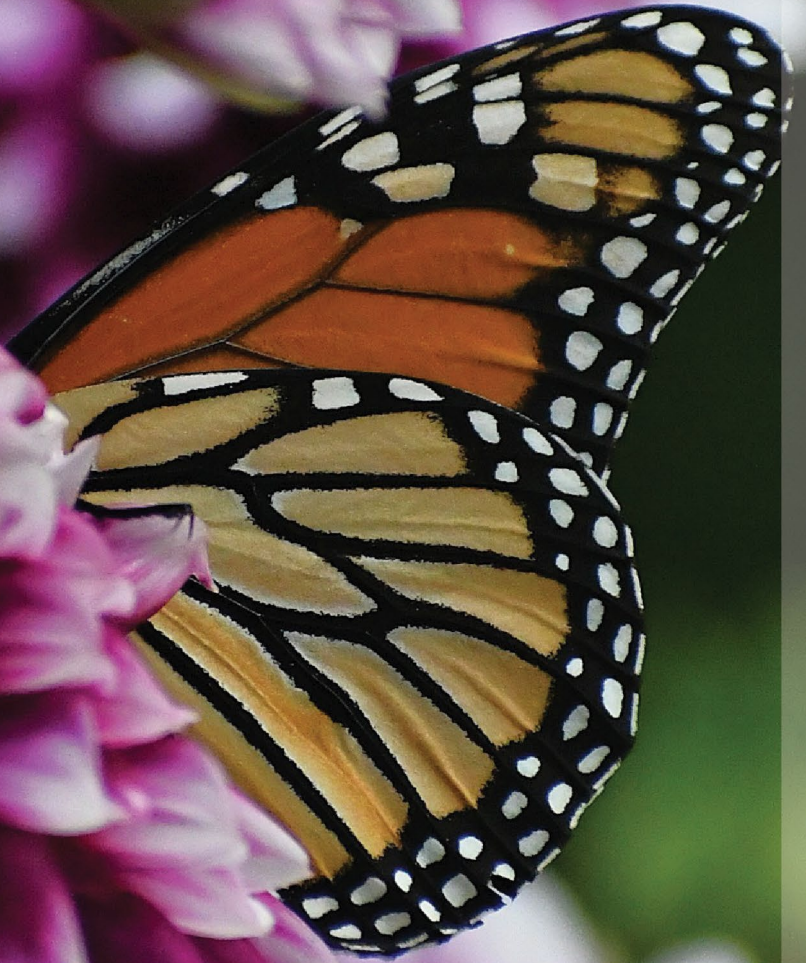


APRIL 2026

Bulletin

OF THE AMERICAN
DAHLIA SOCIETY, INC.



2025 Stanley Johnson & Les Connell Medal Winners Announced

Each year, the American Dahlia Society bestows its top two cultivar awards, the Stanley Johnson and Les Connell Medals, on those dahlias demonstrating superiority in exhibition.



The Stanley Johnson Medal is awarded to the cultivar with the greatest number of higher than blue ribbon awards that were won at shows held during the previous year by ADS member societies in the United States and Canada. Previous Stanley Johnson Medal recipients are excluded from further competition.

The Les Connell Medal is awarded to the cultivar with the highest total number of awards at shows held by ADS member societies in the United States and Canada in its first five years since introduction.

The award is named in honor of prolific hybridizer Les Connell.

Irish Gnome
5002 - MC FD Y
Originated in 2023 by
Sandy & Steve Boley
Whatcom County Dahlia Society

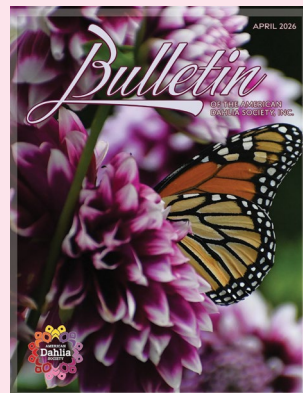
**Lake Hills
Creamsicle**
8003 - Pe O
Originated in 2020 by
Annie Walker
Puget Sound Dahlia Association

Bulletin Submissions

The *Bulletin* is committed to publishing articles and information with universal appeal to our membership. With a regular cadre of contributors including writers, growers, hybridizers, researchers and ADS society reporters, we plan each issue so that it is timely, entertaining and relevant.

From time to time, we receive articles and stories from members and others on a variety of topics; sometimes we are able to use these, but not always. If you are thinking about doing an article, please e-mail the editor at adsbulletin@dahlia.org to discuss your thoughts and ideas. Thank you for being part of this wonderful endeavor!

Visit the ADS Website
Dahlia.org



On the cover

**2025 ADS Photo Contest
Class 8 3rd Place, Monarch**
Photo by Catherine Luce

BACK COVER
**2025 ADS Photo Contest
People's Choice Award
Who Goes There?!**
Photo by Val Luckey

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See page 47 for committee contact information.

President's Message

Spring is coming and with it the annual ritual of dahlia growing starts again. 2026 will bring many new varieties to your gardens, many opportunities to learn new growing practices, I hope some new dahlia friends and I hope some fun.



I know all the new medal winning cultivars will be highly sought after and I hope the local societies will be a source of sharing and trading dahlias. If you are not a member of a local dahlia society, please consider aligning yourself with one (or more). A monumental positive change has occurred with the rollout of the new online Member Management System. Change can be hard, but this change has many benefits, and I trust with persistence we will be able to get everyone to appreciate this modernization. I believe we will soon be saying "we should have done this long before". Special recognition goes to Brad Freeman and Mary Loftness for the significant time they put into this project.

Some of you are seeing the ADS logo for the first time. The strategic plan we are working with has as a goal branding of the ADS as a goal. This new logo is the beginning of this process. I appreciate the many positive emails received after you got the introductory letter regarding the new logo. Stay tuned to more ways that the ADS will embrace this logo.

I was pleased that our volunteer team was able to compile the 2026 *Classification & Handbook of Dahlias* and we were able to get it in the mail much earlier than the past few years. The online, updated data was uploaded to the ADS website before February 1.

I hope you have a "save the date" (August 28-30) for National Show and annual meeting being hosted by the West Michigan Dahlia Society in Grand Rapids. We plan to celebrate as we compete and recognize the contributions so many make to the love of dahlias.

We appreciate your membership and trust that the colorful *Bulletin* and other benefits are worth your continued support. Happy Growing. 🌸

Mark

Mark Oldenkamp | President | president@dahlia.org

Deadlines for submissions to the ADS Bulletin

August, 2026
Content Due

June 1,
2026

December, 2026
Content Due

October 1,
2026

April, 2027
Content Due

February 1,
2027

Send correspondence,
reports, and articles to:
ADSBulletin@dahlia.org

For information on advertising
in the ADS Bulletin:
Advertising@dahlia.org

April 2026 Featured Content



24

Doing Good With Dahlias

When floods struck opposite ends of the country, the dahlia world came together to support disaster relief in unique ways. Learn more about how Pacific Northwest hybridizers and growers banded together to help the community recover from catastrophic damage.

Features

28 Photo Contest Winners

Learn about this year's winners, and see the top award-winning photos.

40 Growing Healthy Dahlias

Learn how the American Dahlia Society and commercial grower members are formulating new strategies for maintaining dahlia health and preventing spread of disease.

50 Demystifying Dahlia Trials

Each year, the American Dahlia Society supports the work of trial gardens across North America. Learn more about how the process works.



6

6 2026 National Show

The West Michigan Dahlia Society is eagerly anticipating hosting the 59th Annual ADS National Show and Midwest Dahlia Conference this August. Learn about the show, the schedule, and how to register. Don't miss out – last year's show sold out long before the first blooms were placed on show benches!

“My Grandma raised dahlias.”
How many times have you heard that statement? Followed by reminiscing comments about walking in Grandma’s patch of beautiful dahlias. The past, present and future of our dahlia world is wonderful.

Hopefully, you received the 2026 *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*. (The ADS bases this 2026 *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias* on principles established by the Central States and American Dahlia Societies in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s.) Names of Members of the ADS Classification Committee are listed on the inside of the front cover. Each committee member deserves kudos for their efforts—especially Karen Sanchez, Committee Chair and Colin Walker, Production Manager.

New Trial Garden Down Under by Stephen Cox announces the Partnership with Cruden Farm. Stephen Cox is a familiar face to ADS members across the US. He has been working with the Dahlia Society of Victoria to establish a new dahlia trial garden at Cruden Farm.

Debbie Pavich announces the ADS Photo Contest winners. If a picture is

worth a thousand words the April *Bulletin* far exceeds the word limits. WOW! Each picture generates extraordinary emotions.

Webmaster, Sharon Swaney, gives navigation tips of dahlia.org. Several societies have presented The Best of 2026 at society meetings. Sharon shows how to easily locate articles on the website.

Trial Gardens by Heidi Zierdt and The Seedling Bench Evaluation Program by Roger Walker focus on how these programs drive the development, and promotion of new dahlias. Both the trial gardens and the seedling bench provide key opportunities for dahlia growers.

Society reports are full of data. CDS member Lori Goehring, writes about guest speaker Per Benjamin, who is a world-renowned Swedish floral designer, educator, and industry leader from Stockholm. He is especially respected in the international floral competition and design world.

Numerous reports indicate community service and dahlia awareness projects, including Colorado Dahlia Society spreading dahlia love at libraries. Along this same theme is the article by Debbie Pavich on Evelyn Chou’s creation of Amelia’s Flower Library. DS

Bulletin Editor



of California is celebrating 100th anniversary of dahlia as the San Francisco. The logo is worthy of T-shirts. WCDS has great information on founding and original members. That is the wonder of new members and seasoned hybridizers working together to advance dahlias – the flower that owns us.

The West Michigan Dahlia Society is primed for a spectacular show. Check out the article 59th Annual ADS National Show by Joni Debrie which creates dreams of future dahlia adventures. Hopefully, you have made hotel reservations at Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel. Garden tours include Jeff and Nikki Miner, Luke and Joni Debrie and Warren Vigor and Rhonda Cantrell’s fantastic gardens.

One of my favorite articles is Dahliyah’s 100 Dahlias which reveals a kindergarten student’s project of one hundred items. Inspired by her grandma, Dahliyah chose dahlias which she is growing and selling for her “future life fund.” I would love to connect with you: email me at adsbulletin@dahlia.org. ❁

Pat

Pat Looney | Editor-in-Chief

ADSBulletin@dahlia.org





The 59th ADS National Show & Exhibition

Joni Debrie, with contributions from Jo Jepsen

The West Michigan Dahlia Society is honored to welcome you to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the 59th Annual ADS National Show and Midwest Dahlia Conference! We cannot wait for you to check out our fabulous city.

There is plenty of beautiful scenery and unique local places to explore while you're here. The show will be located at the beautiful Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, which first opened in 1995 and was founded by Fred and Lena Meijer. At Meijer Gardens, you'll find The Richard & Helen Devos Japanese Garden, the Tassell-Wisner-Bottrall English Perennial Garden, the Michigan's Farm Garden, the Lena Meijer Children's Garden, the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory, the Kenneth E. Nelson Carnivorous Plant House, the Earl & Donnalee Arid Garden, and much more.

