



The San Diego County Fair's Container Plant Competition is a captivating and competitive outdoor exhibition designed to showcase the artistry, skill, and innovation of adult and youth gardeners as they create stunning, functional, and imaginative container plant displays. This event offers participants the opportunity to demonstrate their creative horticultural expertise within a compact, portable, and self-contained environment.

Exhibition Timeline

Entry Deadline	Friday, May 1, 2026 by 8:00 PM
Individual Container Plant Deliveries	Tuesday, June 2 – Wednesday, June 3 9 AM – 5 PM
Judging	Friday, June 5, 2026
Fair Dates	Wednesday, June 10 – Sunday, July 5, 2026 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays)
Award Ceremony (Invitation Only)	Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 6:00 PM
Container Plant Removal	Monday, July 6, 7 AM -5 PM

Contact Us

Patty McGinty, [Coordinator](#)
San Diego County Fair Entry Office
 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA 92014
 Office (858) 792-4207 - Mon-Fri 10am-4pm



Garden Show Container Plant Eligibility & Competition Rules

1. Open to all California residents, including youth ages 9-18.
2. Management reserves the right to assign display locations.
3. Professionals, Adults, and Youth are eligible for participation. A professional is someone professionally involved in the Horticulture Industry (Horticulture Instructor, Landscape Architect, Nursery Owner, Etc.)

Entry Limits & Fees

Entering multiple divisions and classes is allowed. Multiple entries per class are not allowed. ***If multiple entries are submitted by the same exhibitor in the same class, they will be disqualified.*** The same item cannot be re-entered in subsequent competitions, neither under the original nor a different exhibitor's name.

Entry fees are payable online with a credit card and are not refundable.

Division 4004 - Professional Container Plants	\$10 per entry
Division 4005- Adult Container Plants	\$10 per entry
Division 4006- Youth Container Plants	\$10 per entry

Fair Tickets

Individual exhibitors will receive two Exhibitor Access Passes.

How to Enter

1. After reading all entry materials, click the “Enter Now” link below to go to the ShoWorks Entry Homepage.
2. Register as an **Exhibitor**.
3. Select the appropriate division and class and input the required information. (See “Divisions and Classes” below for a list of all divisions and classes.)
4. Review your entry before completing registration to ensure that you have entered the correct division and class for each entry.
5. Click the check-out button and pay for all entries.
6. Read the confirmation statement and type YES. **Do not click multiple times**, as it will charge you each time.

If you plan to make changes to your entries or need to leave ShoWorks at any time, SAVE YOUR CART before exiting out.



For additional help with entering, review this detailed step-by-step guide:

[Entry Tutorial](#)

Still have questions? Please call or [email the Entry Office](#).

Phone: (858) 792-4207, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm

Materials

Exhibitors must furnish their own materials, accessories, and labor for set-up and delivery. Management insists on the use of high-quality products and materials. All containers and accessories should be marked with a waterproof label listing the owner's name and phone number on the bottom of the container. Valued accessories, heirlooms, etc., should not be used. All elements must be tasteful and appropriate for display in a garden setting. At the discretion of Fair Management, any items deemed inappropriate or distasteful will be removed and held for pickup at the conclusion of the Fair.

Delivery & Pickup

Exhibitors will deliver their container plant entries to the Fairgrounds on the designated delivery day. After closing entries, exhibitors will receive specific delivery directions and map. Vehicles must be parked in designated areas.

Container plants must be picked up between 7 AM and 5 PM on the designated pick-up day, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Garden Show Coordinator.

Maintenance

Watering of entries during the Fair will be done by trained Garden Show staff per the Watering Schedule Form provided by each exhibitor before the Fair. [This watering schedule form](#) must be completed before Opening Day. Maintenance of plants in containers and landscapes throughout the entire Fair is critical, and entries should be inspected by the exhibitor often. Access for maintenance may be attained on open Fair days between 6-9 am (after which all vehicles must exit the Garden Show area) and on closed Fair days, any Monday or Tuesday between 6 am-6 pm. All vehicles must display a valid Garden Show Exhibitor permit on the dashboard or be subject to tow. Exhibitors must use their own tools and remove all equipment when finished with maintenance each day. Excessive watering that causes run-off into area drains may result in State-imposed fines. Any entry that is not maintained properly may be determined ineligible and have premiums withheld.

Water Quality Control Initiative

The 22nd DAA has strict requirements associated with its stormwater permits (Industrial General Permit and Small Phase 2 MSR). Both permits require the 22nd DAA to ensure that no water, other than what falls from the sky, makes its way into the storm drain system. This includes excess plant water. Anyone found watering in a manner that results in discharges to



any storm drain shall be fined \$500 for the first incident. If the behavior continues, the violator shall be referred to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SD RWQCB) for action. Fines and penalties levied by the SD RWQCB shall be the sole responsibility of the violator, along with any direct costs sustained by the 22nd DAA for clean-up and repair.

