

Advice: Domestic Section, Autumn 2026

Your entries don't need to be perfect. Don't be afraid, just 'have a go'!
The more entries the better the show.

- **Check that your entries comply with all the requirements mentioned in the schedule.**
- Please don't hesitate to ask the Show Secretary if there is anything that you don't understand.
breamgardeningociety@gmail.com,
- When asked to provide a list of ingredients , quantities are not required.

Your list of ingredients may be typed or clearly handwritten. Please do not include your name.

Please display your ingredients list next to your entry.
- Please **cover all food**.
- Much of this advice document is based upon the recommendations in '*On with the Show: An NFWI Handbook for Exhibitors, Judges and Show Committees*' but with some adaptations. The **BGS Autumn Show Schedule**, and the advice notes below, **should always take precedence**.

Baking - General

- Unless specified, **bake sizes are at the discretion of the exhibitor**.
- Where recipes are provided, **direct like-for-like replacements may be used to avoid specific allergens**. For example, egg replacer, vegan butter or gluten-free flour.
- Where more than one item is specified, flavour and appearance should be consistent across the set.
- The majority of marks will be awarded for flavour and aroma.

No off-flavours/ odours and no hint of staleness.

The predominant flavour/ aroma should be characteristic of the bake and of any ingredients mentioned in the recipe title.
- Spices, flavourings and seasonings should be balanced for an average palate.
- Evenly baked. No burned edges or uncooked middles.
- Lining papers removed.
- No cooling rack marks on the top of your bake.
- Unless otherwise stated, bakes should be displayed on a plain plate, doily optional.
- Bakes should be protected by a transparent covering, such as a cake dome or clingfilm, and labelled with the recipe title.
- Entries should be labelled with the main flavours if these are not apparent from the recipe title.

Yeasted bakes

- Ideally, your loaf should be baked the day before the Show.
- Salt is required to develop a good flavour but the loaf should not be salty.
- The dough should be well kneaded to ensure an even texture with no streaks or holes inside the loaf.

- Shape neatly to avoid cracks in the base. The finished loaf should be free of any shaping marks, bulges, splits on the sides of the bread. The dough should not have rolled over the edge of the tin.
- Avoid overproving which may produce a sour yeast flavour.
- Loaves baked in a tin should show no residue or marks from the tin - tins used for baking cakes can leave a sugary deposit along the edges and discolour the loaf.
- The loaf should be well risen and baked to a warm golden brown colour. There should be no scorching. Wholemeal and brown loaves will be slightly less well risen.
- The crust should be even.
- Aim for a soft, springy crumb which is dry or very slightly moist. (Wholemeal and brown loaves will be a little denser than white.) There should be no obvious denseness at the bottom of the loaf or very large holes suggesting that the loaf has proved too quickly or is underbaked. If the crumb is pressed between two fingers and it does not spring back, the bread is underbaked.
- When the bottom is knocked, it should sound hollow. The loaf should feel light rather than heavy for its size.
- Rolls should be even in size and weight. Well risen, neat in shape and appearance. Rolls with kissing crusts are acceptable. Batch rolls are acceptable (where rolls are joined together).
- Presented on a plate, board, or platter.

Milk bread

- An English- or Japanese-style milk loaf. A vegan milk alternative may be used.
- Made with a yeasted dough which has been enriched with milk. (Some recipes are also enriched with egg and/or butter.)
- English-style milk bread should be faintly buttery and only slightly sweet.
- Japanese-style milk bread may be slightly richer and sweeter.
- The crust may be dusted with flour, or brushed with milk or butter before baking.
- Baked in any style of loaf tin or shaped by hand. If baked in a tin, the dough should have filled the tin well.
- No glaze is required but is permitted. If glazed it should be applied evenly and carefully.

Soul Cakes

- Carefully follow the recipe provided on page 34 of the schedule.
- Make sure that the warm ale that you use to activate your yeast isn't too hot.
- The recipe may be adapted to be vegan, gluten free and/or alcohol free. List any adaptations next to your bake.

Pastry

- Savoury items may be garnished with parsley, or a garnish reflecting the ingredients. Any garnish will be included in the marking of the external appearance.
- Pastries should be evenly baked. The base pastry should be completely cooked through.
- Plain flour should be used for all pastries except suet pastry.

