

# Aquarium Beautiful Competition Handbook

# Adult & Youth

## IMPORTANT DATES

Online or Paper Entry Form deadline	Friday, December 6, 2024
Late Entry Period	December 7 - 13, 2024
Deliver items to the Florida Center — located at the Florida State Fair. (see page 4)	Saturday, February 1, 2025 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
	Sunday, February 2, 2025 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
	Monday, February 3, 2025 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Items exhibited	February 6 – 17, 2025
Entry pickup	Tuesday, February 18, 2025 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

For more information, contact  
The Creative Living Department @

Phone: 813-734-2810

Email: [Creativeliving@floridastatefair.com](mailto:Creativeliving@floridastatefair.com)

Aquarium Beautiful Coordinator

**Bill Shields**

Phone: 813-310-4212

Email: [tbasbill@aol.com](mailto:tbasbill@aol.com)



## Benefits of Competing?

The Florida State Fair is proud to showcase the bounty of talented people from around the state. Not only do we provide you the opportunity to win ribbons and prize money... it's also a great way to share your talent with a larger community. **In appreciation... all adult exhibitors receive a FREE ticket and youth exhibitors will receive two FREE tickets to attend the fair.**

## Competition Overview

<b>Entry Fee:</b> Youth Division	FREE
Adult Divisions	\$5 per entry
<b>Late fee</b>	\$10 per entry

Youth Division **FREE** (Youth entries are sponsored by the Tampa Bay Aquarium Society at [www.tbas1.com](http://www.tbas1.com))

### Entry Fees are non-refundable

All information regarding Creative Living Competitive Exhibits can also be found at [www.floridastatefair.com](http://www.floridastatefair.com) >> **PARTICIPANTS** (top of page) >> **CREATIVE LIVING** (drop down)

**How to enter online – page 4**

**General Rules – page 5**

**A paper entry form is available on the last page.**

Exhibitors are encouraged to read this handbook in its entirety, as some rules have changed.

### Eligibility & Guidelines

- The **Hobbyist Adult & Professional Adult Divisions** are open to all Florida residents ages 18 and up. You cannot compete in both divisions.
- The **Hobbyist Youth Divisions** are open to Florida residents in grades 1 – 12, as of September 1, 2024.
- The **Saltwater Open Division** is open to all Florida residents ages 6 and up as of September 1, 2024.
- **All entered items must be on display for the entire duration of the Fair.**
- **Tank dimensions must be included in registration due to space restrictions.** There is no upper or lower limit on the size of the entered item, but due to space limitations, tanks over 55 gallons will need approval by Bill Shields. Entered items will be assigned space on a first-come, first-served basis. If space is unavailable for all entered items, the Fair will notify those affected.

## Eligibility & Guidelines (continued)

- Exhibitors may enter as many tanks as they like, but each tank can only be entered in one (1) class.
- You are allowed to show fish that have been shown in prior years at the Florida State Fair.
- Each exhibitor will provide a tank complete with all accessories including light, filter, and a drop cord with a three-way plug. Only one electrical outlet will be provided for each tank. Electricity, water, and a table to place the tank on will be provided.
- The Fair will provide professional care of all entered items during the Fair but assumes no responsibility, either actual or implied, for any mishaps or fish loss, which may occur. Fish will be fed once a day with standard flake food.
- No late-entered items will be permitted. Claim Receipts will be issued at the time you set up your display.
- All entries will be displayed at the Fair whether they receive an award or not. In keeping with the Florida State Fair's family orientation, items of an offensive, controversial, or objectionable nature or subject matter will not be accepted.

## Judging & Awards

The Fair ensures that the judges we employ are knowledgeable in the division in which they are judging and will be impartial. Judges reserve the right to reassign entries to a more appropriate division or class. Judging will be done using a scorecard to assist in keeping decisions as objective as possible. **The decision of the judge(s) is final.**

If, at the Judge's discretion, an entry does not merit a placing, the Judge shall give no award under any circumstance. This rule applies whether there is one or more exhibits in the Class. **Final results and exhibit display will be revealed during Fair time.**

## Definitions

**Nano tanks:** Natural freshwater or saltwater tanks less than 10 gallons with an emphasis on small-scale inhabitants. Plants and fish should be chosen from the smaller species. They will be judged on their ability to be maintained long-term in the Nano setup.