Judging

Judging will take place on the date listed in the Exhibition Timeline. Exhibitors' and suppliers' names must be covered by exhibitors before judging. Failure to do so can result in disqualification. Exhibitors will not be permitted in or around the show area during judging. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.

Judging Criteria

Entries are judged on overall health and quality of plant material; clean foliage without dead leaves, water spots, disease, or pests; decorative container selections and condition, including shape, texture, and color; overall balance and symmetry, originality, and artistic creation. Plants must have **proper plant labeling, including botanical and common names visible to the public. Labels must be legible, either typed or handwritten.** Illegible labels will disqualify the entry.

All accepted entries will be displayed in the Garden Show exhibit with any awards received.

Awards

Award checks will be available at entry pick up following the last day of the fair. Checks not picked up will be mailed within 30 days. You must notify the Fair if the person or business name to be issued your award check is different from the exhibitor's name under which the entry was registered. For collaborative projects, only one check will be issued. It is the responsibility of the exhibitors to divide the premium check. Entries winning first through third places will be invited to an awards ceremony.

Professional, Adult, and Youth Divisions

The following will be awarded in each class:

1st Place	\$30 and Ribbon
2nd Place	\$25 and Ribbon
3rd Place	\$20 and Ribbon
4th Place	Ribbon
5th Place	Ribbon
Honorable Mention	Ribbon



Division 4004- Professional Container Plant Classes

Eligibility: Individual professionally involved in the Horticulture Industry (Professional Nurseryman, Horticulture Instructor, Landscape Architect, Nursery Owner, Etc.)

Amateurs, hobbyists, or semi-professional gardeners must enter specimen plants in Division 4005

Specimen Container Plant Definition: A single specimen plant is in a single container. Some classes specify if a hanging container is needed. The maximum weight for entry is 30 pounds. All entries will be displayed outdoors unless specified.

Class 001 Specimens: Bromeliads & Tillandsias

Show bromeliads or tillandsias in a decorative pot, mount, or hanging display. Single plants or groupings, blooming or not. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 002 Specimens: Cactus

Bold and sculptural! Show a cactus specimen (single or multiple of the same species) in a decorative container or hanging display. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 003 Specimens: Succulents

Highlight the variety of succulents through single plants or combinations on the same species. Entries may emphasize texture, growth habit, or color in a decorative container or hanging. Cacti are not allowed. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 004 Specimens: Ferns & Tropical Plants

Colorful combinations or single specimens of any variety of ferns, including staghorn ferns, or tropical plants in a decorative container, or mounted. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information. No entry weight restrictions on ferns. Please contact the coordinator if your fern is over 30 pounds.

Class 005 Specimens: Epiphyllum

Feature your epiphyllum in a decorative container or hanging basket. Bloom color and cultivar must be listed on the entry label. If submitting a hanging basket, a hanger must be included.

Class 006 Specimens: Orchids

Blooming orchids are presented in a decorative container. Phalaenopsis, Cattleya, Cymbidium, and more- blooming orchids judged on flower quality, health, and presentation. The entry label must list the species or cultivar. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 007 Specimens: Bonsai

Any style or species of bonsai artistically trained and displayed in a traditional container. The entry label must include bonsai style and primary species.

Class 008 Specimens: Houseplants

A single species of indoor plant displayed in a decorative container, highlighting foliage, form, or unique character. Can be hanging. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 009 Specimens: Carnivorous

Venus flytraps, pitcher plants, or sundews in a container arrangement. Can be a single species or multiple. Entry labels must list species or cultivar information. Judged on health, design, and creativity.



Division 4005- Adult Container Plant Classes

Eligibility: Open to adults, amateurs, hobbyists, or semi-professional gardeners.

Professional nurserymen may only enter specimen plants in Division 4004.

Specimen Container Plant Definition: A single specimen plant is in a single container. Some classes specify if a hanging container is needed. The maximum weight for entry is 30 pounds. All entries will be displayed outdoors unless specified.

Class 001 Specimens: Bromeliads & Tillandsias

Show bromeliads or tillandsias in a decorative pot, mount, or hanging display. Single plants or groupings, blooming or not. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 002 Specimens: Cactus

Bold and sculptural! Show a cactus specimen (single or multiple of the same species) in a decorative container or hanging display. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 003 Specimens: Succulents

Highlight the variety of succulents through single plants or combinations on the same species. Entries may emphasize texture, growth habit, or color in a decorative container or hanging. Cacti are not allowed. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information.