Additionally, Meijer Gardens is hosting the incredible glass exhibit



Chihuly at Meijer Gardens Presented by Macatawa Bank this summer. Dale Chihuly is a world-renowned American artist famous for his breathtaking glass sculptures that play with color, light and form in ways you truly must see to believe. His installations are spread throughout the gardens, indoors and out, transforming each space into

something magical and unexpected. Whether you're a longtime fan or seeing his work for the first time, you'll be amazed by the vibrant colors and imaginative shapes. The permanent Chihuly installations at Meijer Gardens are a must-see, and having the opportunity to experience them up close is a real treat. If you love art and nature, or just want to be inspired, this exhibition

Photos courtesy West Michigan Dahlia Society & Midwest Dahlia Conference

is something you won't want to miss -- and it is available to enjoy the weekend of the show at no additional cost.

This year, we've shaken up the usual weekend schedule, giving you extra time to explore Meijer Gardens after lunch on Saturday. Guided tram tours have been arranged to show you the best spots, and your registration covers your entrance ticket, so you can just relax and enjoy everything the venue has to offer.

The dahlia show will be held on the main floor of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, in the Huizenga Grand Room. With its floor-to-ceiling windows, the event room is filled with natural light, making it the perfect setting to showcase our beautiful blooms. The elegant, spacious layout allows for comfortable viewing and judging, and you'll find it easy to move around and enjoy the displays. The Huizenga Grand Room is known for its modern design and views of the surrounding gardens, so you can soak in the scenery while connecting with fellow dahlia lovers. If you need a break or a quick pick-me-up, visit the adjacent James & Shirley Balk Café, where you can have a coffee or snack during the day. Don't forget to look up to the ceiling in the café to see a beautiful permanent Chihuly installation Lena's Garden.

Lodging

You will enjoy your stay at the newly renovated Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel, just minutes from the airport and less than a 15-minute drive to Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. Plenty of dining options can be found within minutes of the hotel, so grabbing a bite to eat is easy. The hotel features both indoor and outdoor pools, meeting spaces, a fitness center, and plenty of on-site parking. You will discover that getting around is simple, too. The hotel offers shuttles to and from the airport. And if you'd rather not rent a car, Uber and Lyft are available. For your convenience, we have scheduled the guest reception, ADS meetings and other speakers at the hotel. Your hotel reservation can be made utilizing the link found on our website.

About Our Club

The West Michigan Dahlia Society has a rich history that dates back to the 1950s, when it was originally founded as the Grand Valley Dahlia Society by Lillian Donaldson. In those early days, meetings were held in Donaldson's home with approximately 20 members gathering to share their passion for dahlias. As the club grew, meetings moved to the Chadwick Garden Center at the Grand Rapids Museum. In 2011, the club adopted its current name, the West Michigan Dahlia Society. The club is fortunate to have a strong relationship with Meijer Gardens, which hosts our monthly meetings as well as our annual show. With a membership of 185 and counting, our club is thriving, with increasing participation and engagement across all activities. Our club focuses on enjoying the beauty of dahlias, building friendships, and sharing knowledge with fellow enthusiasts.





Flower of the Year

Our club will sponsor both a large and a small Flower of the Year. The Large Flower of the Year is Clearview Jonas; the Small Flower of the Year is Baron Aunt Dorothy. In addition to these two cultivars, we will have a class for sponsored varieties. If you plan to sponsor a cultivar, enter seedlings for bench evaluation, or enter arrangements, please be sure to scan the QR code in the *Bulletin* for updates and additional information as it becomes available.

The Weekend Schedule

Thursday, August 27

The National Show kicks off with a guest reception meet and greet at the hotel. Check into your room, then reconnect with your friends from near and far while enjoying appetizers and a cash bar in the evening.

Friday, August-28

Friday is your opportunity to see how we grow dahlias in West Michigan. Join us for a bus tour to visit the gardens of Jeff and Nikki Miner, WMDS President and second-generation grower and Luke and Joni Debrie, WMDS Trustee and owner of Tree House Blooms LLC. We will leave the hotel to tour both gardens, with a light lunch and ice cream stop in-between. We look forward to showing you what works in our climate to help dahlias thrive.

These two gardens have two very different soil types and two different methods to support dahlias. Jeff and Nikki have a gorgeous collection of show dahlias that are well-marked and organized, with hills that leave plenty of space for the plants to spread.

Luke and Joni's garden uses unique structures custom designed and built to handle a large number of dahlias. Their garden includes roughly 2,000 plants of named cultivars plus many seedlings. Joni grows a mix of show- and cut-flower varieties, with no

open-centered cultivars. Her daughter, Madison, also grows dahlias and would love to show you her Mystery corner.

After the tours, we will return to the hotel early enough to provide plenty of time for staging at Meijer Gardens. Staging begins around 3 pm and continues through the night, with ample space for everyone.

Saturday, August 29

Showtime! Judging begins at 9 am. Strong teamwork will be required as we expect thousands of entries and the show opens to the public at noon.

The afternoon schedule is more relaxed. Take your time and explore the gardens, take a tram tour, or enjoy the venue's beautiful walking paths. See if you can find the dahlias hiding in plain sight, in and among the gardens. Back at the hotel at 4 pm, our keynote speaker will present insect identification and treatment options. Happy hour starts at 6 pm with a cash bar followed by a buffet-style dinner. We don't want to interrupt dinner conversation, so honors and awards will follow dinner. Be sure to stick around and cheer on your friends for their well-deserved recognition.

Sunday, August 30

The day begins with breakfast at the hotel, followed by the ADS Classification meeting, ADS Judging meeting, and ADS Annual meeting, also at the hotel. You are on your own for lunch, but you have plenty of options nearby, such as Panera, Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakhburgers, Culver's, Noodles and Company, Jimmy John's, Bagger Dave's, and many others.

Sunday afternoon holds our slate of speakers, with presentations scheduled from 1:30 - 4:15 pm. Additional details with times, speakers, topics and the final show schedule will be available on our website. We have plans for a class from a local expert on arrangement techniques, a craft class creating a stained glass-like floral win-





dow-catcher while relaxing with friends and a glass of wine, among other presentations. Some of these classes will run concurrently, allowing you to tailor the afternoon to your interests.

Monday, August 31

Buses will leave in the morning from the hotel to visit Warren Vigor of Vigor Fertilizer and former President of the Dahlia Society of Australia and Rhonda Cantrell's beautiful garden. This garden is one to remember. Learn how a mate from Down Under has combined his growing style with hers from West Michigan to create this masterpiece. Enjoy the trip with acquaintances, new and old, and take in what Vigor does to enrich those blooms.

If you come early or stay late, we encourage you to take advantage of the best weather of the year by exploring scenic West Michigan highlights -- Lake Michigan's stunning beaches and historic lighthouses are just a short 45-minute drive away. Relax and enjoy the sunshine before or after the show. August often brings warm waters, ideal for swimming or sunbathing. Grand Rapids is proud to be recognized as "Beer City USA," offering a rich selection of local craft breweries and



cuisine for food and drink connoisseurs. Outdoor lovers will appreciate that our city ranks No. 3 nationally as the Most Outdoor-Friendly City, thanks in large part to the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park- a centerpiece of our community. We encourage you to discover all West Michigan has to offer during your stay.

Other local attractions: Check out experiencegr.com/ articles for general area activities. Visit the John Ball Zoo, Robinette's Apple Haus & Winery, Grand Rapids Public Museum, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, Grand Rapids Art Museum, and Boulder Ridge Wild Animal Park. Take a short

drive to Grand Haven State Park Beach, Holland State Park beach, or PJ Hoffmaster State Park beach.

Registration for the show will be posted on our website, along with the link for preferred room rates for your reservations with the Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel.

Visit <https://westmidahlia.com/ads-2026-show-newsletter/> to sign up for updates.

Tuber Talk

Harry Risetto

One of Caesar's Commentaries began with the words: "All Gaul is divided into three parts." The dahlia world is also divided into exhibitors, gardeners, and container growers. The balance between the three has shifted during the last 50 years.

The American Dahlia Society, which began more than a century ago by a group of floral professionals, quickly grew to include non-commercial members. By 1916 there were 250 members mostly from the Northeast, but also from throughout the United States and foreign countries. In addition, local dahlia societies proliferated from coast to coast. Tubers and plants became available by mail-order. Newspaper articles from the early era support their increased appearance as a garden flower and in exhibitions

Between its founding in 1915 and its 100th anniversary the ADS grew less than ten-fold. This suggests that there was a disconnect between the casual and serious growers. Membership in the many local dahlia societies had to be multiple of those in the ADS, and a fraction of those growing dahlias in their gardens. How often have we heard that "my grandmother grew dahlias."

Beginning in the late 20th Century,

the ADS increased its outreach. The annual national dahlia show moved beyond the New York area and was staged throughout the United States and Canada. A free monthly newsletter began publication and attracted thousands of subscribers. The ADS *Bulletin* promoted local societies and offered some content geared to the home gardener. More importantly, computer technology expanded the dahlia's horizons through the Internet and social media such as Facebook. Interest in gardening during COVID provided fertile ground.

The ADS has begun to embrace the "casual grower" by encouraging displays and competitions of garden-dahlia bouquets. There is a point of view that garden dahlias should stay and be appreciated where they grow. They should not enter the restrictive arena of competition.

Low growing dahlias have existed at the edges of the dahlia world since the late 19th Century. They were characterized by their short size and small single blooms. Terminology varied and has included "dwarf, and "bedding" dahlias. They have been grown mostly for garden pleasure and arrangements. For many years, these dahlias had a single row of florets (petals). Smaller hybridizers introduced families of cultivars such as Gallery, Figaro, Unwin, Mystic, Kelsey have created cultivars

suitable for small containers. Recently, major commercial hybridizers are producing new cultivars with multiple rows of florets, as well as in single forms. They were short and produce many small blooms. By all accounts, these new dahlias are a significant part of the commercial flower market.

The ADS has standardized the form and size of the mignon single and micro classifications for dahlia shows. It has left the double dwarf dahlias to remain in backyards, terraces, and balconies. Dahlia popularity is growing in all three of its parts. It is a tribute to the versatility of our flower.

Postscript: There is a library of books about growing dahlias. The basic techniques have not changed for more than one hundred years. Keith Hammett's *World of Dahlias* is one of the most useful, even though it was published 40 years ago. More recently, Kristine Albrecht has added *Dahlias, Seed to Bloom* to the dahlia literature. Two sites on the internet, among many, are notable for providing a scientific perspective. Steve Lloyd, "The Dahlia Doctor" looks under the tuber to explain how it develops. dahliadoctor.com/blogs/second-blog. The Blog from Bear Creek Farm provides an interesting perspective on how dahlias grow. bearcreekfarm.com/blogs/news/when-to-dig-up-dahlias-the-first-frost-rule-of-thumb



New Trial Garden Down Under: Dahlia Society of Victoria Announces Partnership with Cruden Farm

Stephen Cox

Located just outside of Melbourne, Cruden Farm is one of Australia's most exciting green spaces. This historic farm in Langwarrin had been owned by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (pictured at right) since 1928, where various flowers, including dahlias, had been grown for decades. Since her passing in 2012 at the age of 103, the Murdoch Family Trust has managed the property, shepherding it in perpetuity as a site for public recreation and nature preservation.

