



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

**Cooperative Extension
of Mercer County**

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



107th Annual Mercer County 4-H Fair **July 25 & 26, 2026**

EXHIBITOR CATALOG



In partnership with Howell Living History Farm,
a unit of the Mercer County Park Commission



Dear 4-H Family and Friends,

Please join us for the **107th Annual Mercer County 4-H Fair** at the **Howell Living History Farm**.

This community event showcases the work of our 4-H leaders, members, parents and the greater community or general public. Our fair is an excellent place for the members of Mercer County 4-H and the residents of Mercer County to showcase their talents and receive recognition for their individual entries.

Please take some time to look through the divisions and classes. Each division title refers you to a page with judging criteria to prepare you for exhibiting your entry, and for what to expect from the judging process.

Exhibitors must deliver their entries to Howell Living History Farm by Thursday, July 23 between 3:00 and 7:00 pm. Exhibit forms will be available during exhibit entry on Thursday, and they are also available on page 14 of this booklet.

*Thank you to the many 4-H club leaders, volunteers, and parents
who support the 4-H program and the youth of our county.*

Sincerely,

Chad Ripberger
County 4-H Agent

Altaira Bejgrowicz
4-H Program Associate

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County
Mercer County 4-H
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2026 MERCER COUNTY 4-H FAIR

GENERAL RULES

1. Individuals who are not current 4-H members may enter exhibits in the *Open Division*.
2. Mercer County 4-H members are eligible to exhibit their work. 4-H members must have completed at least fourth grade and must not have been out of high school for more than one year. Cloverbud members (K-3) may exhibit their projects, but they will not be judged (a Cloverbud participation ribbon will be given).
3. All entries exhibited will be judged against a standard, with or without other entries in the division.
4. Entries must be delivered to Howell Living History Farm by Thursday, July 23, between 3:00 & 7:00 pm.
5. Late entries will be accepted at the discretion of the 4-H staff.
6. Exhibit forms will be available at the fair during entry.
7. 4-H Exhibit Entry/Evaluation form must be securely attached to all exhibits throughout display time.
8. All exhibits must be the result of the current year's work done by the individual entering the exhibit.
9. All exhibits must be removed between 4:00 - 5:00 pm on Sunday July 26th. Entries not promptly picked-up will be left at the risk of the exhibitor. Someone other than yourself may enter and pick-up your items for you.
10. Please check the specific rules for each division.
11. Animal exhibitors are responsible for the care and clean-up of their animals at all times.
12. The judges may disqualify any entry not meeting the requirements as listed in this Exhibit Book.
13. Only ONE (1) entry per class will be accepted per exhibitor.

OPEN DIVISION (non 4-H members)

To participate in the Open Division at the Mercer County 4-H Fair, one must:

1. Live in Mercer County or the surrounding area.
2. Have made or grown the exhibit within the past year, August 2025 - July 2026.
3. Open to any age – youth or adult
4. Only 4-H members and those invited to show their animals can exhibit live animals. Medical clearance is required before an animal may participate in the 4-H fair.

4-H DIVISION (4-H members)

To participate in the 4-H Division at the Mercer County 4-H Fair, you must:

1. Be an active member in any Mercer County 4-H school, community, after-school, or special interest program.
2. Have made or grown the exhibit within the 4-H year, August 2025 - July 2026.
3. 4-H members are permitted to enter an item in the 4-H Division, and a second item in the same class in the Open Division.

ANIMAL DIVISION

1. All animals must be current with all appropriate vaccinations.
2. No sick animals will be allowed on the fairgrounds.

SPECIFIC RULES for animal classes will be supplied by the division superintendent.

AWARDS

1. 4-H exhibits will be judged by the Danish system – no competition between exhibits. Each is judged independently against set standards.
2. Ribbons will be awarded to those judged “Excellent”, “Very Good”, “Good”, and “Fair”.
3. 4-H Cloverbud members (grades K-3) will receive a participation ribbon.
4. Exhibits may be entered for “Exhibition Only” upon the request of the exhibitor. Participation ribbons will be awarded to those entered for “Exhibition only”.
5. In each division, a “Best of Division” award will be given if an exhibit is judged to earn this award.
6. A “Care Takers Award” will be given to the exhibitor with the neatest kept animal area.
7. Fairgoers will have the opportunity to vote for their overall favorite exhibit. A *Fairgoers favorite* ribbon will be awarded in both Open and 4-H Divisions and placed for the public to see on Sunday, July 26th.