Class 004 Specimens: Ferns & Tropical Plants

Colorful combinations or single specimens of any variety of ferns, including staghorn ferns, or tropical plants in a decorative container, or mounted. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information. No entry weight restrictions on ferns. Please contact the coordinator if your fern is over 30 pounds.

Class 005 Specimens: Epiphyllum

Feature your epiphyllum in a decorative container or hanging basket. Bloom color and cultivar must be listed on the entry label. If submitting a hanging basket, a hanger must be included.

Class 006 Specimens: Orchids

Blooming orchids are presented in a decorative container. Phalaenopsis, Cattleya, Cymbidium, and more—blooming orchids judged on flower quality, health, and presentation. The entry label must list the species or cultivar. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 007 Specimens: Bonsai

Any style or species of bonsai artistically trained and displayed in a traditional container. The entry label must include bonsai style and primary species.

Class 008 Specimens: Houseplants

A single species of indoor plant displayed in a decorative container, highlighting foliage, form, or unique character. Can be hanging. Entry labels must include species or cultivar information. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 009 Specimens: Carnivorous

Venus flytraps, pitcher plants, or sundews in a container arrangement. Can be a single species or multiple. Entry labels must list species or cultivar information. Judged on health, design, and creativity.



Division 4005- Adult Container Plant Classes (Continued)

Eligibility: Open to adults, amateurs, hobbyists, semi-professional gardeners, and professionals.

Themed Container Garden Definition: Mixed plant species. Each theme garden is a single container. Some classes specify if a hanging container is needed. The maximum weight for entry is 30 pounds. All entries will be displayed outdoors unless specified.

Class 010 Themes: Herb Garden

A decorative container featuring at least three edible herbs, beautifully arranged and thriving. Judging is based on design, health, and overall impact. Entry label must include species or cultivar information.

Class 011 Themes: Fairy/Cottage Gardens

Choose to design a miniature garden planted in a single decorative container with whimsical dwellings designed to scale or a potted garden overflowing with charm, arranged in a romantic cottage garden style. Must be suitable for outdoor display and contain at least three different plants.

Class 012 Themes: Terrarium

Capture a whole world under glass! Miniature landscapes or single specimens displayed in a glass container, highlighting creativity in enclosed gardening. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 013 Themes: Influencer Inspired

Turn your scrolling into growing! Re-create a plant idea inspired by Pinterest, Instagram, or TikTok. Submit the social media photo along with your entry to show how you brought online inspiration to life. Submit a decorative container with single or multiple species.

Class 014 Themes: Hanging Floral Baskets

Bursting Botanicals! Colorful arrangements or mixed species or single specimens are displayed in a hanging container, showcasing cascading or trailing plants. Highlight design, color harmony, and balance. Must have a hanger for display.

Class 015 Themes: Hanging Houseplants

Bring a touch of greenery to new heights! Showcase your favorite hanging houseplant and let its beauty shine. Entries will be judged on overall plant health and presentation. Can contain multiple species. Plants must be suitable for hanging display. Will be displayed indoors at the Farm 2 U exhibit in O'Brien Hall.

Class 016 Themes: Low Water Use

Arrange drought-tolerant or low-water-use plants or succulents in a decorative container, showcasing the art of sustainable gardening. Must contain at least three different plants. California natives encouraged!

Class 017 Themes: Floral

Bright, bold, and bursting with life! Creative arrangements in a container using flowers in a decorative container, highlighting design, color harmony, balance, and overall presentation.

Class 018 Themes: Waterscapes

Dive into creativity! Design a water-themed container garden featuring aquatic or semi-aquatic plants. Judged on balance, originality, and presentation.



Division 4005- Adult Container Plant Classes (Continued)

Eligibility: Open to adults, amateurs, hobbyists, semi-professional gardeners, and more!

Container Definition: Each container garden is a single container. Entry must be presented in the correct type of container. The container should be a garden of mixed species or a single specimen.

Max weight for entry is 30lb. All entries will be displayed outdoors.

Class 020 Containers: Vintage

Give old treasures new life! Display your plants in a vintage container for a touch of nostalgia and charm. Judged on originality, design, plant health, and overall presentation. The entry label must include a description of the container and its age.

Class 021 Containers: Window Boxes

A traditional window box planted with the exhibitor's choice of plants. Judged on originality, design, plant health, and overall presentation.

Class 022 Containers: Terra Cotta

Show off timeless beauty with plants arranged in terra cotta. Judged on originality, design, and overall impact. Any blooming or non-blooming plants artistically and creatively arranged in a terra cotta container.

Class 023 Containers: Wooden

Natural and warm, wooden containers bring character to your display. Any blooming or non-blooming plants artistically and creatively arranged in a wooden container, judged on originality, design, plant health, and overall presentation.