A little background first. Cruden Garden had been in the Murdoch family since the property was presented as a wedding present to Elisabeth Joy Greene by her fiancé, Sir Keith Murdoch. Sir Keith was an influential editor and newspaperman and had been named as one of Melbourne's most eligible bachelors. He met Elisabeth after seeing a photograph of her

as a 18-year-old debutante in *Table Talk*, a society magazine published by his company. Less than a year later, they decided to marry. Prior to their nuptials in 1928, Murdoch gifted his 19-year-old bride with the lovely pastoral space called Cruden Farm. Set on 54 hectares in Langwarrin, the property became the family home. Together, Dame Elisabeth and Sir Keith devoted themselves to their family, home, gardens and their work. The couple raised their four children on the farm, including their son, media mogul Rupert Murdoch, founder of News Corps and Fox News.

In addition to her work as a wife and mother, Elisabeth's other calling was philanthropy. She believed that helping others was the most important and rewarding thing a person can do and she devoted her life to doing what she could in countless ways. Her title as Dame Commander of the British Empire was bestowed on her by Queen Elizabeth in 1963. She was actively involved with scores of charities, serving first as a volunteer and eventually



Photos courtesy Dahlia Society of Victoria

Editor's Note

Steve Cox, dahlia grower, hybridizer and author of this article, is a familiar face to ADS members across the US. He has been a regular presenter at ADS National Shows for many years, and this season, has been working with the Dahlia Society of Victoria to establish a new dahlia trial garden at Cruden Farm near Melbourne, in the town of Langwarrin.

an officer with the Royal Children's Hospital. She also loved gardening and was "hands on" at Cruden garden most of her life. Murdoch was an honorary fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects and helped to establish the Elisabeth Murdoch Chair of Landscape Architecture and the Australian Garden History Society. Under her hand, Dame Elisabeth's garden was opened to the public, gaining international acclaim. She used the garden to raise millions of dollars for charity. In 2007, Dame Elisabeth said it was her "wish that the gardens and other areas would be retained largely in the form in which they are at present." Upon her death, the Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Charitable Trust was established, with its principal purpose being "the retention of Cruden Farm as an area for public recreation."



A Trial Garden is Born

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch had been a member of the Victoria Dahlia Society and she loved her dahlias. She attended the annual State Dahlia Show whenever she could and participated in the loving care that her dahlia gardens at Cruden Farm received. Eventually Dahlia Society of Victoria honored her for her support and influence with a lovely seedling, a pink collarette named Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (pictured at top of page), and originated by one of the society's past presidents Chris Michalopoulos.

Knowing all this, imagine how exciting it was when, in March of 2025, the Australian Dahlia Society of Victoria (DSV) received a call from Jo Neil, one of the gardeners at Cruden Farm. Some of the original tubers planted at Cruden Garden had been donated by DSV. However, since Dame Elisabeth's passing, labels had been lost and there was no one on-site who might be able to name the dahlias that were still being grown there. Jo was calling to request that the DSV may be able to help to identify the different varieties. The DSV was more than happy to help with this task.

But wait - there's more. As DSV President Pam Albutt began aware of how much Dame Elisabeth had enjoyed her dahlias, it occurred to her

that Cruden Farm might, in fact, be an ideal spot for a dahlia trial garden. She and DSV leadership decided to inquire whether gardener Neil might have an interest in hosting a dahlia trial garden at Cruden Farm. DSV had not held a trial ground for many years, and the idea seemed to align with the history and the commitment of Dame Elisabeth. The idea had been discussed within the DSV in the past, but to date no suitable site had been located.

Gardener Jo was very enthusiastic and agreed to take the idea to the Cruden Farm Board of Management. It was her feeling that they would likely be keen on the idea. The DSV Board met with head gardener Lewis Barrett to present their vision for a Cruden Farm dahlia trial garden. The Cruden Farm Board and the Dahlia Society of Victoria Executive Committee loved the idea, wasting no time to approve and establish the trial garden.

DSV Senior Judge Deb Collett has been named as Trial Garden Director. Secretary Fran Grylls, President Pam Albutt and Steve Cox rounded out the committee, following up by meeting with gardeners Lewis and Jo Neil to establish guidelines and norms for the garden. With space for up to 40 varieties, the 2025 first season boasted 13 exhibitions and 3 cut-flower varieties. To fill out remainder of the spaces, two plants each of already-named varieties were grown. The garden's location is near the "Picking Garden", where vegetables and flowers are grown specifically for use in the main house. Both the Picking Garden and the Trial Garden enjoy a beautiful view that overlooks the main lake on the property.

Maintenance is scheduled to take place on Monday mornings from 10am to noon, when we will weed, tie up and disbud as needed. We are considering adding donuts as additional incentives for garden volunteers.

DSV is delighted that Cruden Farm said YES. Having such a safe, secure and accessible space as a trial garden is exciting. This is truly a win-win for Cruden Farm and the Dahlia Society of Victoria, promising new dahlia joys nurtured in beautiful, peaceful surroundings. 🌸





My Dahlia Godfather, Bob Bloomfield

Deborah Dietz

They warned me, “He can be ornery; beautiful dahlias but downright cantankerous.” I steeled myself to deal with a difficult old codger. But when Bob and I met for the first time, something ignited! As crazy as it sounds, our souls recognized each other. We were on the same wavelength. Our connection just snapped into place.

Thus, our 30+ year relationship began. Whenever I visited Portland, Oregon, where my parents lived, I would go sit in one of Bob’s 3 dank dark greenhouses. We had bemoaned rotten

overwintering casualties and celebrated precocious sprouters. He kept lists of cultivars on lined paper in spiral notebooks. Mentors usually teach, but Bob treated me like a (younger) (much younger) equal. If, perchance, he had a new variety, he talked it up describing why he added it; but not in a teachy way. We wallowed in our joint obsession. We laughed at each other’s green humor.

What is the difference between a mentor and a Dahlia Godfather? First, statistics. Many people seek out mentors, many mentors train newbies. But in all my 75 years I have only been graced with ONE Dahlia Godfather.

Next up, many people apprentice themselves to more knowledgeable

dahlia growers. They learn by example and through service. I never planted with Bob, nor took cuttings; although I could not help but disbud when we coursed through his magnificent blooms. I listened to horror stories about the Widow Maker, a monstrous rototiller of Godzilla proportions which bucked and brutalized my ever-growing frailer each year Bob. I did not try to lasso that murderous machine, but I sympathized. I begged Bob to forego tilling to thunderous arguments. The worse his description of the Widow Maker, the louder he roared about its subjugation. We shivered in the dizzy thrill of danger together.

Third, we obviously respect our mentors. But I loved Bob. Often by

dint of experience, mentors accumulate greater age than their mentees. Maybe it was this 35-year gap that engendered his avuncular attitude and let me be this spoiled dahlia goddaughter.

Bob loved sharing with me with Philip Mingus Sr. in Vancouver, Washington. We would head straight for Phil's seedling patch. Bob and Phil discussed heritage lines, best seed parents, and lousy tuber makers. Weeks later a box would arrive at my home in San Francisco full of Mingus Tony, Mingus Nicole, Mingus Harry, and more! Like sending red shoes to a granddaughter, Bob sent me tubers that were not yet available to the public at large. Once a spectacular Northlake Heritage graced the cover of a calendar, stunning people with its magnificence. Bob and I shared secret sniggers because he had made sure it was growing in Golden Gate Park two years before dissemination. We loved our collusion!

Mentors diligently teach; a Dahlia Godfather dotes and delights.

Fourth on the list: Mentors often share dahlias with their trainees. Over Memorial Day, I would help my mother decorate five generations of family graves in three different cemeteries. Bob always had three buckets of lilies, irises and greens awaiting her. As mama arranged bouquets, Bob and I considered his vast cutting collection which I flagrantly pillaged. Beaming, Bob would share the story behind each choice. Urchin, he named for a nasty miniature poodle of his wife.

Myrtle's Folly, one of his first laciniated successes, was named after his wife just like Myrtle's Brandy, named for yet another (equally nasty) poodle. He particularly twinkled over Half Ass. Only the size of an airplane carry-on limits the number of new dahlias I could plunder. Then all the summer we would phone chat about his "children" and how they fared in The Big City.

Lastly, mentors sometimes become friends; Bob and Myrtle became family. My four-year-old twin nephews bemoaned getting hauled off to "another boring dahlia garden." But when they discovered a 100' hedge of raspberries, they began begging to go to Bob's. One year when we arrived, Bob called out, "Sammy! Sammy!" (Neither boy is named Sammy.) What? Then we heard a rustling in the trees. Down the trunk dashed a squirrel and ran right up Bob's overall leg and snuggled into his upper pocket.

Benevolently, Bob gave Sammy a peanut. It seems that a baby squirrel fell out a tree and Bob rescued it. All through the winter, Bob and Sammy worked in the greenhouses together. For several years, Sammy and the raspberries delighted in my twins. Occasionally, when Myrtle could not take any more of Bob's grouching and grumping, she would phone me.



Top: *Myrtle's Folly*

Bottom: *Myrtle's Brandy*

"Oh, Bob, Deborah's on the phone."

Of course, we would immediately fall into contentious discussion about the importance of distinction or thrips. Myrtle got some relief and I returned her a happier husband. In his mid-90's Bob crashed his car. At the hospital he would not allow visitors. But I insisted. I was his Goddaughter. Ultimately, we commiserated together and even laughed all afternoon. We held hands. He died the next day. I miss him so much.

Mentors are honored at their passing. I will miss Bob for the rest of my life. 🌸

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The Other Side of the Garden

Ramona Kuiper

Hello dahlia growers and flower farmers! What an exciting time of the year, with seed packets on display and spring decorations filling the store aisles.

After our long, cold, and snowy winter, it's the inspiration we need in our lives, just in time to get our dahlia gardens ready. I sit here by the window in my old rocker, enjoying my morning coffee as I watch the many varieties of birds out there. They still look like they might be cold and hungry, reminding me to put some more seed in the feeders - they are still dependent on us until spring finally gets here.

I close my eyes for a few minutes and think about last year's trial garden. In 1987 two wonderful dahlia gardeners decided to share their world with others by creating this garden in a wonderful park in Bristol, Indiana. Thank you, Mac Boyer and the late Dan Franklin for your work with the parks department to make this space into one of their main attractions. Besides the garden, there are several pavilions scattered throughout, as well as an old-time schoolhouse, which we love to use for our dahlia picnics. It's just so quaint and welcoming, with a kitchen, nice restrooms and air conditioning,

making it perfect for our club meetings and other events.