EXHIBITS CATALOG

DIVISION 1 – 4-H BOOTH DISPLAYS

1. Booths should follow the theme chosen for the current year’s fair. There will be no duplications of the dominant theme or props of previous years.
2. Members *guided* by leaders are to plan their own club displays. Adults may not assist youth in setting-up booth displays at the fair. Adult assistance will be grounds for disqualification.
3. No product in the display will be eligible for individual member award.
4. Club members must create displays. Materials used may be obtained from commercial sources.
5. Each booth display will have 4 feet of table space to use.
6. All clubs will use the same standardized 4-foot booth backs, which are available at the Extension Office. Display may be 30” above the tabletop. Banners or signs may be hung from the front of the table and items may be placed on the floor in front of the table.
7. No electricity will be permitted, only batteries.
8. The 4-H office will supply the tables used. However, other materials will not be furnished.
9. Clubs setting-up displays in this division must make an entry just as individual members in other divisions. Please use the correct entry form.
10. Displays will be judged on the following points:

1) Attracts attention	Points
a) Suitable subject with viewer appeal	10
b) Effective title – clear, short and well planned	10
c) Good layout, color, and design	15
2) Carries out theme	20
3) General appearance and workmanship (neat, clean, uncluttered, finished look, correct grammar and spelling)	20
4) Originality and creativity	25
5) Bonus points (best 4-H promotion, most original, most creative, best layout)	5

11. Booth displays must be assembled at the fair between the hours of 3:00 and 7:00 PM on Thursday, July 23rd, ONLY. All booths must be dismantled between 4:00 - 5:00 pm on Sunday, July 26th. Please check in before setting up booths.

DIVISION 2– ARTS & CRAFTS (judging criteria, p.10)

4-H Exhibit Entry/Evaluation forms must be securely attached to exhibits throughout display time.

Class 2-1	Basket - must demonstrate at least one weaving technique, may feature purchased bottom
Class 2-2	Metal craft - not jewelry
Class 2-3	Leather craft - not jewelry
Class 2-4	Ceramics (pre-made)
Class 2-5	Origami - stamping - scratching paper
Class 2-6	Decoupage
Class 2-7	Holiday ornament
Class 2-8	Woodworking kit
Class 2-9	Silk screen printed object
Class 2-10	Tie Dye object
Class 2-11	Scrapbooking Project
Class 2-12	Duct Tape craft
Class 2-13	Rainbow loom craft
Class 2-14	Repurposed art or craft
Class 2-15	Any other craft or artwork (if from a kit, please indicate)

DIVISION 3 – FINE ARTS (judging criteria, p.10)

4-H Exhibit Entry/Evaluation forms must be securely attached to exhibits throughout display time.

Class 3-1	Sculpture - clay, papier mâché, or other additive process
Class 3-2	Sculpture - wood, stone, carved or other subtractive process
Class 3-3	Sculpture - found object
Class 3-4	Sculpture - other medium
Class 3-5	Watercolor painting
Class 3-6	Oil painting
Class 3-7	Acrylic painting
Class 3-8	Pen and ink drawing
Class 3-9	Graphite pencil drawing
Class 3-10	Color pencil drawing
Class 3-11	Pastel drawing
Class 3-12	Marker drawing
Class 3-13	Charcoal drawing
Class 3-14	Crayon drawing
Class 3-15	Mixed media painting
Class 3-16	Block print - E-Z cut or linoleum block
Class 3-17	Block print - wood block
Class 3-18	Etching print
Class 3-19	Digital art print
Class 3-20	Wood burning
Class 3-21	Woodcarving – figure or plaque, hand or kit
Class 3-22	Wood Working - Simple project – such as breadboard or rack for holding tools
Class 3-23	Wood Working - Advanced project – such as furniture
Class 3-24	Wood Working - Turned wood piece

Class 3-25	Wood Working - Upholstered piece
Class 3-26	Wood Working - Repurposed work worked piece
Class 3-27	Wood Working - Other piece
Class 3-28	Other fine art piece

DIVISION 4 – SEWING: CLOTHING, HOME DÉCOR & LINENS

(judging criteria, p.10)

4-H Exhibit Entry/Evaluation forms must be securely attached to exhibits throughout display time. Please provide your own means of display.

