz., and tall 1L sizes  
[Note: Flavored vinegars are neither water bath canned nor pressure canned]

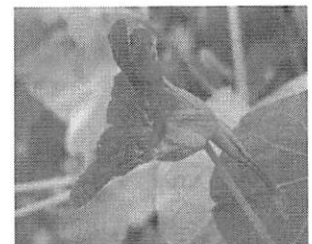


Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

NASTURTIUM  
TROPAEOLUM MAJUS

THE FLOWERS CAN BE USED TO ADD COLOR TO FLAVORED VINEGAR