Class 024 Containers: Modern

Sleek and stylish! Highlight your plants in modern containers- plastic, concrete, or mid-century inspired. Judged on originality and design.

Division 4006- Youth Container Plant Classes

Eligibility: Open to San Diego County Youth Ages 9 through 17 as of date of entry delivery.

Specimen Container Plant Definition: A single specimen plant is in a single container. Some classes specify if a hanging container is needed. The maximum weight for entry is 30 pounds. All entries will be displayed outdoors unless specified.

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Division 4006- Youth Container Plant Classes (Continued)

Eligibility: Open to San Diego County Youth Ages 9 through 17 as of date of entry delivery.

Themed Container Garden Definition: Mixed plant species. Each theme garden is a single container. Some classes specify if a hanging container is needed. The maximum weight for entry is 30 pounds. All entries will be displayed outdoors unless specified.

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Class 024 Containers: Modern

Sleek and stylish! Highlight your plants in modern containers- plastic, concrete, or mid-century inspired. Judged on originality and design.



2026 Local Rules

1. Completion of online entry registration shall be deemed acceptance of all rules and permission to use your name, photograph, and images and description of entries in print, digital, and other media.
2. Online registration is required for all competitions and one-day contests. Online entries and any required image/document uploads are accepted until the published deadline, which specifies a date and time. Late entries will not be accepted.
3. Once registered, the exhibitor's name, entry description, title, and price may not be changed. Substitutions will only be allowed in accordance with current State Rules. Fair Management is not responsible for errors on entry forms, which may lead to elimination or disqualification of an entry.
4. Processing fees must be paid online at the time of registration. Processing fees are non-refundable.
5. Exhibitors must be living at the time when the online entry is submitted.
6. All non-livestock/non-agricultural entries must be the creative work of the exhibitor (whose name appears on the entry registration), be in good taste, and suitable for family viewing. Fair Management reserves the right to disqualify any entry/exhibit it deems objectionable or not in accordance with competition standards.
7. If an entry is disqualified after judging is complete, no changes will be made to the status of awards given for other entries.
8. Exhibitors are responsible for obtaining necessary permission from models and/or for using material in their entry that is considered copyrighted.
9. No entry will be accepted should the exhibitor describe the conditions under which he/she will exhibit, or the exhibit will be displayed.
10. Judges are selected for their expertise in the divisions or classes they evaluate. New judges may be appointed each year, and judging assignments may vary annually based on the needs of each competition.
11. If a coordinator or judge deems an entry to be in the incorrect category, division, class, etc., he or she may direct the Entry Office to move that entry as appropriate. The Entry Office may combine divisions or classes to create an adequate judging pool.
12. Fair Management reserves the right to limit entries and display thereof, to facilities available, and to cancel any division or class in which, in its judgment, the entries are insufficient to secure adequate competition.
13. Entries must be delivered on the date(s) and times specified. Entries will not be accepted before or after the stated entry delivery date. All accepted exhibits must remain on display and shall not be removed until the stated entry pick up date. Any exhibit not picked up on the specified date becomes the property of the San Diego County Fair and will be disposed of promptly.



2026 Local Rules (Continued)

14. All exhibits are entered and shown at the owner's risk. Reasonable care will be taken to prevent loss or damage to exhibits, but in no event will the 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) be responsible for any injury or loss which may occur or for the actions of third parties. Insurance, if desired, should be obtained by the exhibitor at his/her own expense.
15. Any person who violates any Local, State, or Department rule or displays unethical conduct will forfeit all privileges and premiums and be subject to such penalty as the 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) may order.
16. To ensure reliable award notification, exhibitors are responsible for submitting all address, phone number, and email address updates promptly in writing to entry@sdfair.com or Entry Department, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar, CA 92014.
17. Premium money will be paid per the recorded placings in the official judging reports rather than the ribbon attached to the exhibit.
18. Donated Award recipients will be selected per the instructions given on the Donated Award Confirmation Form submitted by the donor.
19. Premium, donated cash award, and auction checks will be made payable to the exhibitor as listed on the online entry registration. Checks will be mailed within 30 days after the close of the Fair to the address shown on the online entry registration, or as updated by the exhibitor via written notification to the Entry Office. Checks not cashed within six (6) months from the date of issue will be forfeited. Replacement checks may be subject to a stop payment fee.
20. The 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) is required by the Internal Revenue Service to report any premium payments totaling \$600 or more. Exhibitors whose awards meet or exceed this amount must submit a W-9 form before their check can be issued.
21. The 22nd District Agricultural Association (San Diego County Fair) management reserves the right to amend or add to these rules and assumes no liability or responsibility not herein expressed.
22. California State Rules apply and are available [here](#).