Class 4-1	Simple dress - no closures, basic fitting
Class 4-2	Intermediate dress - basic fitting through seams, closures
Class 4-3	Advanced dress - formal wear, detailed construction and fitting
Class 4-4	Basic pants or skirt - drawstring or elastic waist, no pockets or fly opening
Class 4-5	Advanced pants or skirt - fitted waist/waistband, closures, pockets
Class 4-6	Basic top/jacket/vest - simple construction, minimal shaping through seams
Class 4-7	Advanced top/jacket/vest - fitted, tailored construction
Class 4-8	Basic multi-piece outfit - dress and jacket; skirt, blouse, and jacket; etc.
Class 4-9	Advanced multi-piece outfit - dress and jacket; skirt, blouse, and jacket; etc.
Class 4-10	Knitwear
Class 4-11	Millinery/headwear
Class 4-12	Basic bag or purse - tote, hobo, other simple construction with no closures
Class 4-13	Advanced bag or purse - detailed construction, zipper, frame, or other type of closure
Class 4-14	Shoes or slippers
Class 4-15	Other women's accessories - shawl, scarf, belt, gloves, etc.
Class 4-16	Menswear
Class 4-17	Men's accessories - tie, cummerbund, pocket square, etc.
Class 4-18	Original pattern, hand-drafted or digitally drafted - must include all pieces and finished product, photo, or sketch
Class 4-19	Costume, historical recreation, cosplay
Class 4-20	Doll clothing
Class 4-21	Sewn animal, toy, etc.
Class 4-22	Children's formalwear - christening gown, etc.
Class 4-23	Curtains, drapes, or other window treatments
Class 4-24	Bedding, set - bedspread, pillowcases, shams, sheets, dust ruffle
Class 4-25	Bedding, individual - bedspread, pillowcases, shams, sheets, dust ruffle
Class 4-26	Quilt - machine quilted, pieced top
Class 4-27	Quilt - hand quilted, pieced top
Class 4-28	Quilt - machine quilted, un-pieced top
Class 4-29	Quilt - hand quilted, un-pieced top
Class 4-30	Quilt - hand appliqued top
Class 4-31	Quilt - machine appliqued top
Class 4-32	Quilt - Tie quilted
Class 4-33	Decorative or throw pillow/pillow cover
Class 4-34	Weaving - tapestry or wall hanging
Class 4-35	Weaving - other woven object/fabric

Class 4-36	Table décor, set - table cloth, runner, placemats, napkins
Class 4-37	Table décor, individual - table cloth, runner, placemats, napkins
Class 4-38	Kitchen décor - cozies/covers, towels, potholders
Class 4-39	Rug - latch hook
Class 4-40	Rug - rag rug
Class 4-41	Blanket, throw, or afghan, sewn
Class 4-42	Blanket, throw, or afghan, tied or other assembly method
Class 4-43	Any other sewn project - hand sewn or machine sewn
Class 4-44	Other home décor or linens item

DIVISION 5 – NEEDLEWORK & HANDWORK (judging criteria, p.10)

4-H Exhibit Entry/Evaluation forms must be securely attached to exhibits throughout display time.

Class 5-1	Basic crochet project – displaying mastery or stitch types
Class 5-2	Advanced crochet project, flat object – blanket, afghan, throw, scarf, shawl, etc.
Class 5-3	Advanced crochet project, 3D object – clothing, toy, or other shaped and dimensional item
Class 5-4	Basic knit project – displaying mastery or stitch types
Class 5-5	Advanced knit project, flat object – blanket, afghan, throw, scarf, shawl, etc.
Class 5-6	Advanced knit project, 3D object – clothing, toy, or other shaped and dimensional item
Class 5-7	Embroidery – preprinted, basic kit
Class 5-8	Embroidery – counted cross stitch from either a kit or pattern/chart
Class 5-9	Embroidery – cross stitch or canvas stitch on plastic canvas, flat object
Class 5-10	Embroidery – cross stitch or canvas stitch on plastic canvas, 3D objects
Class 5-11	Embroidery - bargello/brick stitch/flame stitch/etc.
Class 5-12	Embroidery - goldwork or silverwork
Class 5-13	Embroidery – black/red/white/other monochrome work
Class 5-14	Embroidery – stumpwork/crewel
Class 5-15	Embroidery – any other type of embroidery or needlework
Class 5-16	Knotting and braiding - macramé, friendship bracelets, etc.
Class 5-17	Lacemaking – tatting, bobbin lace, tape lace, needle lace, etc. (no knit or crocheted lace)
Class 5-18	Jewelry – woven
Class 5-19	Jewelry – sewn
Class 5-20	Jewelry – metal/chain
Class 5-21	Jewelry - leather
Class 5-22	Jewelry - other
Class 5-23	Handspun skein
Class 5-24	Needle felted piece - flat
Class 5-25	Needle felted piece - 3D object
Class 5-26	Any other handwork project

DIVISION 6 – FOODS & NUTRITION (judging criteria, p.10)

All food must be on paper or plastic plates or in disposable containers and placed inside a clear sealable bag or use wrap. Put a recipe card and suggested number of servings on item (see specific class for details).

