

Preparing an orchid for display and judging.

Preparing an orchid for display is mostly about presentation and timing. Judges notice plant health, cleanliness, grooming, and how well the flowers are displayed.



1. Start 2–4 weeks before

- Check for pests (scale, mealybug, mites, snails). Treat early if needed.
- Remove dead leaves, old sheaths, dried flower spikes, and weeds from the pot.
- Clean the pot thoroughly — wipe off algae, fertilizer stains, and dirt.
- Top up or refresh potting mix if the surface looks messy (without disturbing roots).

2. Groom the plant

- Wipe leaves with a soft damp cloth to remove dust.
- Trim damaged leaf tips neatly with sterilised scissors (follow the natural leaf shape).
- Remove spotting or damaged flowers if it improves overall appearance.

3. Stake and position flowers

This is one of the biggest show-winning details.

Use clean stakes (bamboo, green plastic, or wire).

- Attach with orchid clips or soft ties — never tight enough to bruise stems.
- Position blooms evenly and naturally spaced.
- Turn the plant every few days before the show so flowers face forward toward the light.

4. Water carefully

- Water 1–2 days before the show so the plant is fresh, but not dripping wet.
- Avoid water sitting in crowns or flower centres.
- Don't overwater just before transport.

5. Clean flowers

- Gently remove dust with a soft artist's brush.
- Never use leaf shine or oil — judges dislike artificial gloss.
- Remove any insect marks if possible.

6. Label correctly

Include:

- Registered name (if hybrid)
- Species name (spelled correctly, italicized if possible)
- Your grower name if required by your society schedule

For example: Paphiopedilum rungsuriyanum

7. Transport carefully

Use boxes with supports so pots cannot tip.

- Cushion blooms with soft tissue if needed.
- Keep cool and shaded in the car.
- Never leave orchids in a hot vehicle.

8. On the bench

- Check flower orientation one last time.
- Remove any marks, debris, or fallen pollen.
- Ensure the best face of the plant is toward the judges/public.

What judges usually notice most:

- * Clean healthy foliage
- * Fresh unblemished flowers
- * Good flower arrangement and staking
- * Correct culture for the species
- * Balance between plant and pot
- * Overall presentation

