

Miniscapes Competition

The Miniscape Competition is open to individuals or teams of two exhibitors who reside in Austin County and adhere to the Home Economics General Rules that will compete on Sunday, September 27, 2026. Schedule of Events will be listed on the Austin County Fair website under Horticulture and on the Horticulture Facebook page.

Please join the ACF Horticulture page on Facebook.



The contest will be split between Junior, Intermediate and Senior entries at the discretion of the Horticulture Committee. Junior are 3rd to 5th grade, Intermediates are 6th-8th and Senior are 9th to 12th grade. **It is Mandatory to register via the online sign up form on the ACF website/Menu/Horticulture. Entries will be the first twenty-four (24) exhibitors** based on forms received via online entry with any additional entries being added to a waiting list. The Horticulture Committee can make adjustments as they see fit.

ENTRIES WILL OPEN ON SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026 at 9 am.

Please see the website for the Miniscapes Theme!

The Horticulture Committee will confirm your entry via email. Exhibitors will be required to RSVP by August 28, 2026 to confirm they will be participating at the fair. If exhibitors fails to respond, an individual or team will be pulled up from the waiting list, tracked via entries and email. This rule has been put in place to avoid No-SHOW entries and for the maximum number of Exhibitors the opportunity to participate. Entries will close upon limitations or no later than August 16, 2026.

Competition Format: Each individual/team will compete in a design and execution of a Miniscape, based on the **theme to be released on the ACF website.**

Design Guidelines: Exhibitors should review the guidelines prior to preparing their entry. Questions may be directed to the Horticulture Committee at ACFHorticulture@gmail.com.

- Entries will be constructed in a water trough (planter) that is approximately 24" deep.
- Troughs will be chosen on a **First Come First Serve Basis**

- Troughs vary in sizes by 24 X 48, and 22 X 46 inches, please plan accordingly.
- The planter will be provided by the Fair.
- Each planter will be pre-filled will soil up to the top of the planter.
- Plant materials should be able to withstand sunny, warm conditions.
- Planters will be displayed outside for 15 days.
- No living creatures may be used in the design.
- Entries should be designed with equal visual interest from all sides.
- Entries may not display signage that names the team's school, school district or FFA/4-H chapter. A sign will be provided upon completion of judging for display on the grounds.
- Exhibitors are responsible for bringing wagons, carts, wheelbarrows, etc. to transport their materials from the parking lot to the exhibit area. **No parents are allowed in the Competition Area.**
- Exhibitors can get in line starting at 8:45 am. Entry to the competition area will begin at 9 am.
- Registration beings at 8:00 am. **Design begins at 9 am.** Trough random drawing will be chosen at registration time and plants may be moved in upon trough number/letter drawing.

Day of Competition:



- Check in for Miniscapes will be on the grounds of Austin County Fair on Sunday September 28, 2025, starting at 8:00 am. Each team will receive a registration number.
- Announcements begins at 8:45 am
- **Competition begins at 9:00 am**
- Designs must be complete by 11:00 am.
- Exhibitors will be met by the Horticulture Committee volunteers; the volunteers will assist with check in, direct the exhibitors to the exhibit area and help with bring in design elements if needed. **No Parents will be allowed in the competition area.**
- Carts/wagons are recommended for transporting materials from a vehicle to the competition area.
- The planting and design of the planter must be performed by the exhibitors ONLY.



- **No cell phones, iPads, Watches, or any other type of communication device is allowed in the competition area.**
- **No Prepotted plants of any kind**
- **Precut weed barrier is required if using rocks, gravel, stones, etc. Compostable mulch does not need weed barrier.**
- Paper sketches of design are allowed in the competition area.
- The exhibitor is responsible for providing the plants and any props to be used in the planter.
- The exhibitor is responsible for bringing all tools needed to prepare their planter.
- Buckets will be provided for each team to use for holding purposes while the design is being planted. Any extra soil not used can be left in the supplied buckets and the Horticulture committee will keep for reuse.
- Trash Containers will be provided for each team to clean up their area and throw all trash away when planting is complete. Brooms and dustpans will be available to sweep your area.
- Each Exhibitor must sign Thank you notes to our sponsors on the day of the competition prior to award announcements.
- Unsportsman like conduct or cheating will not be tolerated. If there are instances by exhibitors or parents, the exhibitor will not be allowed to participate the following year.
- Entries will be watered and maintained by the Horticulture committee during the following weeks. 
- Exhibitors will have access to water and watering pitchers on that day and must water their troughs **thoroughly** before leaving.
- The Show is not responsible for lost, damaged or dead items.
- **Items of great sentimental value should not be used.**
- **It is MANDATORY to remove all design elements and plants including any type of stones or other types of hardscape used in your design on Sunday, October 11, 2026 by 3 pm. No Exceptions.**

Judging: The fair will select qualified judges for each competitive event. Any questions about the judging criteria may be directed to the Horticulture Committee. Judging criteria will be placed on the website and sent out via Facebook at Registration time.

- Entries will be judged on a 100-point system:
 - Up to 50 points may be awarded for design.
 - Up to 25 points may be awarded for staging and quality.
 - Up to 25 points may be awarded for variety of plants.

Each team must be prepared to explain to the judges what their plant choices are and how their design fits the theme during the competition.

- Winning entries will be announced on September 28, 2025, and winning exhibitors will be recognized at 2:00 pm
- **Judges' decisions are final. Please feel free to talk with judges after the competition is over to get their thoughts and ideas for your design and scores.**

Awards: Supreme Grand Champions will receive a banner. Buckles will be awarded to the Grand and Reserve Grand Champion winners in Junior, Intermediate and Senior Divisions. Placement ribbons will be awarded 3rd – 10th.

SUPREME MINISCAPES



Grand Champions will advance to Supreme in the Junior, Intermediate and Senior Miniscape Division. Supreme Champions will have the option to enter their Miniscape into the Youth Supreme & Country Auction to be held on Saturday, October 10, 2026.

Supreme Champions of the Miniscape Division will have the option to sell and will receive the auction price minus the administrative fee from the fair. See the Youth Supreme & Country Auction section of this book for a full set of rules pertaining to the auction.

Exhibitors will surrender all items used in their Miniscape as designed. **Items of great sentimental value should not be used.** Buyers will pick up their purchase on Sunday afternoon at the conclusion of fair.

Any questions regarding these rules may be sent to the Horticulture Committee at ACFHorticulture@gmail.com.

Removal: Exhibitors placing other than Supreme, **MUST REMOVE** their plants, stones and design materials on Sunday, October 11th from noon to 3 pm. Any plants or materials left after 3 pm will be disposed of or become the property of Austin County Fair. Containers will be moved to their storage location.