Class 6-1	Muffins
Class 6-2	1 coffee cake

Class 6-3	Loaf of quick or fruit bread
Class 6-4	4 drop cookies
Class 6-5	4 rolled cookies
Class 6-6	4 cookie bars
Class 6-7	4 cupcakes
Class 6-8	1 single layer cake
Class 6-9	1 double layer cake, frosted
Class 6-10	3 pastries
Class 6-11	1 yeast bread – white or other
Class 6-12	3 yeast rolls
Class 6-13	Pie – single or double crust or crumb of any variety
Class 6-14	3 candies – chocolate, hard jellied or other
Class 6-15	Revise an old recipe to make it more healthful
Class 6-16	Home preservation – sweet jelly or jam
Class 6-17	Home preservation – savory jelly or jam
Class 6-18	Home preservation - sauces
Class 6-19	Home preservation - pickles
Class 6-20	Home preservation - vinegars, dressings, or marinades
Class 6-21	Honey
Class 6-22	Syrup
Class 6-23	Any other baked good or food related item

DIVISION 7 – PRIDE OF THE CROP (judging criteria, pp. 10-12)

Bring your own paper plate for your item (where appropriate)

Class 7-1	Sheaf of grain
Class 7-2	Flake of hay
Class 7-3	Flake of straw
Class 7-4	Sample of grain – 1 cup
Class 7-5	3 tree fruit – apple, pear, peach or other
Class 7-6	1 cluster or cup vine fruit – grape or other perennial
Class 7-7	1 vine fruit – annual such as cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew, or other
Class 7-8	1 pint or cup bush fruit – strawberries, currants, blackberries, or other
Class 7-9	3 pods of snap beans – any color including pole
Class 7-10	3 pods of flat beans – any color including pole
Class 7-11	3 pods of Lima beans – either pole or bush
Class 7-12	3 beets – any color or type, stems and leaves should remain on
Class 7-13	Cabbage – one head
Class 7-14	3 carrots – with stems and leaves
Class 7-15	3 ears of sweet corn – any color
Class 7-16	3 slicing cucumbers
Class 7-17	3 pickle type cucumbers
Class 7-18	3 onions, either bulb or bunching type
Class 7-19	1 eggplant of any color
Class 7-20	3 peppers – bell or non-bell type, hot
Class 7-21	3 peppers – bell or non-bell type, sweet
Class 7-22	3 potatoes

Class 7-23	3 sweet potatoes
Class 7-24	3 bush type squash – zucchini, yellow, patty pan, etc.
Class 7-25	3 vine type squash – pumpkin, acorn, butternut, etc.
Class 7-26	3 tomatoes – any type or variety of standard size
Class 7-27	3 small tomatoes – cocktail, yellow, plum, etc.
Class 7-28	1 head of garlic
Class 7-29	1 any other vegetable
Class 7-30	Any collection of five herbs – one sprig of each 5 inches or longer
Class 7-31	Any one herb – 3 sprigs – 5 inches or longer
Class 7-32	Tallest stalk of corn
Class 7-33	Heaviest tomato
Class 7-34	Largest squash (including pumpkin)
Class 7-35	Largest vegetable
Class 7-36	Largest fruit
Class 7-37	Oddest shape fruit or vegetable
Class 7-38	Any other fruit or vegetable of which you are proud – explain why
Class 7-39	Scarecrow – may be done by one person or by a group
Class 7-40	Vegetable Characters – use at least 3 vegetables or fruits to create one or more characters from your imagination or TV or movies – you do not have to grow the vegetables or fruits – name your creation.

DIVISION 8 – FLOWERS, HOUSE PLANTS AND GARDEN DECORATIVES (judging criteria, p.12)

You must provide a container, vase or paper plate. Variety names must be included.