The trial garden sits off to one side of the road and is about 20 feet wide and 40 feet long with room for about 32 entries, in a spot where the sun hits it at just the right time. Nearby there is an herb garden as well as a river next to a grist mill that still grinds grain and makes flour. There is even a tiny store where people can buy little bags of grain. The park is a busy place, with weddings, picture sessions, weddings, family gatherings and picnics. Not far from the pavilion is a walking path that goes to a sweet little waterfall and a small wooden bridge. I am always expecting a cute troll to appear, asking "Who's that walking on my bridge?" just like in the kids' story, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, from The Golden Books series, from when I was - once upon a time - a kid.

People come from all over the country to see this garden in Bonneyville, inspired by the dahlias. Cammi Waggoner, our wonderful trial garden director, does a great job. I remember when she was just a young gal - she loved flowers from the time she could walk - thank you, Cammi! Mac Boyer and Steve Kuiper have taught her so much about running a

trial garden. When the tubers arrive in the spring, the originator sends a picture along with the name of the cultivar and how it is classified. Mac assigns each seedling a number, then the ground is prepared and the tubers are planted. We're happy we have experienced judges who do that important work and at the same time, teach newer judges, giving them the experience needed to advance.

The thing I love about Bonneyville Park is that it's a joyful place, a place of serenity. There's an inviting marble memorial bench right next to the dahlias, where we can just sit and count our blessings. With a small herb garden nearby, people walk by carrying fishing poles or picnic baskets, or they just stroll by to see the flowers.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote "The earth laughs in flowers". I remember once seeing a dahlia at a show that had just been awarded top honors. Then, just moments later, it dropped all its petals. I was standing next to the man who judged it, and I must have gasped in disbelief, because he turned to me and said, "You know, that's how we all feel at times. We lose a few petals and sometimes the stress gets to us. We need to lighten up and just enjoy life - deal with life as it happens.

We can't sweat the small stuff." A lady came up to me later and said "I just wanted to tell your club thank you. I've been so absorbed with my personal problems, so a friend brought me here to the show." Then, smiling, she said "My heart feels like it could burst with such happiness. How can I grow some of these flowers?" She wanted me to see the arrangements, leading me to one that especially charmed her.

"As the fall and winter approach," she said, "this will be in my mind – the joy that this brings." I just smiled – the Good Lord created the dahlia and gave special talents of the flower arrangers, who delight us through their work, sharing this promise of hope and love.

Well folks, I hope your dahlia season will be great. Our kid talks with such zest and enthusiasm. She reminds me of the time that my late mother-in-law asked her son – my Mister – if he

would dig up her whole yard and help her plant flowers. Of course, at first he said no. But then years later, he said "I finally understand my mom. What would you think if I plow up the yard and plant flowers?" I had no other answer than "Well I suppose those fishing poles will be taking a long rest...." But for some reason, I wasn't too worried.

Have a wonderful spring and summer! ❁

ADS Membership Management System Update

Brad Freeman, Past-President and MMS Committee Chair

We appreciate those members who have taken the time to create their username and password to access the member area in the membership management system (MMS). The full potential of the MMS cannot be realized until most of the ADS members log in and create a username and password. If you need assistance with logging into the member area or have questions about your membership, please contact Elva Sellens, Membership Chair, at membership@dahlia.org.

We are pleased to report that there is now a direct link between the member area of the MMS and the members-only portion of the ADS website. The link is in member area of the MMS which you can access using your unique username and password. To access the members-only section of ADS website you no longer need the "not so secret" username and password found in the *Bulletin* which eventually will be phased out.

Another feature included in the member area is a calendar of events. We encourage all local dahlia societies and regional conferences to list their meetings, tuber sales, workshops, etc. on the calendar of events. These events can be denoted as member-only or open to public. Those events that are denoted as open to public will appear on a calendar of events on the ADS website. You can submit your event information by using the "Submit" button located under the calendar of events in the member area of the MMS.

While you are in the member area of the MMS please make sure your member profile is up to date by completing these tasks:

- ❁ ***Make sure the information in your member profile is current.*** *Of significant importance is your email address; these are being used to communicate vital information to all ADS members.*
- ❁ ***List only your home or primary dahlia society in the Communities section of your member profile.*** *This helps the ADS and local dahlia society leadership keep track of the ADS members that are in each of the local dahlias societies. Listing only one dahlia society in your profile helps everyone, please choose just one.*
- ❁ ***A field called "Additional Local Societies" is available for those wishing to list more than one local dahlia society in their profile.*** *Note, this field is not for your home or primary dahlia society.*
- ❁ ***If you have a Local Society or Conference leadership position, please confirm the information is current.*** *Changes to the leadership information can be submitted to Sharon Swaney and Clare Grehofsky at info@dahlia.org.*

We are off to great start with the new membership management system. The membership portion of the system is up and running. Now our attention can turn to activating other features of the MMS, so stay tuned! ❁

Society Reports

Badger State Dahlia Society

Monique Volden, ADS Representative

2025 was a busy and rewarding year for our club! We kicked off the year by hosting a booth at the Wisconsin Garden and Green Living Expo in February—an event that attracts thousands of Midwesterners eager for signs of spring. Tabling at the Expo is an important recruitment opportunity for our club. Visitors are drawn to our colorful display to ask dahlia questions, and each year we welcome many new members as a result.

Throughout the year, we hosted quarterly meetings for our membership. As the only active dahlia society in Wisconsin, we strive to offer hybrid meetings so members can participate without having to travel long distances.

In April and May, we held our annual online tuber sale with in-person pickup. This is the sixth year we have had the sale online and it continues to be very successful and streamlined. We continued using Square as our sales platform, and—true to traditions sold out of our most sought-after varieties within minutes of opening the site. We have found that having multiple members present on pickup day to answer questions and discuss dahlia-related topics is helpful for buyers.

In August, we hosted our 79th annual show and made a special effort to encourage new growers to participate.

September brought an adventure: we organized a bus tour to the ADS National Dahlia Show in Chicago. The club subsidized the cost for members and welcomed non-members as well. The show itself was a highlight of the season, as was our visit to the Chicago Botanic Gardens.

In October, we partnered with the University of Wisconsin–Madison Allen Centennial Gardens to host a floral arranging workshop. Participants toured the Gardens—led by an intern our society helps to fund—and were



invited to snip greenery to incorporate into dahlia-focused bouquets.

We closed the year with our annual banquet and awards ceremony. While the year was filled with many joyful moments, it ended on a sad note with the loss of BSDS member Charles Craig. A longtime dahlia expert, mentor, hybridizer, show chair, and friend, he will be deeply missed.

Canadian Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society

Murray Thompson, ADS Representative

A big thanks to Bonnie Murphy, who was able to secure a new venue at a golf course. With more space to spread out, and with a catered repast, we saw

attendance rise over past years by about 40%.

Michael Burns has agreed to serve as President for his second year. Bonnie Murphy is assuming the treasury, and thankfully, folks in all the other positions have agreed to continue without change.

As with most Dahlia Societies, there is hardly any time we are not involved with our growing hobby, whether in the garden, involved with storage, planning new crops, and counting our treasures. We just got our crops put away, and now the Spring sales call for us to start digging them out again.

We participated in the Toronto Botanical Gardens 'Jump On Spring' in late February and look forward to participating in their plant sale in early May.



Badger State Dahlia Society members hosted a booth at the Wisconsin Garden and Green Living Expo in February.

Carolinas Dahlia Society

Lori Goehring, ADS Representative

As I write, I feel like a ground hog eagerly waiting to poke my head out and announce spring is here! From floods fall 2024 to ice storms this year, we persevere.

To kick the year off, our President, Elise Fournier, has secured Per Benjamin of Stockholm, Sweden as a guest speaker. He is a World Champion Florist, Nobel Prize event florist and educator. He will be exploring the wild and wonderful options available to us for creating arrangements with our dahlias, all while leaving zero footprint on our planet. He will be presenting to our group (and other Southern States members) on February 21st via Zoom.

On April 11, senior members will present "prepping and planting your tubers" as well as collecting tubers for our annual spring tuber sale. May 9th Carolinas annual public tuber sale. June 13th Program on Monarch Pollinators, followed by discussion on "caring for our growing dahlias". July, member

garden tours. August 15th Judges Training held at The Village Green in Cashiers, NC. September 11-13th - 2026 CDS Show held at The Village Green. Upcoming events can be found on our Carolinas web page.

Central Coast Dahlia Society

Michelle Mitchell, ADS Representative

Our Central Coast Dahlia Society began 2025 with a bang, hosting the 74th Pacific Southwest Dahlia Conference. Over one hundred attendees enjoyed great presentations on dahlia culture, a fantastic raffle including a handmaid dahlia quilt, and the company of good friends.

CCDS had two new Accredited Judges in 2025 and seven new Candidate Judges. That brings our society total to fourteen judges, many of whom excitedly attended a summer judging seminar and volunteered as judges and clerks at our own ADS Dahlia Show and other conference shows.

One of our youth members, Izzy Mayr, recently competed in the San Luis Obispo (SLO) Countywide FFA

Continued on page 20

We have chosen to continue meetings via Zoom, since it offers convenience for widely dispersed members, and is much more economical than renting meeting space. It also allows us to include international speakers, even if we need to accommodate date and time changes to make it a reality.

We have secured the Toronto Botanical Gardens for our Fall show and are changing to a two-day show. Tied to this show will also be an enhanced effort to encourage membership, something we believe has both exciting potential and opportunity.

And here we are, chomping at the bit to get the season going again.

Central Coast Dahlia Society
President Heather Jamieson shows off
SLO Sweetheart, her first origination.





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Project Competition. Izzy's project, which focused on hybridizing dahlias through controlled cross-pollination with the goal of identifying dominant and recessive traits expressed in successive generations, earned a Gold Ribbon in one division and third place in another. Our club is very proud of this young woman's drive and commitment to dahlia production.

2025 marked the beginning of a new community partnership with SLO City Farm, a local community garden. Our club planted tubers, tended them with the help of City Farm volunteers, and wrapped up the year with a dig & divide clinic. SLO City Farm sells the blooms, the community enjoys the lovely dahlias, and we get tubers for our spring sale!

Lastly, we wish to extend a big congratulations to CCDS President Heather Jamieson for her first introduction, SLO Sweetheart, and its entry into the 2025 ADS *Classification & Handbook of Dahlias*. SLO Sweetheart is a BB ID LB with truly captivating picotee. This classified ADS variety is a first for our club and we could not be prouder!

Central States Dahlia Society

Marian Landerholm, ADS Representative

The members of CSDS again, extend a big thank you to all who attended the 2025 National Show in Chicago. Your attendance made the show a tremendous success.

CDS has elected a new slate of officers. President is James Kassner, 1st VP is Mike Hartel, 2nd VP is Linda Kudelka, our Secretary is Lisa Soto, our Treasurer is Sonia Harmon, and our Membership Chair is Anne Allodi. Newly elected Directors are David Groesch, George Koons and Jackie Myers. Of note: Carol Cichorski has taken on website responsibilities and Dana Clinkman is our News-Line editor. This team includes new faces to our society, and we are eager to have them be a part of our society's leadership.

Congratulations to our newly accredited judges. Members Sonia Harmon, Keith Hill, Robin Hill, Jennifer Jones, Debbe Kassner, Rosemarie Magura, and Lindalee Stuckey have passed the Accredited Judges Exam.