**Freshwater w/ Live Plants:** Any freshwater aquarium with live plants excluding artificial plants.

**Freshwater w/o Live Plants:** Any freshwater aquarium without live plants.

**Freshwater Biotype:** All fish, plants, and décor hardscape from the same geographic habitat.

**Novelty:** Any creative setup with artificial décor. Theme setups usually place better than random setups.

**Saltwater:** Any saltwater aquarium including reef tanks.

**Saltwater Open Division:** Open to all hobbyist adults, professionals, and hobbyist youth.

## Awards Information

### Hobbyist Adult, Professional & Saltwater Open

---

**First Place – State Fair Ribbon \$50**

**Second Place – State Fair Ribbon \$40**

**Third Place – State Fair Ribbon \$30**

**Best of Show – State Fair Ribbon \$100**

Best of Show award will be chosen from the First-Place winners in each class within the 3 adult divisions.

### Hobbyist Youth

---

**First Place – State Fair Ribbon \$35**

**Second Place – State Fair Ribbon \$25**

**Third Place – State Fair Ribbon \$15**

**Best of Show – State Fair Ribbon \$40**

Best of Show award will be chosen from the First Place winners in each class in youth division.

**Director's Choice Award – State Fair Ribbon \$35**

**Honorable Mention Ribbons** may be awarded, at the discretion of the judge(s).

## Judging Criteria

The following awards are determined on both the fish and the tank appearance.

### Fish Judging

**(50% of total score):** health, size, finnage, behavior, category, and compliance to class.

**Tank Judging (50% of total score):** lighting (especially when live plants are used), water, clarity and overall appearance and compliance to class.



## Division Definitions

**Hobbyist Adult Division:** Adults (age 18 or older) who have purchased or raised their fish.

**Professional Division:** For those who are professionally involved in the sale or maintenance of aquariums or aquarium fish, including wholesale and retail markets.

**Hobbyist Youth Division:** Youth must be a student in grades 1 – 12 as of September 1, 2024.

# Aquarium Beautiful – Divisions & Classes

## Aquarium - Hobbyist Adult Division 10.101

### Class Description

- 1 Nano Tank
- 2 Freshwater w/ Live Plants
- 3 Freshwater w/o Live Plants
- 4 Freshwater Biotype
- 5 Novelty

## Aquarium - Professional Division 10.201

### Class Description

- 1 Nano Tank
- 2 Freshwater w/ Live Plants
- 3 Freshwater w/o Live Plants
- 4 Freshwater Biotype
- 5 Novelty

## Aquarium – Saltwater Open Division 10.601

### Class Description

- 1 Saltwater

## Aquarium - Youth (age 6-10) Division 10.301

## Aquarium - Youth (age 11-13) Division 10.401

## Aquarium - Youth (age 14-18) Division 10.501

### Class Description

- 1 Nano Tank
- 2 Freshwater w/ Live Plants
- 3 Freshwater w/o Live Plants
- 4 Freshwater Biotype
- 5 Novelty



The 2024 Aquarium Beautiful Best of Show winner was Dharmesh Patel.



The 2024 Hobbyist Youth Best of Show winner was Layla Eder.



**Bill Shields** has supervised the Aquarium Beautiful Competition for over 25 years. Without his dedication and care these beautiful fish tanks would not have been shared with the public.



The Aquarium Beautiful Exhibition will be held in the Florida Center during the Florida State Fair. The exhibit will be open for your viewing pleasure.

## How to Enter Online

We encourage you to enter online, using ShoWorks. The Florida State Fair has implemented ShoWorks, an online entry program. ShoWorks is an industry-standard used by over 50 fairs nationally. This user-friendly program can be trusted to accurately enter you into our competitions and allows for efficient communication via e-mail. We are excited to have ShoWorks to better facilitate entering Florida State Fair competitions.