Quiche

- One or two portion quiche or a slice from a larger quiche.
- **Homemade shortcrust pastry** (half fat to plain flour) flan base.
 - Pastry texture should be light and short, not hard and brittle.
 - Pastry even at edges, and not too thick.
- **Savoury egg custard filling.**
 - Added ingredients should be flavoursome and complement one another. Uniformly chopped/ diced. Carefully seasoned.
 - Don't forget to list the main ingredients next to your bake.
 - Case should be well filled without spilling over.
 - The filling should be cooked together with the pastry base.
- Evenly baked and the base pastry completely cooked through. Egg mixture should be cooked in the centre.

Scotch pie:

- Single-portion pie with a **hotwater pastry crust**.
- Form the pastry made by heating water, melting the fat (lard or vegetarian equivalent), bringing the mixture to a boil, and finally incorporating the plain flour.
- Hand raised or baked in a tin. Well proportioned, even shape. It is accepted that a hand-raised pie may sag slightly during the cooking process.
- Filled with a well-flavoured moist filling which should contain mutton or lamb mince. Seasoned with onion, salt, pepper, nutmeg, mace, and/or allspice.
- A vegetarian or vegan alternative may be presented. If so, the main ingredients of the pie filling should be listed next to your bake.
- Evenly baked to a golden brown and the base completely cooked through.
- Pastry glazed.

Cakes

- All ingredients should be well mixed. No flour pockets. Any fruit (or other additions) should be evenly distributed.
- Cakes should be well risen with an even shape and colour.
- The crust should be thin and even.
- No raising agent tunnels. No large air bubbles or crumbling edges.
- Cakes should be rich and moist but should be neither wet, heavy nor soggy.
- Lining papers removed.
- No cooling rack marks on the top of your cake.

Pumpkin Muffins

- **Baked by an exhibitor who has never been placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in the Domestic Section at a BGS Show.**
- Carefully follow the recipe on page 35 of the schedule.
- Ingredients well mixed – no lumps of sugar or pumpkin!
- Muffins should be baked in deep tins or paper cases (or reusable cases) of a minimum depth of 4 cm.
- Evenly baked. Golden brown – neither raw nor burnt.
- Muffins should rise above the rim of the tin or paper case. Should be peaked with a crack.
- Some internal holes are acceptable.
- Texture should be springy.
- You should be able to taste the pumpkin.
- The recipe may be adapted to be vegan and/or gluten free. List any adaptations next to your bake.
- Presented on a plain plate, doily optional.

Lemon drizzle cake

- A lemon sponge cake baked in a loaf tin or round tin.
- No extra ingredients such as poppy seeds.
- The lemon syrup should be drizzled over the cake whilst it is still warm.
- No additional lemon icing/glaze should be applied after cooling.
- Additional decoration with lemon slices, zest, or homemade candied peel is allowed but is not required.

Celebration cake or cupcakes

- Cakes/ cupcakes to be judged on decoration alone - a real or dummy cake may be used.
- Colour, design, originality and creativity are all very important. The judge will be looking for a 'Wow Factor' design which fits the theme.
- Structure should be neat, strong and stable. There should be no visible steps at the joins between cake pieces unless by design.
- Any non edible supports (e.g. columns, skewers, or wires) should be food-safe, easily removable during serving, and clearly listed next to your bake. **Note - this is different from WI advice!**
- The design of the cake will be judged as a whole - don't forget to decorate the sides as well as the top of your cake with an edible covering. However, cupcakes may be presented in paper (or reusable) cases with only their tops decorated.
- All decorations should be edible and should be in proportion to the size of the cake.
- There should be no cracks or air bubbles in the icing or other covering medium.
- Unless the covering medium is textured by design, it should have a smooth surface. No finger marks or messy corners.
- May be displayed in any way to suit your design - on a plate, cake board or cake stand. Display must be food safe.
- A transparent covering may be used but is not required if the cake is not to be eaten after the Show.

Biscuits

Savoury biscuits

- Cut with a 5–6cm straight cutter.
- Approximately 3mm thick.
- Biscuits and crackers should be crisp; oatcakes will be softer.
- Even in colour, according to ingredients.
- Predominating flavour according to recipe

Sweets

Truffles

- Bite-sized chocolate confections made from ganache — a mixture of melted chocolate and warmed cream — cooled until firm, and then rolled into small balls.
- Consistent in size and shape.
- The ganache centres should be rich with a velvety texture and intense flavour.
- The ganache may be infused with other flavours, but all 6 truffles presented should be of the same flavour.
- Typically coated in cocoa powder, tempered chocolate, or nuts etc. to create a contrast of textures. Your 6 truffles may have a variety of different coatings.
- May be made with vegan or dairy-free ingredients instead of chocolate and cream.
- Presented directly on a plate, or in individual foil or paper cases.
- Labelled with the recipe title and with details of the coating(s).