Class 8-1	Any annual started from a seed – 3 blooms/stems
Class 8-2	Any garden annual started from another method – 3 stems
Class 8-3	Any everlasting started from seed – ex: coxcomb, strawflowers, statice, etc. – 3 stems
Class 8-4	Any spike annual – snapdragon – 1 spike
Class 8-5	Any other annual – 1 stem
Class 8-6	Any perennial started from a tuber – dahlias – 1 spray
Class 8-7	Any perennial started from a bulb, ex: gladiolus – 1 spike
Class 8-8	Rose – 1 bloom
A	Floribunda
B	Other
Class 8-9	Rose – Spray
A	Floribunda
B	Other
Class 8-10	Any other blooming shrubs such as Hydrangea – 1 bloom
Class 8-11	Any other perennial – 1 bloom or 1 spike
Class 8-12	Wreath – any size or material
Class 8-13	Pressed flower arrangement
Class 8-14	Table centerpiece – any material, fresh, dried, or silk
Class 8-15	Miniature arrangements – not over 3 inches high including container, any material
Class 8-16	Theme arrangement – 4-H using green and white, patriotic using red, white and blue, this year's County Show theme or holiday season
Class 8-17	Any other arrangement such as Japanese, natural container such as a gourd; silk flowers

Class 8-18	Flowering houseplant – must be in bloom ex: African violet, etc.
Class 8-19	Houseplant grown for foliage – such as ivy, rubber plant, etc.
Class 8-20	Succulent – such as jade, agave, cactus
Class 8-21	5 specimens of shrub leaves or needles, pressed
Class 8-22	5 wildflowers
Class 8-23	5 dried grasses
Class 8-24	5 twigs of trees or shrubs
Class 8-25	5 specimens of fruit or seeds from trees
Class 8-26	5 garden weeds
Class 8-27	House plant grown from seed by exhibitor – include date seeded
Class 8-28	House plant propagated by a non-seed method by exhibitor – include method and date
Class 8-29	Hanging basket grown for foliage or flowers
Class 8-30	Other houseplant
Class 8-31	Potted topiary – herbs, foliage or plant
Class 8-32	Terrarium – may be forest, desert, or other type of miniature garden, landscape, seascape
Class 8-33	Container garden – any container 8 or more inches in size with one or more flowers, vegetables or fruits for patio use
Class 8-34	Hydroponics – plant rooted and growing in water
Class 8-35	“I grew it in a shoe” or any other unusual container
Class 8-36	Any other horticulture project

DIVISION 9 – PHOTOGRAPHY (judging criteria, p. 12-13)

Photos can be either black and white or color; photos must be mounted, and ready for hanging. Entries must be labeled on the back with exhibitor’s name, grade, and type of camera.

Class 9-1	Single photos															
	<table><tr><td>A. Buildings</td><td>F. Action</td><td>K. Other</td></tr><tr><td>B. People</td><td>G. 4-H project related</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>C. Animals or Birds</td><td>H. 4-H Camp</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>D. Landscape</td><td>I. 4-H Fair</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E. Nature</td><td>J. Picture of recognized notoriety</td><td></td></tr></table>	A. Buildings	F. Action	K. Other	B. People	G. 4-H project related		C. Animals or Birds	H. 4-H Camp		D. Landscape	I. 4-H Fair		E. Nature	J. Picture of recognized notoriety	
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E. Nature	J. Picture of recognized notoriety															
Class 9-2	Two to six photos															
	<table><tr><td>A. Buildings</td><td>F. Action</td><td>K. Other</td></tr><tr><td>B. People</td><td>G. 4-H project related</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>C. Animals or Birds</td><td>H. 4-H Camp</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>D. Landscape</td><td>I. 4-H Fair</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E. Nature</td><td>J. Still life</td><td></td></tr></table>	A. Buildings	F. Action	K. Other	B. People	G. 4-H project related		C. Animals or Birds	H. 4-H Camp		D. Landscape	I. 4-H Fair		E. Nature	J. Still life	
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Class 9-3	3 photos following a theme – black/white, color, or computer/digital															
Class 9-4	Photo manipulation art – digital															
Class 9-5	Photo manipulation art – film															
Class 9-6	Self-processed film photograph – must include negative															

DIVISION 10 – SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING

(judging criteria, p.13)

Any project applying science to achieve a practical purpose through invention, planning, or manipulation

Class 10-1	Robotics
Class 10-2	Navigational/orienteering project using GIS, GPS
Class 10-3	Aerospace
Class 10-4	Electric
Class 10-5	Small engines
Class 10-6	Wind Power
Class 10-7	Water and wetlands
Class 10-8	Plant and soil science
Class 10-9	Recycling
Class 10-10	Entomology
Class 10-11	Soil conservation
Class 10-12	Composting
Class 10-13	Pollution
Class 10-14	Energy
Class 10-15	Crop Science

DIVISION 11 – 4-H CLOVERBUD (p. 13)

Open to all Mercer County residents, grades K-3 (grade just completed). The projects will not be judged (a participation ribbon will be given for Cloverbud exhibits). Constructive comments should be shared to encourage future improvement.