We are proud of their accomplishments. It takes a lot of dedication to pass this exam. We look forward to having them judge at this new level at our shows this year! We also have a new candidate judge, Dana Clinkman, and we are eager to work with her as well.

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the loss of one of our Life Members, Charles Craig. Charles's home society was Badger State Dahlia Society, and he belonged to our society for over 25 years. On many occasions Charles supported our society's fundraising and educational efforts. He was a knowledgeable dahlia enthusiast, and we lament losing his expertise.

An important activity for the late winter and early spring is our propagation program. We hope to have a bountiful number of healthy plants for our Chicago Botanic Garden and online sales. The April meeting is our last scheduled meeting until fall. The program will focus on planting and the summer care of the dahlias. As a proud member of the Midwest Dahlia Conference, we encourage our members

Photo courtesy Colorado Dahlia Society

to attend the conference meeting and plant auction held in Elkhart, Indiana. This will be on first Saturday in June. It is a great time to meet old friends from all over the Midwest.

We wish everyone a wonderful growing season and spectacular dahlia blooms in 2026.

Colorado Dahlia Society

Jennifer Carpenter, President

It has been an unusually dry and warm winter here in Colorado. We are hoping for some heavy spring snow to get our snowpack numbers up and prepare for summer gardening. In early December, CDS members enjoyed a fun holiday party hosted by our incoming President and his wife. We gathered at Michael and Leah Rotert's Westminster home for a festive cookie exchange and white elephant gift exchange with a garden theme. Some lucky members

Colorado Dahlia Society members enjoyed a holiday party at Michael and Leah Rotert's home in December.



Your Club Name Here

The many forms of the *Dahlia*

HOW DAHLIA CLASSIFICATION WORKS

Dahlia Size Category
AA Giant - over 10 inches diameter
A Large - 8-10 inches
B Medium - 6-8 inches
M Small - 4-6 inches
M Miniature - up to 4 inches
BA Ball - over 3.5 inches
MB Miniature Ball - 2-3.5 inches
P Pompon - up to 2 inches
MS Mignon Single - up to 2 inches

Dahlia Colors
There are 15 recognized color groups, including bicolor, variegated, plus blends. Of course, dahlias also have a vast color range. Colors are designated by abbreviations (i.e. Y = yellow, FL = flame)

BB - IC - DB
Size Form Color

The above description is for a small sized dark blend invaried double bloom

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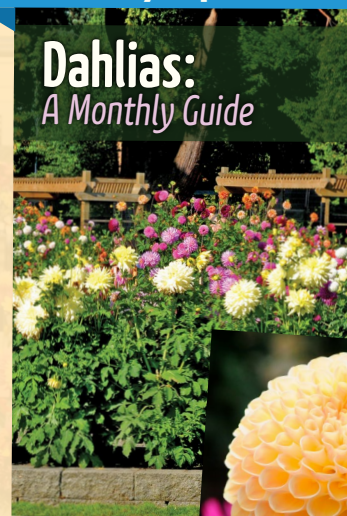
be in full bloom

Educate visitors to shows, tuber sales, and club events with our signature banner, *The Many Forms of the Dahlia*.

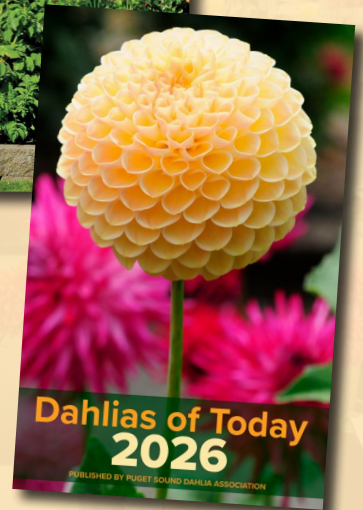
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unwrapped original dahlia artwork, unicorn tubers, and some new helpful garden tools. It was great to fellowship during the winter season and prepare for happy holidays.

The first CDS meeting will be on February 28th at the Moose Lodge in Longmont. We will be deciding on our show theme for 2026, meeting locations, and discussing our spring Tuber Sort/Swap. We will be offering some education on dividing dahlia clumps that members have wintered successfully. The Club Flower for this year is 20th Avenue Old Major and Arrowhead Dahlias will be providing tubers and/or cuttings to all club members who are interested in growing this gorgeous lavender ball variety.

This year our Growing Dahlias in Colorado presentation for Echter's Garden center will be on March 7th. This has been very well attended in the past with over fifty visitors gathered to learn about dahlias. CDS offers presentations at local libraries and garden clubs as well to spread the "Dahlia Love."

Our annual Tuber Sale is set for April 18th at Front Range Gardens in Westminster. This year we are hoping to offer cuttings grown by members for sale for the first time.

The club also sponsors two public gardens at The Gardens on the Paseo

in Arvada and at the City of Westminster Administration building. New for this summer in 2026, a group of Arvada residents who are CDS members, purchased a plot at the Arvada Community Gardens where they plan to grow and maintain a spot for only dahlias!

Sending out the positive vibes from the Mile High area of Colorado across the country. May happy thoughts of the upcoming growing season, the chance to be with other likeminded flower lovers at club events and future sunshine on our shoulders keep you well in the coming months.

Dahlia Society of California

Deborah Dietz, ADS Representative

This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of our dahlia ascending to the official flower of San Francisco, primarily for its beauty and diversity. One of the differences in 100 years is that we are searching for help in establishing ourselves as a non-profit. Please contact us if you have some insights. Meanwhile, our team led by Lou Paradise pinches, and packs in the greenhouse to produce over one thousand cuttings for Our Tuber and Plant Sale, April 25.

We invite the public to attend our May 12 meeting where Erik Gaensler will deliver his (in)famous Dahlia 101 presentation. August 15-16 finds us at our Floribunda! our big show. We look forward to a celebratory picnic September 13 at the Dahlia Dell in Golden Gate Park. Volunteers will lead two Walk 'n Talks for the public and then there will be a lot of champagne. Please come join us for any of these happy events!

Dahlia Society of Alabama

Julene Pickard

The Dahlia Society of Alabama was founded in 1935, and our members look forward to its tradition of bringing dahlia enthusiasts together for years to come.

Our growing membership, along with 91+ years of successful growers and show winners, is driving our Society's growth and success.

It is our goal to keep our Society's memories alive. We are gathering archival documents, which will be displayed at our March 2026 meeting, and we are excited to share our history and make new memories.

One of the most notable documents is the first Dahlia Society of Alabama December Newsletter 'The Cut Worm' (circa 1940), including the performance of 31 Alabama varieties and their distinct characteristics.

Today, Valda is the only variety that exists. Valda was first seen in the 1940 edition of 'Exhibition Dahlias' published by Wilfred I. Larson & Son.

Wilfred I. Larson & Son was a notable Minneapolis, Minnesota-based dahlia breeder and nursery that specialized in high-quality "Exhibition Dahlias" during the 1940's. They published an annual 16-page specialized catalog that featured show-worthy varieties with high-petal-count, and in some instances miniature dahlia varieties, including award-winning seedlings, for exhibition from 1940 through 1946.

As winter fades and our tubers rest, we value our time, our meetings, and learning together.

Wishing you a wonderful 2026 and Happy Spring!

Dahlia Society of Ohio

Chris Bryant, ADS Representative

After a more typical Fall, we have settled into a REAL Winter!! Many veteran members have referenced, "this is a Winter like we used to have all the time!" Much of our climate is directly impacted by all the Great Lakes, especially Lake Erie, at the time of submission all the great lakes are above average for ice coverage. With Lake Erie being in excess of 98% if not completely covered, will be curious to see how Spring impacts, especially for members traveling with blooms to this year's Grand Rapids, MI National Show, early planting might be a necessity.

The club has set dates for our members only tuber and plant sales, which are our best fundraisers for the club. Show dates are Cuyahoga County Fair Show Augst 15-16,, Geauga County Fair Show September 11-13; Summit Mall Show Setpember11-13; DSO Member Only Show October 3-4.

Speakers are being secured for meetings, and the anticipation of "next year" is quickly becoming THIS YEAR!

Elkhart Dahlia Society

Rhonda Cantrell

From the midst of the deep freeze, we can finally start to get excited about Spring approaching. It has been the coldest Winter that yours truly has experienced! The Elkhart committee has put together another action-packed calendar of events for us all to enjoy.

Our "Spring Fling" tuber sales will be at McNaughton Park Pavilion on May 2nd from 9am to 3pm. There will be a potluck luncheon along with tubers at great prices. June 6th we are at the High Dive Pavilion for our Midwest Conference meeting where we will also be holding our plant auction to help raise funds to support the West Michigan Dahlia Society National Show.

August 15th brings us to our Bonneville Trial Garden. The morning will be spent examining the varieties supplied by various hybridizers around the country. A luncheon and ADS judg-

Kelly explores the intricate world of dahlias, magnified under Warren's attentive gaze.

ing seminar will follow. Additionally, exhibiting tips for our new growers will be discussed. EDS show be held at the Wellfield Botanical Gardens on August 23rd and is being held in conjunction with the Wellfields Summer concert series. All can enjoy the blooms and tunes.

This will be a great warm up to the ADS National Show the following week and a great opportunity to show off the early blooms. There will be a few garden walks with dates to be confirmed as yet and then we have a few more local shows to support in September. With Sept 5th -7th being the Southtown Dahlia show. Then Sept 12-13 the Southeast Michigan show. Fi-

nally, we finish the show year with the Central States show. EDS will provide great opportunities to catch up with friends and show off our favorite new and older varieties.

Evergreen State Dahlia Society

Karen Sanchez, ADS Representative

Evergreen State Dahlia Association just finished up our 2025 executive meeting and are in the process of securing a Spring Tuber Sale location and finalizing plans for our March tuber pack. The club has returned fully to in-per-

Continued on page 38



DAHLIAS FOR GOOD

Linda DeRooy Holmes-Cook



Back in the 1960s, people used the term “Flower Power” to promote peace, love and understanding. Today the phrase has taken on an even broader meaning when discussing our favorite flower. The dahlia has become a major vehicle for working within our communities in response to the needs of others, especially during times of natural disasters and economic need.

Dahlia people have always known the happiness that comes from growing and sharing dahlias with others. It’s one of the joys of gardening. Routinely, at the close of dahlia shows, we have come to expect to see people queued up outside venues as exhibitors exit, in hopes that they might be able to rescue some of these flowers from the dumpster.

Maybe they simply want some flowers to take home to share with family, friends, or neighbors. In some communities, local charitable groups exist solely for the purpose of collecting and distributing second-hand blooms. Flowers such as these are ideal for adding just a bit more light and color into the lives of people in shelters or assisted living, hospitals, churches, and other community nonprofits.

Even though show dahlias might no longer be “ready for prime time,” they are perfectly suited for such a second life.

Dahlia societies have always needed to be creative when working with their communities to generate funding, whether to cover the basic needs of local clubs and dahlia shows or to reach out to others in times of need. For example, many readers may remember that in September of 2024, Hurricane Helene hit the southeastern United States with a vengeance, leaving widespread destruction in its wake. Homes, businesses, and personal property were destroyed.