- **Take a moment to look through this Competition Handbook to see which division and class your entry is eligible to compete in.** Then, follow the easy steps listed below to enter the competition you have chosen.
- **To Enter Online using ShoWorks.**  
Go to [www.floridastatefair.com](http://www.floridastatefair.com) and at the top of the home page select the **PARTICIPANTS** TAB and you will see in the dropdown list a link for **CREATIVE LIVING**. Select the [ENTER ONLINE](#) link on the left side of the page.
- **Everyone must register as a new exhibitor even if you have competed in the past.**
- **Note that sessions expire after 20 minutes** of inactivity, so “save the cart” if you plan on leaving the computer for more than 20 minutes.
- When registering, please verify that all information that you entered into ShoWorks is correct. Please pay special attention to capitalization, full names of cities/counties and use proper spelling (no abbreviations).
- If you [ENTER ONLINE](#) you will need to pay with a credit card at that time. You will not be able to delay payment as we were able to do in the past.

## Mailing Paper Entry Forms

- **Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**  
*Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification.*
  - **Late entries must be postmarked between December 7<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> 2024 will incur an increased entry fee.**
- Mail Entry Form to:**  
Creative Living Competitions – Aquarium Beautiful  
Florida State Fair  
P.O. Box 11766  
Tampa, FL 33680
- Make checks payable to:**  
Florida State Fair Authority

## Delivery & Setup of Entries

- **All entries must be delivered to Florida State Fair Authority and setup their aquariums on either:**  
Saturday, February 1, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, February 2, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Monday, February 3, 2025, 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### Deliver entries to:

Florida State Fair Authority  
Florida Center Bldg.  
Attn: Bill Shields

*Enter off Orient Road through the Service entrance on the west side of the fairgrounds.*

Map with directions to the Florida Center available on the [Creative Living webpage](#).

- Entries arriving at the Fairgrounds after Delivery may be disqualified.

## Retrieving Entries

- See the calendar for Pickup dates, times, and locations (page 1).
- Entries not picked up on designated dates can be arranged for a special pick-up appointment by emailing [CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com](mailto:CreativeLiving@floridastatefair.com).
- All entries remaining on the Fairgrounds after the designated release time will be treated as abandoned property.



# General Rules

## Disclaimer

Please be advised that competitive exhibits are entered at the exhibitor's risk. The Florida State Fair does not insure and is not responsible for any loss, damage, or theft of entries, even if the loss, damage, or theft occurs as the result of the handling of the exhibit by staff, volunteers, contractors and/or visitors. If the exhibitor desires insurance coverage, this coverage should be secured from a personal insurance agent prior to entry and the policy written to cover the period of exhibition and transportation. Reasonable care will be taken to prevent loss or damage to exhibits. Unauthorized persons are not permitted in the building after closing hours.

## Division/Class Cancellation

The Florida State Fair management reserves the right to return entries and cancel any division or class in which, in its judgment, the entries are insufficient to secure adequate competition.

## Entry Errors

Florida State Fair management is not responsible for finding errors in entries. Exhibitors are responsible for any and all errors that were submitted online or on entry and summary forms. No exhibitor shall be entitled to an award which has been disallowed as the result of his own error. The Florida State Fair management shall withhold the payment of awards for exhibits that are ineligible and may recover awards that have been paid for ineligible entries that are disclosed during post-audits of Fair records. However, exhibitors with cause are entitled to question the validity of any disallowance. Such exhibitors should inform the Florida State Fair management immediately, in writing, giving their name, address, a complete description of the entry, and the reason for requesting reconsideration. Requests will not be considered later than ninety (90) days after receiving notice of disallowance.

## Premium Payments

Premium Awards will be paid according to the Judging Criteria Record Sheets. Premium checks will be void after 6 months from date on check. **PLEASE CASH PREMIUM CHECKS IMMEDIATELY.** After 6 months, all uncashed checks will be voided, and replacement checks will not be issued.

## Substitutions

Substitutions, if necessary, must be within the same department as the original entry. Substitutions must be completed by the last day of the entry delivery period. You cannot transfer your entry to another exhibitor.

## Previously Entered Entry

Any entry that has been exhibited at a previous Florida State Fair is not eligible for entry in this year's Florida

State Fair. This excludes Horticulture & Aquarium Beautiful entries.

## Verification

Exhibitors wishing to verify that the Florida State Fair has received submitted entry forms and fees must include a self-addressed/stamped envelope when submitting entry forms. Online submissions will receive a confirmation code once entries are submitted.