For Cloverbud entries, please simply list as Division 11 and place it on the table designated for Division 11.



SEE YOU AT THE FAIR!



MERCER COUNTY 4-H STAFF

**Chad Ripberger, 4-H Agent,
Altaira Bejgrowicz, Sharon Gore, Yaa Owusu-Mensah, 4-H Program Associates,
Joelle Ginter, Office Assistant, Dana Thompson, Office Manager**

JUDGING CRITERIA BY DIVISION

DIVISION 2 – ARTS AND CRAFTS

- Technical: overall appearance, composition, quality of expression, attention to detail, craftsmanship.
- Material choice: appropriate for the project.
- Creativity: vision, originality, clever use of material.

DIVISION 3 – FINE ARTS

- Technical: composition, mastery for age, negative space.
- 2D Projects: color and value harmony
- 3D Projects: quality of technical expression, relationship of forms in 3D space.
- Creative Expression: quality of mark making material, creative material manipulation
- Wood Craftsmanship.
 - Saw cuts straight, accurate and smooth.
 - Accurate layout.
 - Nails are flush, or set below surface, no hammer marks.
 - Screws are properly set, no head damage.
 - Accuracy of joints: tight with no open gaps.
 - Method of assembly, difficulty of design.
 - Number and accuracy of machine operations.
 - Surface sanded properly: free of plane or sandpaper marks.
 - Finish properly applied: no runs or sags.
 - Overall appearance: attractive, well proportioned, and made of proper wood for its intended use.

DIVISION 4 – CLOTHING AND SEWING

- Overall appearance: clean and neat, well pressed, adequate size.
- Stitching: even, neat and secure. Thread matches fabric. Correct tension and stitch length. Ends of thread are tied and trimmed or back tacked.
- Seams: appropriate finish, pressed appropriately and clipped, square corners, smooth curves, no buckling.

DIVISION 5 – NEEDLEWORK AND HANDWORK

- Overall appearance: cleanliness, attractiveness.
- Material used: suitable for project, durable, condition of materials.
- Workmanship: appropriate skills for class requirements, accuracy of project.

DIVISION 6 – FOODS AND NUTRITION

- External characteristics: shape, surface – frosted, unfrosted, distribution, flavor.
- Volume: light weight in proportion to size.
- Crust: uniform color.
- Internal characteristics: Texture, grain, color.
- Container, proper labeling
- Recipe: accurate, legible, cost.
- Clarity
- Consistency

DIVISION 7 – PRIDE OF THE CROP

Follow the rules for the number of specimens required (see specific classes). Consider all of the following: shape, color, size, age, insects, diseases, weather, handling, crowding in rows, large, old, wilted, improperly trimmed, small, young, dirty, peeled, scrubbed.

- **Beans:**
How to Exhibit: An exhibit of beans is most impressive when the beans are thin, long, and seemingly copies of each other. Selecting matching beans to exhibit does take time, and preparing multiple specimen plates is a challenge. A small section of stem should be attached to the fruit but trimmed neatly to about ¼ inch.
- **Beets:**
How to Exhibit: Beets should be of medium size, from 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches in diameter, and of typical shape for

their variety. Good attention should be given to cleaning the beet gently without leaving any scars. Cleaning is best accomplished by rubbing your hands over the roots in warm water. The tops should be neatly trimmed leaving 1 inch of leaf stalks, and the beets should be well matched. Pull off secondary fine roots and trim the taproot below the beet to about 1 ½ inches. Beets on a single plate should all be the same length, from the trimmed top of the leaf stalks to the lowest part of the tap root.

- **Cabbage:**

How to Exhibit: Cabbage is normally exhibited as a single head. The head should be surrounded by 3 or 4 wrapper leaves. The ground end should be cut squarely, and little or no insect damage should be apparent. Green, red, Savoy, and Chinese heading cabbages should all be exhibited in this way.

- **Carrots:**

How to Exhibit: Carrots for an exhibit should be free of injury and true to varietal type. They should not have green shoulders or other discolorations, and they should match up well with each other in a single exhibit. Display carrots with healthy leaves left on or with leaves cut off about 1 inch above the root (or according to the standards of your exhibit list). Hair-like side roots should be removed and the thin extension below the tap root should be cut to 1 inch. Do not exhibit carrots that are forked. Make sure no cleaning marks are left on the root by a rough brush or cloth. These will show up very clearly after the carrot has dried. Bruises also allow moisture to leave the root, causing the carrot to shrivel.

