



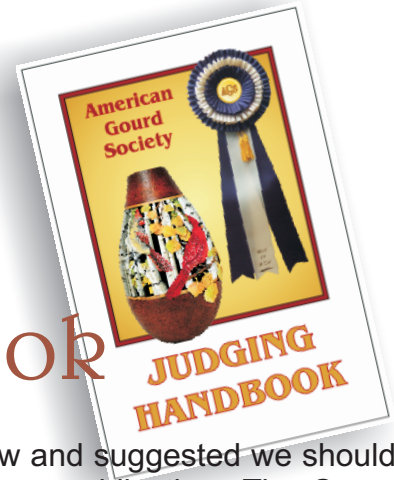
American Gourd Society Certified Judges Training Packet

This packet was compiled using
Contributions from a Team of AGS Members
Experienced Teachers, Judges, and Gourd Artisans

Thanks to
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The Making of the AGS Judging Handbook



A few years ago, Bill Lanning approached me at a gourd show and suggested we should have judging standards and trained judges. I mentioned in our publication, *The Gourd Magazine*, that we needed volunteers to start such a project. Not long after that, I appointed an AGS committee of these volunteers, charged with the responsibility of submitting a draft set of judging standards.

The committee consisted of Barbara Nelson, Pat Patterson, Janet Barnett, Merilou Jenkins, Judy Richie, and Leigh Adams. After a lot of hard work, they submitted a draft in 2007.

Then we all became involved! We posted the draft on the internet, both on our AGS website and on the AGS board's website. I asked that all chapter presidents let their members know they could read and comment on the draft, and I mentioned it in the AGS magazine.

What a response! With every single member of the AGS knowing about this effort, and having access to the draft, many wonderful comments were sent to chapter presidents, who would gather them and bring them to the Board. We spent many busy months with a lot of give and take on the details, with some very intense debates. As important points were discussed, we'd take intermediate votes to decide particular points. Just as one example, there was disagreement about whether a raw gourd must have the stem attached. Some people believed the lack of a stem should be absolutely disqualifying, and others believed it was not important in judging the gourd. We had an opinion from a biologist on this, and he told us that the fruit of a plant did not include its stem. We finally voted that stems would not be required under AGS rules. However, in deference to those who treasured their tradition of having stems on gourds, individual categories in competition may include a requirement for a stem. This is just one example of the difficult but wonderfully rewarding debates we had over a number of critical points.

Finally we were ready, and your Board voted to accept these rules as the AGS judging standards. I have no doubt that this will be a document that will change in the future as we have experience using these standards; that's what is the strength of our process. We'll use these standards, yet learn from them as to how they might become better in the future.

Thanks to everyone in the American Gourd Society for being a part of this process. It is a document we can all be proud of, because we all worked on it together. I'm proud of the "can-do" attitude of your AGS Board as we debated the details, because everyone had a common goal and worked to get there. I hope many people aspire to become AGS Certified Judges; you'll find a friendly, understandable, and society-wide standard that will add to the quality of our competitions.

Bob James
President, American Gourd Society

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Bob James, the author of the text.

Certified Judge Training Goals



The AGS Judging Handbook offers clear procedures for observing crafted, artistic, and raw gourds with the intention of selecting award winning specimens—an aid for judges and applicants alike. The Judging Handbook does not recommend categories, entry qualifications, applicant restrictions, award types, or entry fees. Those decisions are at the discretion of the individual organization. An organization which chooses to use the AGS Judging Handbook criteria should publish, prior to their event, that they will abide by the guidelines therein. Then it is recommended that an AGS Certified Judge be solicited as head judge. Organizations may visit www.AmericanGourdSociety.org for a list of contacts.

This class is intended to train you to be a more effective judge of gourds—decorated and raw (undecorated). It should reinforce and clarify the standardized procedures required of an AGS Certified Judge. When selected to judge, you will be expected to adhere to the criteria and procedures in the AGS Judging Handbook. We hope you, as a trained judge, will exercise flexibility, show no favoritism, encourage new artists, avoid negativity towards the artwork or exhibits, give educational and respectful comments, and exhibit willingness to learn more where your expertise is weak. When asked, you should translate the judging guidelines as stated, but you are discouraged from creating new rules to fit a situation. Let the event coordinators make those decisions outside of the range of the judging guidelines.

In this training, you will participate in several fun and educational activities:

- 1) a **Review** of the guidelines in the Handbook,
- 2) a **Mock Judging**, a hands-on practice run,
- 3) a **Questions & Answers** review showing how well your trainers have done, and
- 4) **Presentation** of credentials.



Upon completion of this training, you will receive a personalized nametag and a certification card stating that you are an official AGS Certified Judge. Your supply contact after this class will be Terry Noxel, agsads@aol.com, 607-655-5366. If you ever lose your nametag or card and would like to order another, contact her. She will maintain an up-to-date list of authorized AGS judges on the website. Competition coordinators, either AGS or others, may contact you to ask you to be a judge or find a certified judge for their gourd competition. We hope you will accept all or most invitations and feel pride in your contributions to improve the quality of judging in gourd competitions nationwide.

Thank you for participating!