## Responsibility

The Florida State Fair shall not be responsible for exhibits remaining on the fairgrounds after designated release times. All still exhibits or display elements remaining on the Fairgrounds after the designated release time will be treated as abandoned property and will be disposed of on or before September 1st of the same year.

## Removal of Entries

An exhibitor may not remove his or her entry from the Florida State Fair once it has been accepted. Entries must be on exhibit at the official opening of the Fair or at any other time specified in the Competition Handbook and shall not be removed from the Fairgrounds prior to the release date printed in the handbook, except (at the discretion of the Florida State Fair management) in cases of positive evidence of sickness, accident and/or death, or other circumstances that are in the best interests of the Fair.

## Eligibility for Fair Employees

Florida State Fair Authority employees are eligible to compete in the Creative Living competitions except for those who directly work for the Creative Living Department.

## Dishonored Checks

A penalty of \$25.00 per dishonored check must be paid if a check in payment of entry fees or other applicable fees is refused by the bank. Only cash, certified check or money orders are acceptable for a penalty payment.

## Design

The Florida State Fair assumes total design control over the presentation of all exhibits. Entries designed for hanging and not so equipped will be hung in a manner deemed appropriate by the Fair. No exhibit changes will be made once the entries have been displayed. Once an entry has been received by the Florida State Fair, no further handling of entry by exhibitor shall be permitted. Relocation and final placement shall be accomplished by Florida State Fair personnel. Entries requiring assembly/disassembly must include detailed instructions and sketches for assembly/disassembly. Instructions should indicate lifting points, unsecured parts and any other information required for such handling. Where necessary, bank pins will be utilized to attach exhibits for display.

# Aquarium Beautiful Entry Form

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Exhibitor #	_____
Late Entry	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Total Fee	_____
Paid	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> MO <input type="checkbox"/> Check
Check No.	_____

**Entry Forms must be postmarked by Friday, December 6, 2024.**

**Late Entry Period: December 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (Adult Double Entry Fees)**

Failure to complete any portion of the entry form may result in disqualification.

Please print legibly

Exhibitors Name (First, Last)		If youth exhibitor, who should the premium check be written to:	
Mailing Address		County	
City	State	Zip Code	<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you are a new exhibitor
Phone (      )	Email		

**Please indicate Age Group**      **Age as of SEPT 1, 2024, \_\_\_\_\_**      **Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_**

Hobby Adult (18 +)     
  Youth (age 6-10)     
  Youth (age 11-13)     
  Youth (age 14-over)

Professional (18 +)

**Entry Fee: Adult, Professional & Saltwater Open Division \$5 per | Late entry \$10 per entry**

Youth Division FREE

**Exhibitors may enter as many tanks as they like, but each tank can only be entered in one (1) class.**

**Late Entry**  
 YES  NO

#	DIVISION #	CLASS #	Tank Size & Length of Tank	Fee
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
<b>Total Amount Due</b>				<b>\$</b>

I hereby certify that I have read the Florida State Fair General Rules for the Competitive Exhibits Program (Page 5) and the above item(s) is/are entered for exhibition strictly in accordance with these rules, by which I agree to be governed. I also agree that the Florida State Fair may use my name, likeness, or photograph (including, but not limited to photographs of my entry), in any manner relating to my participation in the Competitive Exhibits Program, free of charge and without further notice or consultation.

I understand that the 2025 Creative Living Competitions & Exhibits are held in conjunction with the 2025 Florida State Fair and agree that the Florida State Fair is not liable or responsible for any delay, change of dates or cancellation of the 2025 Florida State Fair due the following unforeseeable circumstances: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake; or (c) other potential disaster(s) or catastrophe(s), such as epidemics, pandemics, or explosion.

Signature of exhibitor	Date
Signature of parent/guardian (Youth ONLY)	Date
If Youth wins prize money, who should the check be made payable to?	

**Mail Entry Form to:**  
**Creative Living Competitions –**  
 Aquarium Beautiful  
 Florida State Fair  
 P.O. Box 11766  
 Tampa, FL 33680

**Make checks payable to:** Florida State Fair Authority