- **Corn:**

How to Exhibit: To display corn, remove the husks entirely, cut the stalks very close to the ear, and put the specimens for a single exhibit in a plastic bag so the kernels will not dry. This allows the judge to examine the entire ear. Windowing, or pulling off a few husk leaves, is a satisfactory alternative, but the exposed kernels will dry out quickly. There should be no evidence of insect damage and the kernels should be of uniform size and in straight rows. Tip fill should be good, meaning well-developed kernels extend almost to the tip of the ear. Varieties differ in their ability to produce kernels at the tip. There should be no bird damage in that area. The color and size of the corn should be typical of the variety listed. Corn deteriorates rapidly, so it must be kept on ice or very cool until the time of the exhibit.

- **Cucumber:**

How to Exhibit: Cucumbers of newer varieties grow uniformly. Those selected at the proper eating stage should be lined up and specimens of uniform size, shape, and color should be chosen for an exhibit. Slicing types are long, thin, and dark green. Do not substitute them for pickling types, which have a short, squat shape and are lighter green, striped with yellow. Trim the stems neatly to about ¼ inch. Make sure the cucumbers are clean. Use water and a soft sponge to remove soil, being careful not to bruise them.

- **Eggplant:**

How to Exhibit: Normally, 1 or 2 eggplants are displayed per exhibit. They should be glossy with a rich color and good form for their variety. Soil should be wiped clean from the fruit and the stem trimmed neatly about 1 inch above the fruit and sepals.

- **Garlic:**

How to Exhibit: Although size is one of the major exhibiting criteria, uniformity in the size and color of all the specimens is most important. Pure white is traditional but bulbs with some red coloring are attractive. Garlic should be cleaned and well-trimmed - tops to ½ inch and roots to 1 inch. Bulbs may also be displayed as a neatly braided exhibit.

- **Herbs:**

How to Exhibit: Herbs are normally bunched; 4 to 8 sprigs or shoots per bundle. The smaller the shoot or area of leaf tissue, the more sprigs or shoots should be in a bundle. For example, 10 to 15 leaves of chives may be needed to make an acceptable bunch. The diameter of the bunch should be at least 1 inch where it is tied. A rubber band or other type of tie should be used to hold the bunch together. Cut ends should be neatly and evenly trimmed, and leaves should not be tightly pressed together. Uniformity is important in color, size of leaves, and shoot length. Different herbs should not be mixed. Potted herbs can be displayed at some exhibitions, and they sell well at markets; they should be well trimmed and formed and of usable size.

- **Onions:**

How to Exhibit: The specimens in a single exhibit, usually 3 onions, should be clean and uniform in color, size, and shape. They should match the description of their variety. Trim the tops to about ¾ inch above the bulb, and cut the roots to just below the bulb. The onions should have a well-cured outer skin and neck, with unsightly bulb skin pulled away. Onions that are not well cured may start to re-grow, sending up green leaf stalks while they are being exhibited. This is not an acceptable condition.

- **Peppers:**

How to Exhibit: Peppers chosen for an exhibit should be cleaned well with a soft cloth or running water. Exhibits normally require multiple specimens, and a larger number of small pepper varieties, such as jalapeno, chili, and cayenne, may be required. The peppers should have a glossy texture, accurately match the description of their variety, and be uniform in shape, size, and color. For example, if their variety is supposed to have three lobes per fruit, then all specimens in the exhibit should have three lobes per fruit. The stem should be attached and trimmed neatly to about ½ inch. Colored peppers, which are fully mature, make a very attractive exhibit or market display; be sure they are well matched in color.

- **Potatoes:**

How to Exhibit: Look over a wide array of potatoes and pick out specimens that are true to the description of their variety, have no surface defects, are similarly sized and shaped. Wash gently with a soft sponge of your hand as the skin is delicate. Line up the most matched specimens for your exhibit. Standard potatoes weigh between 5 and 10 ounces each.

- **Pumpkins:**

How to Exhibit: Pumpkins are normally exhibited as one specimen. The pumpkin should be true to its variety description, clean, bright in color, and symmetrically shaped. Trim the stems neatly. Some exhibits have a prize for the largest pumpkin, measured either by weight or by circumference. Certain squashes have the potential to grow much bigger than a true pumpkin. Be sure your pumpkin is not competing against squashes that look like pumpkins. Squashes have corky stems, and pumpkins have ridged, star-shaped (in cross section) stems.