Your Training Staff



American Gourd Society

Scoring Option A (Detailed)

Judge's Score Sheet

(one per judge for each category judged)

Raw and Current
Season Gourds

Category:

Judge:

	Entrant or Entry	Cultural perfection, quality, cleanliness and maturity 1-5 points	Trueness of type and color 1-5 points	TOTAL
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

American Gourd Society

Scoring Option A (Detailed)

Judge's Score Sheet

(one per judge for each category judged)

Gourdcraft

Category:

Judge:

	Entrant or Entry	Originality of Design	Quality of crafts- manship / gourd	Creativity and Artistry	Color, finish, accessories, decoration	Appropriate for Category	TOTAL
1		1-5 points each					
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							

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Questions & Answers

An organization publishes that they are holding a gourd competition and that it is using the standardized guidelines in the AGS Judging Handbook...

- 1: If a competition uses the AGS standards, may they change any rules?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, any of them, if announced ahead of time
 - c. Yes, but only the scoring option and rule 7.6, and must be announced ahead of time
- 2: How does a person become an AGS Certified Judge?
 - a. Fill out appropriate paperwork and mail a fee to the AGS
 - b. Participate in and complete an AGS Certified Judge Training
 - c. All those who have judged in the past are "grandfathered" and are automatically AGS-certified judges
- 3: Must an AGS Certified Judge be present to operate under these guidelines?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No, but if one or more certified judges are present, an AGS judge must be the head judge
- 4: Are clerks involved in selecting the award winners?
 - a. Yes, they have a vote as do the judges on the team
 - b. No, and they may not participate in deliberations
 - c. No, unless the judges ask them a question
- 5: Once an award is announced, may it later be withdrawn?
 - a. No, but the head judge may award a duplicate in case of error
 - b. Yes, upon joint approval of head judge and show chair
 - c. Yes, but only in the case of a clear error
- 6: Who makes the final decision as to awards?
 - a. The head judge
 - b. The judging team
 - c. Normally the judging team, but they may ask the head judge for advice or a decision
 - d. The head judge in consultation with the show chair
- 7: Under the AGS judging guidelines, must every entry in the show include a gourd or gourd parts?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No, gourd art, such as photography or drawings, is allowed
- 8: How are entries disqualified by the judges?
 - a. Judges are not allowed to disqualify entries
 - b. Judging teams may disqualify entries on their own
 - c. Judging teams may disqualify entries after approval of the head judge, who may or may not choose to make the decision
- 9: If a gourd considered for disqualification is instead moved to another category that has already been judged, can the category be re-judged, or are the awards already final?
 - a. The new gourd can only be considered for duplicate awards, since awards are final
 - b. Since awards have not yet been announced, they are not final, and the entire category should be re-judged
- 10: Scoring options A and B are numerically based. In case of ties, what happens?
 - a. Duplicate prizes are automatically awarded
 - b. The clerk will determine which gourd received more high grades
 - c. The judging team will break the tie by a discussion; duplicate place awards may be given



- 11: For scoring options A and B (numerically based), are deviations allowed from the scoring method?
- No
 - Yes, at the discretion of the judges
 - Yes, if announced in advance by the show committee. Such exceptions should be rare
- 12: Must all place awards as announced by the show be awarded (for example, if there are three entries, and the show is awarding 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place, must all three awards be given)?
- Yes
 - No
- 13: If there is only one entry in a category, must that entry be awarded the 1st place award?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe. This is rule 7.6, which states that normally the answer is yes unless in exceptional circumstances the gourd does not deserve a 1st place. However, the show committee may establish different rules
- 14: How is the height of a gourd measured?
- From the blossom end to the stem protrusion, following the gourd's curvature
 - To the highest point when the gourd sits on a surface, stem not included
 - Measure as in both a & b, then the longest measurement applies
- 15: If a category specifies "all natural materials" must 100% of the materials be natural?
- Yes
 - No; the category may allow for exceptions as announced by the show
- 16: May a gourd be entered in competition if it has been entered in the past?
- Yes
 - No
 - That is a decision of the show committee. Judges will judge what is presented to them
- 17: Are decisions on major awards (such as best of show, best show theme, best newcomer) made by the same judging teams?
- Yes
 - No
 - No; the show committee makes them, and has the option of asking the judging teams to participate or make the decision
- 18: In a gourdcraft category, if the quality of the gourd used is poor, judges should rank the gourd entry lower than they would otherwise. Is this true?
- Yes
 - No
- 19: When measuring the height or length of a gourd, is the stem ever included in the measurement?
- Yes
 - No
- 20: May a visitor to the gourd competition take photos or sketches of the entries?
- Yes, for any purpose
 - No
 - Yes, but not for a profit-producing activity
- 21: What is required for the awarding of an AGS-sponsored award?
- an AGS Certified Judge or AGS officer to be part of the decision process
 - an AGS Certified Judge or AGS officer to be present
 - both a and b
- 22: Which are qualities of a good judge?
- ability to remain impartial and fair
 - willingness to keep the judging deliberations confidential
 - ability to work graciously with other judges and consider differing opinions
 - willingness to eat a raw gourd
 - only a, b, and c