Preserves - Jams, jellies, marmalades, curds and other preserved fruits

- **Jars:** standard clear glass jars, labelled with the recipe title and the preserving date. Avoid fingermarks.
- The reuse of bottles and jars is encouraged but they should be plain clear glass. No recognisable commercial shape, logo, or pattern moulded into the glass.
- Entries should be labelled with the main flavours if these are not apparent from the recipe title.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the jar. Place the label between any seams on the jar.
- Jars should be shown filled to within 3mm of the brim.
- Sterilised jars should be filled whilst they are still warm and the preserve is hot. Seal with a wax disc with wax facing down. To prevent the growth of yeasts and moulds in your preserves, ensure that the temperature of the preserve does not drop below 82°C (180°F) before sealing.
- A cellophane dust cover should be added once the preserve has cooled. Dampen one side of the cellophane cover before applying it to the jar with the damp side facing up. Secure with an elastic band. No additional lids or covers are allowed.

Jam: Stone fruit, hard fruit or vegetable

- **Jars: 340-454g** (12-16oz, approx. 300-400ml).
- Made from one or more stone fruits, hard fruits, and/or vegetables. Additional soft fruits and/or flavouring ingredients may be added.
- Made from crushed or chopped fruit or vegetables.
- **Flavour:** full, fresh and characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Colour:** bright, even and characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Consistency:** uniformly jellified - no loose liquid or syrup. Fruit evenly distributed. Stones avoided where possible. Any fruit skins should be tender. No scum, mould, foreign bodies, or sugar crystals.

Jelly: Stone fruit, hard fruit, vegetable or herb

- **Jars: 225-454g** (8-16oz, approx. 200-400ml).
- Made from one or more stone fruits, hard fruits, vegetables or herbs. Additional soft fruits and/or flavouring ingredients may be added.
- Made from only fruit juice - no crushed or chopped fruit.
- **Flavour:** full, well balanced and characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Colour:** even, bright and characteristic of the fruits used.
- **Consistency:** soft enough to tremble but must still hold its shape. Brilliantly clear with no pulp, haze or scum. No air bubbles.

Marmalade: Citrus

- **Jars: 340-454g** (12-16oz, approx. 300-400ml).
- Made mainly from any citrus fruit(s) besides oranges. Orange may be included but should not be the predominant citrus flavour. Other non-citrus flavours may also be included.
- **Flavour:** definite citrus flavour and slightly bitter.
- **Colour:** characteristic colour of the fruit(s) used. Bright, not dull and cloudy.
- **Consistency:** uniformly jellified - not runny or too firm. Peel uniformly cut (sliced not minced), tender and evenly distributed. No air bubbles or scum.

Fruit Curd: Citrus

- **Jars: 340-454g** (12-16oz, approx. 300-400ml).
- Made from any citrus fruit(s).
- **Flavour:** well balanced fresh flavour. No greasy aftertaste.
- **Colour:** an even colour that is characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Consistency:** smooth with no egg spots, peel or sugar crystals. No air bubbles nor scum. Spreadable but not runny.
- Should be made within 4 weeks of the show and stored in the refrigerator.

Preserved fruit: Other

- For example, bottled fruit, crystallised or glacé fruits or peel, fruit butter, fruit cheese, or fruit leather.
- Tomato ketchup may be entered into this class.
- Consult the Show Secretary for preserve-specific guidance, including bottle/jar sizes and other methods of presentation.
- Labelled with the recipe title and preserving date. List all fruit.

Preserves - Mincemeat, pickles and chutneys

- **Bottles or jars:** standard clear glass bottles or jars, labelled with the recipe title and preserving date. Avoid fingermarks.
- The reuse of bottles and jars is encouraged but they should be plain clear glass. No recognisable commercial shape, logo, or pattern moulded into the glass.
- Entries should be labelled with the main flavours if these are not apparent from the recipe title.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the jar or bottle. Place the label between any seams.
- Sterilised bottles and jars should be filled whilst they are still warm and the preserve is hot. Ensure that the temperature of the preserve does not drop below 82°C (180°F) before sealing.