Left: Christine Tareen and Allison Lingbloom have a little fun while spending time in the Misfit Dahlias beds.

Right: Historic flooding created widespread devastation throughout Snohomish County.



Among ADS communities in the Carolinas, dahlia patches were ravaged by the resulting floods and gardens were devastated, leaving growers and societies heartsick. Not only did they lose their own dahlias, but also the tubers so important for future gardens and to generate critical funds for operating their societies and shows.

As awareness of the need spread, ADS affiliates across the continent rallied. Upon hearing of the need in the Carolinas, local dahlia societies across the country collected and donated tubers and resources, sending them directly to dahlia societies in the Carolinas. In North Carolina, Davie County dahlia grower Teresa Smith got inspired.

Living proof that generosity is contagious, this owner of Terranova Farm in Mocksville, NC decided to host an





With Dahlia Fever at an all-time high, these highly desirable tubers were snatched up quickly by eager buyers.

online dahlia tuber auction, donating the proceeds to hard-hit areas. Due in part to these actions, societies in the southeastern United States were able to reconstitute their resources, their tuber inventory and member gardens.

It's a hard lesson to learn, but most of us realize that no matter how hard we work, we can't control the weather. Recently the Pacific Northwest was hit by a weather phenomenon known as an "atmospheric river," a weather feature that is actually a long plume of moisture that, combined with heavy precipitation, can result in severe flooding conditions.

This is exactly what happened in December 2025 in Washington state, with Skagit and Whatcom counties being hit especially hard. Flooding was severe, forcing over 100,000 people to evacuate, leaving widespread damage in the region. This state of emergency prompted the National Guard to provide disaster response and help citizens find safety. Millions of dollars in damages resulted.

Cody Lingbloom hauls one of dozens of armloads of tubers to the Post Office.

Whatcom County Dahlia Society president and owner of Kale Lane Dahlias, Allison Lingbloom wondered how she might provide direct and immediate help her neighbors in



these hard-hit areas. She had heard of Teresa's Helene fundraiser in 2024, so she contacted her to discuss how she might be able to organize something

similar. Teresa shared tips as well as the spreadsheet they had used, created by another grower, Alinna Satake@thelandlesslady. Tuber donations poured in from area gardeners as well as fans of Allison's podcast "The Dig on Dahlias (co-hosted with Joanne Hartwell). Dahlia mavens from far and wide helped, including waterlily hybridizer and mentor, Sandy Boley (Sandia). In all, over 84 individual items were donated, triggering fast and furious bidding, resulting in sale totals of \$37,684.

In addition to auction of the original 84 items, Misfit Dahlias in Snohomish, Washington held an in-person "seconds" tuber sale, AKA "Ugly Tubers" at Haywire Brewing Company in Snohomish. Priced at \$10-\$15 apiece, owner Christine Tareen donated 10% of the proceeds from their sale and the contents of a designated donation jar. In addition, her customers donated a

total of \$1600 in exchange for many highly desirable tubers that were being offered for \$100 each, all going to the Snoho Strong Flood Relief Benefit. In less than 2 hours, the majority of tubers were sold, the beauties as well as the beasts, raising \$2890. Cherry on the top, Seattle Mariners' veteran player and MLB Hall of Famer Edgar Martinez pledged to double anything raised through the Snoho Strong Flood Relief Benefit, bringing Misfit's total donation up to \$5780. Talk about "root, root, rooting" for the home team!! (Sorry for the tuber pun). In all, nearly \$43,000 went directly towards food, shelter, local non-profits, housing and rebuilding materials for local residents.

But there is more - Sandy Boley also had genuine concerns about the loss of federal dollars for food banks and nutritional subsidies across these counties

and expressed her desire to raise funds to feed those in need. In response to this concern, she and husband Steve Boley (Irish, SBs, and others) personally

donated seed packets from their own award-winning stock, raising an additional \$1650 specifically earmarked for the Nooksack Valley Food Bank.

Let's finish with one final example from the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers (FNWDG). Several years ago, FNWDG launched the Dahlia Legacy Project (DLP), the 2022 brainchild of Innovation Chair Anne Maria Jacobson. The mission was to create and implement a means of honoring and documenting the rich dahlia history of the FNWDG and the people who contributed to it. To make this happen, extensive research, document discovery, biographical research, and digital publication of the facts would be needed. Understanding that nothing runs without money, Anne Maria took the bull by the horns, developing a budget and action plan for generating the necessary funds. The Federation agreed to contribute several hundred dollars for initial costs of digital and technical tools, with the expectation that the DLP team would develop and follow a plan to accomplish future financial viability.

Anne Maria and her team rose to the challenge, conceptualizing the first ever "Once in Decade" Fundraising Tuber Sale. Scheduled as a week-long event, each Federation society was asked to donate 100 quality tubers, specifically new introductions, head table show winners, ADS Fab 50 and Cream of the Crop, as well as "unicorns" that would entice dahlia hunters. With a target of \$7000, tubers were priced at \$10/each plus shipping with a delivery goal of Mothers' Day. The results? Over one thousand tubers were donated and the event was sold out within a few hours. Not only did

Left: Inspired by Sandy & Steve Boley's seed fundraiser, the Walker family quickly packaged up some mixed open-centered dahlia seed to sell, with 100% of the proceeds supporting flood relief.

Below: Organizing a major multi-faceted fundraiser is hard work. Christine Tareen, Anne Maria Jacobson, Stacy DeKoekoek, and Joe & Jenn Morse enjoy a celebratory meal after a successful tuber sale.



the public purchase all the tubers, but also they donated additional funds. Leading up to the tuber sale, the Colin Walker family, originators of Kelsey and Lake Hills dahlias, launched a seed sale in February, offering seeds from their personal seed banks and donating all the proceeds to the DLP. Sandy and Steve Boley did the same with their waterlily seeds. Allison Lingbloom sold these seeds through her own website. Both times they sold out in literally minutes. Additionally, Christine Tareen (Misfit) sold a number of "unicorn" tubers at her January 2025 online sale for \$100 each, sharing these proceeds between the DLP and the ADS Genome Project. <https://www.nwdahlia.org/>

Whether responding to the impact of life-threatening events or simply as a means of raising funds to operate our dahlia non-profits, this flower and those who grow them have risen to the challenge of using the dahlia and all its parts to truly change the world for good. And that is truly powerful. 🌸



Left:

Overall grand prize winner, entered in Class 2, *Dahlia Portrait*: Bloomquist Jean.

Robert Leonelli, photographer

Right:

First Place, Class 6, *Dahlia Bouquets*: Vase of Dahlias

Hanna Abrahamson, photographer

2025 ADS Photo Contest

Debbie Pavich, Photo Contest Chair

Dahlia season is around the corner! The fun part of both the ADS Photo Contest and People's Choice Photo Contest is viewing your artwork helps me to anticipate the beauty of this year's blooms. Thank you all who entered. photos, all ADS members who voted online for People's Choice, and the judges Barb M and Michael P. Congratulation to the winners! Dahlias are art.

Class 1: Undisseminated Dahlias & Seedlings

1st Place
Larry Smith

2nd Place
Laia Solen

3rd Place
Steve Bresser

Honorable Mention
Maddy McCroskey

Class 2: Dahlia Portrait

1st Place
Robert Leonelli

2nd Place
Evelyn Chheak

3rd Place
Todd Imhoff

Honorable Mention
Vicki Baulig

Class 3: Multiple Blooms

1st Place
Monte Cangiamilla

2nd Place
Christine Tareen

3rd Place
Darcey Miller

Honorable Mention
Allison Lingbloom

Class 4: Dahlia Gardens

1st Place
Lori Bell

2nd Place
Brittany Canfield

3rd Place
Thomas See

Honorable Mention
Anne Maria Jacobson

Class 5: Dahlia Shows & Personalities

1st Place
Shelayne Hammack

2nd Place
Lee Ann Coco

3rd Place
Elijah Olson

Honorable Mention
Evelyn Chheak

Class 6: Dahlia Bouquets

1st Place
Hanna Abrahamson

2nd Place
Vicki Baulig

3rd Place
Anne Maria Jacobson

Honorable Mention
Quamrun Eldridge

Class 7: Dahlias & Kids

1st Place
Christine Tareen

2nd Place
Allison Lamb

3rd Place
Melissa Ginther

Honorable Mention
Sherri Madsen



Class 8: Dahlias & Critters

- 1st Place
Hanna Abrahamson
- 2nd Place
Sohini Rath
- 3rd Place
Catherine Luce
- Honorable Mention
Cindy Harris

Class 9: Macro View

- 1st Place
Melody Granillo
- 2nd Place
Genevieve Ralston
- 3rd Place
Brian Moody
- Honorable Mention
Erica Lawrenz

Class 10: Digital Darkroom

- 1st Place
Alysia Obina
- 2nd Place
Brianna O'Halloran
- 3rd Place
Hanna Abrahamson
- Honorable Mention
Darcy Dawson



Community Is Connection

Debbie Pavich

Community is connection. Our love of dahlias creates communities both physical (dahlia societies, community gardens) and virtual (social media and online communities). The dahlia community provides social support by connecting people who share the same interests. Belonging to a dahlia community creates a sense of purpose and decreases social isolation.

Dahlia communities foster learning and growth by creating an environment for research, experimentation, and mentoring. Networking facilities connection with dahlia lovers and promotes the exchange of ideas and information

Storytelling is powerful. Storytelling builds connections and strengthens



Together at Amelia's Flower Library, members exchange seeds, wisdom, and care – growing flowers and thriving communities side-by-side.

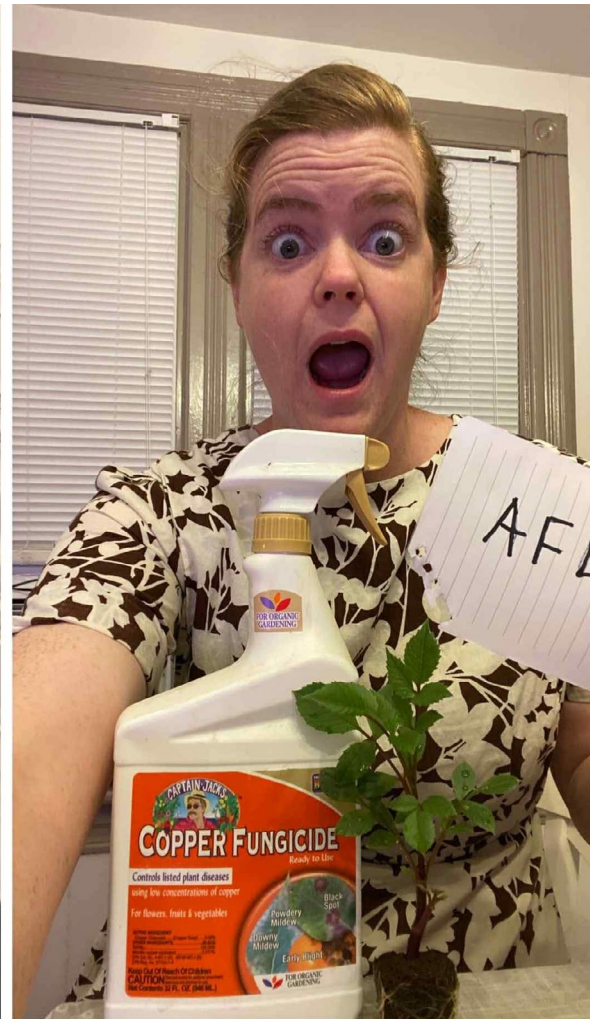
the community. Story telling promotes understanding and can aid in personal healing for both the tellers and the listeners. The four E's of storytelling are emotion, empathy, energy, and engagement. I would like to share a story from Evelyn about the emotion of grief, engaging dahlia lovers, and creating community.