- **Squashes, summer:**

How to Exhibit: Several specimens are required for a single exhibit. Make sure they are true to the description of their variety and uniform size, shape, and color. Take off any remnants of the dried blossoms and cut all stems evenly to within ½ inch of the fruit. Very young squashes can be exhibited as baby vegetables. Baby zucchini should be 2 to 3 inches long and are most attractive with the blossom attached. Baby patty pan squash should be 1 to 1 ½ inches in diameter.

- **Squashes, winter:**

How to Exhibit: Large winter squashes are normally displayed as 1 specimen per exhibit. The fruit should fit the description of its variety. It must be of good size and proper shape, with a bright color. Remove all soil and trim the stem to 1 or 2 inches. Two fruits may be required for a single exhibit of smaller squashes such as buttercup, butternut, spaghetti, or table queen.

In some exhibits, there are contests for the “largest squash” displayed. These specimens are often described incorrectly as giant pumpkins, but squashes are genetically different. Special growing techniques are used to produce the largest, heaviest fruit for these contests. Giant squash varieties include Big Max, Atlantic Giant, Big Moon, and others.

- **Sweet Potatoes:**

How to Exhibit: An exhibit of sweet potatoes normally consists of 3 roots. Choose 3 that are well matched in size and shape and similar in skin color. No damage should be visible. Clean them in water, preferably after curing, rubbing gently with your hand or a soft sponge. If the potatoes have been cured and their skin is firm, each surface can be polished by rubbing it lightly with your hand. If the soil is very sandy, they may only need brushing to be cleaned.

- **Tomatoes:**

How to Exhibit: Tomato specimens in an exhibit should be typical in form and color for their variety. All specimens should be uniform in size, shape, and maturity. The stems should be removed entirely, and there should be only a small blossom scar on the opposite end. Display small cherry, pear, and plum types in a pint basket. The specimens should be clean and bright.

DIVISION 8 – FLOWERS, HOUSE PLANTS AND DECORATIVE GARDEN

- Follow the rules for the number of specimens required (see specific classes). Consider all of the following: shape, color, size, age, insects, diseases, weather, handling, crowding in rows, height (too short or tall), not in appropriate container, not attractively arranged.

DIVISION 9 – PHOTOGRAPHY

- **Composition:** has a definite subject, interesting picture – shows imagination/tells a story.
- **Balance:** utilizes the rule of thirds, fills the frame/no unnecessary detail or distractions, utilizes natural line and patterns, perspective enhances the image.
- **Use of light:** appropriate lighting for subject and effect, flash used as appropriate, reflected light used to advantage, corrections made for artificial light.

- Focus: appropriate part of image in sharp focus, camera held steady.
- Exposure: bright image and details that stand out. Not over exposed (light washed out appearance), not under exposed (dark images and lack of detail.)
- Print quality and presentation: clean, neat, no glue residue or mounting guidelines show. Mounting technique forms stable bond; holds together. Proportion of photo to mat or mount enhances appearance, color of mat or mount enhances photo, paper and inks suitable for purpose. Resolution a good match for the size of print.

DIVISION 10 – SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING

- Projects and Posters –conveys an effective message, idea or principle. Content, title and illustrations are logically arranged. Lettering is easy to read, colors are pleasing. Neat workmanship.
- Creativity: ingenuity in design and development of project, creativity in design of the display.
- Scientific thought: the problem is stated clearly. Collected data justifies the conclusion made. The project ties in with related research. Scientific literature or popular literature cited. Solution workable and economically feasible.
- Thoroughness: project indicates understanding of topic, information is accurate, sufficient data collected. Notes complete, if used. Conclusions based on single or multiple experiments.
- Skill: project reflects 4-Her's own work. Sturdy and well-constructed. Skilled use of tools and methods of science.
- Clarity: project is self-explanatory, neat and accurate. Are visual aids an asset to understanding the project?

DIVISION 11 – CLOVERBUD

- Originality, choice of materials, suitability of design, structural shape and size, decoration, added color or material, workmanship, finishing, use of color.



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



**MERCER COUNTY 4-H FAIR
EXHIBIT ENTRY**

NAME _____ **ADULT or YOUTH** (circle)

CLUB NAME (4-H youth only) _____

GRADE (all youth) _____ **DIVISION** _____ **CLASS** _____ (see Exhibitor Catalog)

EXHIBIT TYPE (circle): **Individual project** **Kit project** **Group Instructional project**

MY SKILL LEVEL IS: ☐ **Beginner** ☐ **Intermediate** ☐ **Advanced**

BRIEF EXHIBIT DESCRIPTION _____



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