Mincemeat

- **Jars: 225-454g** (8-16oz, approx. 200-400ml).
- Jars should be filled to the top and mincemeat well pressed down to exclude as much air as possible.
- A wax disc should be applied whilst hot. A cellophane cover should be added once cooled. No additional lids or covers are allowed. The mincemeat should not be allowed to dry out.
- Ingredients should be in good condition in order to avoid fermentation.
- Should be stored in a cool place such as a refrigerator.
- Should be made well in advance of the show to allow the flavours to develop.

Chutney

- **Jars: 225-454g** (8-16oz, approx. 200-400ml).
- The label should indicate whether the chutney is hot or mild.
- Jars should be shown filled to 12mm from the top.
- Jars should be well sealed with a vinegar-proof lid whilst hot. For example, a well fitting twist top with plastic lining or a pliable plastic press-on cover on a traditional jam jar. Avoid honey jars with screw tops because the thread may not produce a good seal. (No cellophane cover.)
- **Flavour:** well blended, characteristic flavour.
- **Colour:** bright and consistent throughout, even for a dark chutney.
- **Consistency:** reasonably firm and uniform consistency, with no free vinegar. No large pieces of onion, skin, core or stones etc. No air bubbles.

- True chutney should be allowed to mature after potting. Do not re-pot.
- Uncooked or semi-cooked chutneys are allowed, but this must be noted on the label.

These should have been made shortly before the show and refrigerated.

Do not use airtight jars because fermentation may lead to explosion.

Should have an attractive flavour and interesting texture.

Autumn Pickles

- **Jars up to 910g (2lb, approx. 750ml).**
- Any type of autumn pickle such as pickled onions, shallots or red cabbage.
Single or mixed vegetables in a clear spiced vinegar.
- Jars shown with approximately 12mm of vinegar over the pickle and 12mm of headspace.
- Jars should be well sealed with a vinegar-proof lid whilst hot. For example, a well fitting twist top with plastic lining or a pliable plastic press-on cover on a traditional jam jar. Avoid honey jars with screw tops because the thread may not produce a good seal. (No cellophane cover.)
- **Colour:** bright in colour.
- **Consistency:** most vegetables should be crisp; however, beetroot should be tender.
- **Flavour:** smooth, mature and well balanced. Not too salty.
- Ideally, kept for at least 2 months before showing.

Mustard pickles (for example, piccalilli)

- **Jars: 225-454g (8-16oz, approx. 200-400ml).**
- Single or mixed vegetables in a smooth mustard sauce.
- Jars shown with approximately 12mm of sauce over the pickle and 12mm of headspace.
- Jars should be well sealed with a vinegar-proof lid whilst hot. For example, a well fitting twist top with plastic lining or a pliable plastic press-on cover on a traditional jam jar. Avoid honey jars with screw tops because the thread may not produce a good seal. (No cellophane cover.)
- **Colour:** bright and characteristic. Sauce may be coloured with turmeric.
- **Consistency:** crisp vegetables cut to a uniform size.

Drinks

- **Bottles:** standard clear glass. Sterilise before filling.
- The reuse of bottles is encouraged but they should be plain clear glass. No recognisable commercial shape, logo, or pattern moulded into the glass.
- Labelled with the year of making and recipe title.

Indicate if dilution is required.

For wines, the label should also indicate the sweetness.

Entries should be labelled with the main flavours if these are not apparent from the recipe title.

- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the bottle. Place the label between any seams on the bottle.
- Bottles should be shown with 12-25mm of headspace.
- Sealed with any standard type of cap, flip top, screw lid or cork may be used to seal the bottle. The judge will be supplied with a corkscrew and a cap opener.

Beverage, alcoholic - Fermented at home

- A bottle of an alcoholic beverage that has been homebrewed, e.g. mead, wine, beer, cider or perry.
- Wines should have a bright, characteristic colour and should be brilliantly clear. There should be no sediment in the bottle.
- Wines should have a true, well rounded and pleasant aroma.
- **Please enter mead made from your own honey into Class H8: Mead.**

Beverage, alcoholic - Other

- A bottle of any drink made from a bought alcoholic beverage. For example, a fruit liqueur or flavoured spirit.
- List the starting alcoholic beverage and the main ingredients added.
- Indicate if dilution is required.