Evelyn begins "My journey with dahlias started a few years ago but it became something more when I lost my older sister, Amelia, in early 2024. Grieving was not an option for me. I had a job; a baby and a family to take care of, but I knew I needed to start a garden for her. Her garden was her happy place, so it made more sense than ever to make sure she was still surrounded by flowers. I poured my time and energy into dahlias for her memorial garden. It was exhausting but I also enjoyed the solace I found while working on it. Eventually the dahlias started blooming. So much beauty, so many new wonders filling in the once empty space. And the grief finally hit me. Every bloom had me thinking how much Amelia would enjoy them."

Evelyn journeyed through her grief and reached out to her flower friends "We had to do something for Amelia. I knew she loved to share her plants and flowers with all her friends and family. She was always generous, giving and kind.

"It was at this moment a seed was planted. We needed a dahlia library. Then we asked ourselves; what does it mean to grow dahlias? We enjoyed bonding and sharing our "unicorn" finds, we found comfort in meeting friends who shared our questionable obsession with growing dahlias. But we also observed a gap in the dahlia com-

Evelyn Chou began Amelia's Flower Library in memory of her sister – it continues to bloom as a space of camaraderie, kindness, and connection

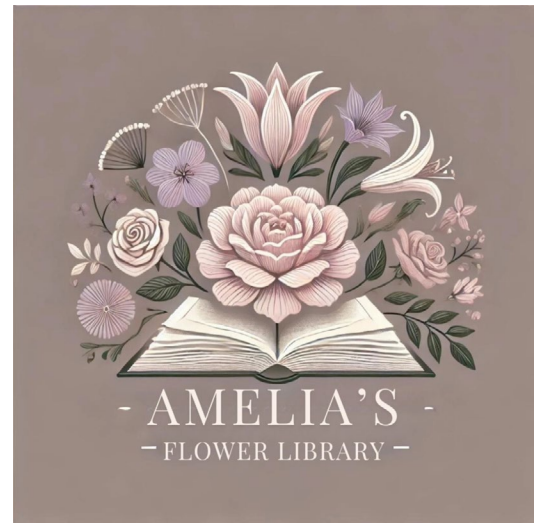


munity that forced us to take a step back and reevaluate how new growers like us find our place in it.

"We simply did not have a space we felt was truly welcoming to all dahlia growers to learn and grow. This goal turned to fruition as we worked out the details of our dahlia library. The focus shifted swiftly from dahlias to all flowers and not just a library, we needed a community. A community that welcomes growers of all experiences, a place to teach and learn, a place to share flowers, seeds, knowledge, and to celebrate friendship and camaraderie. Thus, Amelia's Flower Library was born. Our Facebook page and website were officially created in September of 2024."

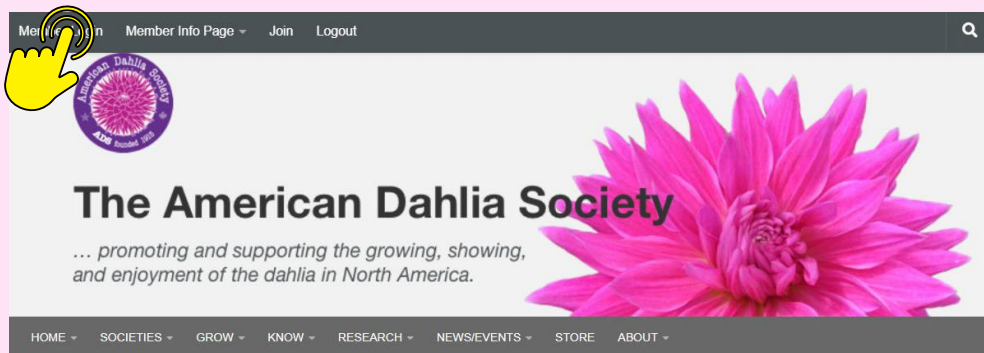
What does this have to do with kindness, happiness, hope, and growth? Well, it is everything our community stands for and everything Amelia was.

There are many times our members have stepped up to offer their knowledge, their experience, their



invaluable time, and labor to help the library run our sales and activities. Last year alone, we received hundreds of tuber donations and seed packets from members to share within our community. Extras were sent out to those who could not afford it.

Evelyn adds "Kindness meant helping a teacher raise money for school supplies for her class. Kindness meant



Grow, Know, Research, and More!

American Dahlia Society members get exclusive access to members-only information on the ADS website, Dahlia.org

- Search and read issues of the *ADS Bulletin* dating back to 1930.
- Access Seedling Bench & Trial Garden Evaluation scorecards.
- Download a roster of ADS judges, and learn about requirements to achieve and maintain judging status.
- Learn about classification change requests.
- Access the expanded Online Classification Guide, which provides exclusive members-only search functionality.
- Read administrative documents, the ADS policy handbook, renew your society's insurance, and access minutes from recent Board meetings.

Members' Only Area Website Access Password

To sign on to Dahlia.org, click or touch **Member Login** and enter the following information:

Username: **member**

Password: **Khaleesi2023WOW!**



Username

Password

sharing what we have for those who lost their tuber stocks. Kindness meant we listened to each other's difficulties and struggles without judgement. Kindness is cheering for members as they grow professionally and personally. Kindness is genuine happiness and celebrating our members through good times and giving comfort and support to their losses. With kindness comes happiness and hope. I cannot recall a day when I do not log on and find myself smiling at my phone because someone in AFL is saying something funny in chat.

These are all the little moments that we do not often see in online groups that truly capture the essence of community and camaraderie. Every now and then we ask our members, how can we improve this experience? How can we make this community better? "I found my people. Evelyn continues "What they do not know is how grateful I am, as they are my people too.

Amelia's Flower Library has become a virtual home, a flower family with whom I can laugh and cry. What was once a simple idea to trade dahlia tubers and share flowers in memory of Amelia has become something so much more. And not just for me but for many of our members who felt they found their safe space and flower community.

One of our early goals was to make dahlias affordable and accessible. It is still one of our main missions along with giving back to the community through charity drives and donations. What started because of a loss has become a place of respect for each other and a mutual understanding of our passion and love for growing dahlias.

Do you have a story to tell? Have you made a special connection growing dahlias? Have dahlias helped your community? The Editorial Board of The Bulletin would love to share your stories. Please send your contributions to ADSbulletin@dahlia.org. ❁



Let's Start At The Very Beginning...

Sharon Swaney, ADS Webmaster

As Maria sings in The Sound of Music, “Let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start”—which, in the case of a website, is the Navigation Menu. The ADS website actually has two menus: one at the very top of the page for member information, and the Main Menu just below the header/logo (and replicated at the bottom of the page). On a mobile device, the two menus are combined.

Greetings from Greater Cleveland, Ohio. I’m Sharon Swaney, and I am—and have been for over ten years—your American Dahlia Society (ADS) Webmaster. This is the inaugural Website Tips column for the ADS *Bulletin*. In each issue, I plan to share insights and tips for using the ADS website.

In this column, we will begin discussing the Main Menu. Reading from left to right (or top to bottom on a mobile device), the Main Menu has nine items, most of which include a pull-down sub-menu (click the small arrow next to the Main Menu item). The Main Menu provides access to public information. The menu items are listed below, with sub-menus indented.

Home

This menu item takes you back to the Home Page (as does clicking on the header logo).

- ✿ Previous Feature Stories - Occasionally, we feature a story on the Home Page that is worth saving for future reference. This sub-menu provides access to those stories.

People/Societies

This menu item focuses on the people of the ADS.

- ✿ US and Canada - Lists all ADS Local Societies with contact information, if available. If your society’s information is incorrect, please have someone from your local leadership follow the “How to Update your Society’s Contact Information” instructions on this page. This page may also include info/links to the local society’s webpage and social media.
- ✿ International - Learn about international dahlia societies and find links to their websites. After all, it is the World Wide Web (www)!
- ✿ Form a Society - Provides definitions and information on starting a new Local Society associated with the ADS.

- ✿ ADS Local Society Grant Program - Describes the grant program, including contact and application information.

- ✿ ADS Awards (to People) - Each year, the ADS presents awards to both people and blooms. This sub-menu leads to information about the awards to people. (Bloom awards are found under NEWS/EVENTS.) Links to awards from previous years are located at the bottom of the Awards to People page.

- ✿ In Memoriam Archive - From time to time, the ADS must share news of the passing of a nationally known ADS member. These notices are featured on the Home Page for a period of time and then preserved in this archive.

More navigation tips next time. In the meantime, the best way to learn how to navigate any website is simply to explore it!! Please note that menus may occasionally change as the website evolves.

A side note: If you have comments, ideas, or corrections, please contact me at webmaster@dahlia.org.

And finally, if you have photography, website, writing, or proofreading skills, I would very much welcome your help. ✿

Photo by Colin Walker



The Seedling Bench Evaluation Program

Roger Walker, Seedling Bench Evaluation Chair

The seedling bench evaluation program doesn't have the long history of the trial gardens, but it has been around for over seven decades. The ADS trial gardens got their start in 1919 at the main UConn campus in Storrs, Connecticut. That first garden was shut down in the 1940s; it remains unclear whether the closure was to make room for the Huskies famous women's (and men's) basketball programs.

A Bit of History

The seedling bench evaluation program got its start in 1949, the result of a plan by Fred Knocke, Conrad Frey, and (not surprisingly) Lynn B. Dudley. It was originally called the

ADS Show Seedling Sweepstakes with eight clubs participating that first year. But other clubs started paying attention, and twenty-six were involved the next year in 1950 - and more joined as time went on.

The main purpose of the proposal, of course, was to evaluate seedlings in actual dahlia shows. Sure, the trial garden program had been around for 30 years - and had expanded from one garden to several - but growers wanted to see show results. As Lynn Dudley wrote in the first quarter 1951 *ADS Bulletin*, "[the Seedling Sweepstakes] would evolve . . . a system of awards which would more nearly enable all worthy seedlings to receive justifiable recognition."

Changes Over the Years

While the name and several details have changed over the years, a surprisingly large number of specifics have remained relatively unchanged. The magic "passing" score remains at 85 on a 100-point scale, hybridizers had to promise to disseminate their prized seedlings that passed mettle, seedling had to be at least three years old to be in seedling sweepstakes competition, and they had to be named.

