

**All Gardens  
Great & Small**  
by  
York Co.  
Horticultural Agent  
**Tom Becker**



**Picking Flowers  
For The Fair**

Are you planning to exhibit annual or perennial flowers at your local community fair? Award-winning entries must be fresh. Pick the flowers on the same day just prior to the fair. Handle them with care.

Flowers will wilt less when picked in the morning. Flowers picked in the heat of the day, may partially wilt. Why? When stems are cut, air may enter their water-conducting vessels, blocking further water uptake.

Select only quality blooms for a flower arrangement. Cut the flower stalks with a sharp pruner or knife, at a slant, near the bottom of the stem. Avoid using a scissors, which tend to crush the stems.

Immerse fresh cut stems and blooms in a bucket of tepid water before carrying them back to your house. Keep the water deep enough to come just below the flower heads. Use separate pails for separate varieties, or wrap each group in newspaper before placing in the bucket.

Recut stems of soft-stemmed

blooms underwater, removing about one-half to one inch of the stem. For woody stems, crush the bottom inch of the stem. Sub-

merged leaves will decay rapidly; so, be sure to remove all foliage that will be below the water line.

Prior to arranging your flowers, check your fair premium book. It defines the number of blooms allowed per arrangement and the classes you can enter with each flower type. If the rules say six to eight blooms per entry, don't stick in 10 to 12 or your entry will be disqualified.

Prior to arranging flowers in a vase, wash each vase in hot, soapy water. Rinse thoroughly with tap water. Fill each vase with warm-fresh water.

Precondition the cut flowers by adding floral preservative to the

water. Without the preservative, bacteria multiply, clogging stem ends and causing flowers to wilt. Place the stems in the vase and when the arrangement is complete move to a cool, draft-free area. Leave the arrangement there until the water cools to room temperature.

To transport your floral entries to the fair, dump some of the water out of each vase into a larger container. Bring this water with you to top off the vase when you arrive at the fair.

Pack arrangements upright in a sturdy cardboard box, using wadded newspaper to keep them sepa-

rate. Take extra blooms in case stems get broken or crushed during travel.

Arrive at the fair before the advertised deadline for entering. Be sure to fill out all entry cards completely. Then, sit back and wait for the judges to announce you as the winner.

For the 1997 Fair schedule for Pennsylvania, contact the Pennsylvania Agricultural Fair Program, Department of Agriculture, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

Any questions regarding the above article can be addressed to Tom Becker, Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717) 840-7408.

# Chincoteague Ponies Unite For Drill Team

(Continued from Page B4)

ton, Mount Joy; and Erika Bender, Manheim.

Although team members did not have their uniforms for practice, the team will wear black hats with black short sleeved mock turtleneck shirts, and grey britches when performing at events.

Team members have lofty plans for the drill team. "We want to perform at the Olympics to show people what ponies can do. We need sponsors," Pennie said.

While the Allens' farm is not open to the public as a tourist attraction, they enjoy meeting Chincoteague enthusiasts all over the U.S. For bookings, or if you would like to visit the Allens' Chincoteague ponies, write to 546 Oak Tree Rd., Manheim, PA 17545, or call (717) 665-7144.



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