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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## PREPARING FLOWERS TO EXHIBIT AT FAIR

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In our last article, we described how you can prepare vegetable to enter in the Fair. This week, we will tell you how to prepare those beautiful flowers so they have the best chance at that coveted blue ribbon.

Cut around 4 pm the previous day, since that time is when the greatest amount of sugar is in the leaves. Place the stem in 100-110 F water and move to a cool location for 15 to 20 minutes. Then refrigerate at 35 to 40 F until put on display. Flowers with woody stems should be split crushed or pounded before being placed in deep water.

### **Know when to pick flowers.**

Spike-form flowers (i.e., gladiolus) should be picked when the bottom florets are open and in good condition and has two-thirds of the blossoms open and one-third developing buds. The spike should be straight and the stem should be sturdy.

Round-form flowers (i.e., mums) should be cut when fully developed and the outer petals fold out gracefully. The center petals should be tighter than the outer petals, but not so immature as to be green.

**Know your Fair rules.** A close look at the Fair Premium book will tell you that they require a certain number of stems, sprays and arrangements. A stem is just what you might think: a single flower on one stem. A spray is a single main stem with blooms on the side branches. An arrangement uses many different types of flowers, usually to address a theme. Be sure to consult your Fair premium book for specific requirements.

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**Resources.** I recommend Kansas State's 4-H Guide Preparing Cut Flowers for Exhibit found on the web at [http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/4h\\_y2/4h826.pdf](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/4h_y2/4h826.pdf).

*Mike Bauer is Extension Educator for the University of Idaho Extension in Bonner County. University of Idaho, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Idaho counties cooperating. Cooperative Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.*

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