Some things have changed as dahlias and the ADS have evolved. In 1949 when the ADS Seedling Sweepstakes was started, there were three classes: large (A), medium (B), and small (BB). Yep, that's all! To win the overall top prize in one of the three categories, a variety (like today) had

to have passing scores from three shows and the highest average scores. But it couldn't be just any three shows: it had to be the ADS show in New York plus two other ADS-affiliated shows.

The top three dahlias (A, B, and BB) each received an ADS gold medal. Then in the May 1965 ADS *Bulletin* it was announced that the top award would henceforth be named in honor of Lynn B. Dudley. Back then seedlings could only be judged by senior judges, and if any scores varied by more than three points from the average of the other judges, those scores would be tossed out.

That rule was removed decades later, as apparently only Susan Ambrose and I understood how it worked. Much later the Evie Gullikson medal was added to the mix, awarded to the top-scoring open-centered variety in seedling bench competition as well as one for the top-scoring open-centered variety in the trial gardens.

The People

Harold Miller was a founding member of the Puget Sound Dahlia Association, the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers, a dahlia hybridizer, and in 1987 was appointed chair of the Seedling Bench Evaluation program.

Since I was his friend and a bit of a computer geek, he "invited" me to join him in the compilation of results; he listed me as co-chair in 1991. I remember calling a prominent dahlia functionary from Harold's house one evening asking why he had submitted scorecards signed by candidate judges. "Well, we don't have that many senior judges," he proclaimed. We couldn't use the scores, and a decent dahlia didn't win a Dudley award as a result of that man's failure to follow the rules.

The following year, those candidate judges had miraculously advanced to senior status, completely skipping the accredited level. Judging advancement has tightened since then.

By 1993 Harold had moved to a smaller home and wanted to "slow down a bit"; I was kicked upstairs to

bench evaluation chair. In the decades since, it's been a pleasure to coordinate with trial garden chairs including Mac Boyer, Ron Miner, Marilyn Walton, and Heidi Zierdt as we review the various classifications submitted by show officials and trial garden directors. It should come as no surprise that dahlias entered in seedling bench competition at several shows – and perhaps also in a few trial gardens – will often be blessed with several divergent classifications from those venues. It's up to us to make sense of the mess. And if we miss anything during the trial garden/seedling bench reconciliation, we'll hear from the classification chair – currently Karen Sanchez and previously Lou Paradise – as they're finalizing the upcoming *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*. They prefer precision.

Entering Your Seedlings

For those who haven't entered dahlias in seedling bench competition, the process is straightforward:

- ☼ First, all the latest rules are posted on the ADS website and in the current *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*.
- ☼ Enter three blooms of your seedling in bench evaluation competition at an ADS-affiliated show
- ☼ The local society cannot charge an entry fee.
- ☼ The entry may be in one container or three – but stick with one. I think I've seen one bench evaluation entry in three containers in the past 50 years – and it did not score.
- ☼ Complete the special seedling bench entry tag at the show, filling out your name, the name of the dahlia, and other pertinent information. The show committee will have the entry tags on hand.
- ☼ The entry will be judged by a team of at least three members. Senior judges must outnumber accredited judges on the team; they no longer have to be all

senior judges.

- ☼ If your entry scores 85 points or higher, you must introduce it (sell it or give some away) within two years.
- ☼ To win a Lynn B. Dudley medal, it must be the highest-scoring variety in its size or type. Those categories are listed on the ADS website and the *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*. There are more than three Dudley awards each year nowadays.
- ☼ The Evie Gullikson medal is awarded to the top-scoring open-centered variety.
- ☼ If your top-scoring variety is to win one of those two medals, it must be disseminated the following year.



The Overall Process

The seedling bench evaluation process actually begins in December when the chair checks ribbon inventory and makes purchases as necessary. As the number of ribbon suppliers has dwindled, those remaining in business need lead time. I want to keep our supplier happy, so I give them lots of time.

Announcements about the seedling bench process are emailed to



Today's Gift Is A Lasting Legacy

**Make a donation
to support the
mission of the ADS, a
501(c)(3) non-profit
organization.**

The American Dahlia Society welcomes donations.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, all donations are tax deductible for those who itemize deductions.

This year it is easier than ever, with the addition of a DONATE button on the main page of our website, Dahlia.org.

Your donation can be made in honor or memory of someone, or may be designated for the Genome Project, Virus Research or the ADS General Fund.

**Support the
American Dahlia
Society. Donate today.**

every ADS representative and every local club president in June. The hope is that at least one of those people will read their email and complete a simple online form outlining what seedling bench supplies they will need for the upcoming season. The ADS supplies ribbons, entry tags, and plenty of instructions to clubs that respond.

Club officials then mail their ADS scorecards to me directly after their shows. Scorecards are checked for math accuracy (you don't want to know!) and whether the grower has actually supplied a name to their seedling. All scores are entered in a spreadsheet, varying classifications are reconciled with the trial garden chair, and Dudley and Gullikson winners are determined. Happy hybridizers are notified and complete results are posted on the ADS website.

Seedlings may be entered in bench evaluation competition for two growing seasons. If it scored during the first season, you are committed to introducing it after the second. If it wins a Dudley or Gullikson medal, it must be introduced the following year. That's always my conversation with growers reluctant to introduce a medal-winning variety. I remind them they're taking a chance; if another variety scores higher the next year, they aren't getting that medal.

Medal winners must have at least three bench evaluation scores; the

three highest scores are considered when determining who won. Those three scores can be over two years; if two scores are from the same show, the highest is used.

Everything we do is in support of the hybridizer. We want you to be a winner and for your new varieties to be successful. Nothing is as irritating as receiving scorecards months after a show when all results have been finalized. That show official – because they were too lazy to go to the post office – may have cost a local hybridizer recognition for their new variety. But I guess some things never change. From a 1960 ADS *Bulletin*, "A total of 31 reports were received, with six other societies reporting 'no awards.' The other 13 societies did not take the trouble to advise us whether or not the awards were made."

Needless to say, the big show winners over the years have virtually all been entered in bench evaluation and trial garden competition. That isn't to say you can't disseminate (sell) your special variety without entering in those competitions. Sure, you can name it and sell it. And if you are introducing to the world your miniature dahlia with 18-inch stems and questionable form that will be great for the cut flower trade, maybe it would be best to avoid the bench and trial gardens. But if you have a potential exhibition standout, get it in the competition. ❁



Photo by Colin Walker & Courtesy Whatcom County Dahlia Society



Join the American Dahlia Society

Gardeners from many countries have chosen to grace their homes, landscapes, and garden plots with dahlias, one of the longest-blooming flowers in cultivation. While many grow dahlias solely as a decorative planting, others are more interested in artistic arrangements, cut flowers, and even exhibition.

Whatever your reason, you will have more success when you become a member of ADS. As a member you will receive the *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*, an essential resource that you will turn to again and again. In addition, all members receive the *Bulletin of the American Dahlia Society*, published three times per year.

For more information, visit
Dahlia.org/Membership
or email
Membership@Dahlia.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP **United States**

Individual:	\$30
Household:	\$35
Patron:	\$75
Benefactor:	\$125
Student:	\$10

Canada & Mexico **Includes Print Subscription**

Individual:	\$40
Household:	\$45
Student:	\$20

Includes Digital-Only Subscription

Individual:	\$30
Household:	\$35

Overseas **Includes Digital-Only Subscription**

Individual:	\$20
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All payments must be made in U. S. Dollars.

Club Reports, continued from page 23:

son sales of our tubers that fund our club activities. We are planning for two sales in April in the Olympia WA area.

Our annual show will again be at the Northwest Christian School Gymnasium. It was a lovely venue, and we look forward to many more shows in this location. Show Chair Susan has been ordering new head table ribbons from a local supplier that sound like they will be superb. Bring your best blooms to compete for ribbons and cash!. We have a new special category this year recognizing blooms from hybridizers that are club members, past and present.

Members are deep in the planning stages of the best dahlia garden ever, tuber inventory, wish lists, trades, website adventures, soil conditioning and all the other mid-winter daydreams of spring and summer.

Member Dina Wild has published an article in the Puget Sound Dahlia Association's annual "Dahlia's of Today" be sure to look for it.

Our partner club Grays Harbor Dahlia Society has closed, and all members are now part of ESDA. We were grateful for our partnership with GHDS over these past decades and our time spent exhibiting at the Grays Harbor County Fair in Elma.

We are looking forward to our monthly meetings, summer picnic, fall table show and holiday party and of course our ADS show in August. If you are in our area please join us!

Five Valleys Dahlia Society

Tami Van Soest, President

Five Valley Glad and Dahlia Society has had a great 2025 season. We held two sanctioned shows, garden tours, and entered a float in homecoming parade for our beloved University of Montana Grizzly's. We also had members build a dahlia garden for a retirement center, which was loved by all residents that were active in watering and helping in the flower beds.

We were invited to do demonstrations at a local garden nursery throughout the year. Our first in March with the subjects covering dividing tubers, cuttings, and getting ready for



planting. We will follow up through the season with disbudding and getting show ready. We are looking forward to sharing with other dahlia enthusiasts.

Our weather has been extremely mild this winter in Montana, so fingers crossed that we will not be digging out at planting time.

Greater Columbus Dahlia Society

Linda Laine, ADS Representative

We closed out 2025 with a meeting in October that included slide shows on our previously reported activities and focused on over-wintering tubers. Dave Keller led a comprehensive discussion and demonstrated tuber division; including showing how to divide some clumps brought in by members and guests.

We are starting 2026 off with some great Amish cooking at our annual winter banquet in February at Der Dutchman Restaurant. A highlight of the year will be celebrating our 60th Annual Dahlia Show in Marysville, Ohio on Sept. 5 and 6. To help commemorate our show, we are having special shirts designed and we will be giving

*2025 Photo Contest 1st Place,
Class 9 - Macro View:
Wild Hearts by Melody Granillo*

some away as door prizes at our banquet.

One of the notable elements in our anniversary show is to honor Wilbur Seipel. Wilbur was a vital force behind the GCDS for many years, including at least 15 years as our president. Zorro was Wilbur's favorite dahlia and Lilly Ann Seipel has been offering \$150 for the best Zorro in our show in memory of her husband for many years. For our 60th Show the GCDS is going to match the \$150 and thus offer \$300 for the best Zorro! Additional prize money is possible, as the best Zorro will also be in the running for the best AA. There will be many other special awards. We invite everyone to join in the fun and participate with either a bloom, arrangement, or a photographic entry.

Greater Philadelphia Dahlia Society

Nancy Sciarretta, ADS Representative

Our Society has grown at an amazing rate thanks to the exposure we have gotten from our tuber sales and our September shows at Longwood Gardens. We are planning to direct the excitement of our new members by getting a jump on the 2028 National Show.

Our recent past President, Dana Miller, posted a video from our 2018 ADS National Show on our website for our members who have never had the experience of one. This beautiful video shows the magnitude of a National versus our local show. Even though our yearly shows have been drawing an average of 1,000 blooms, we expect by 2028 that number will triple. Our shows always thrill Longwood members and guests. We are expecting to share that excitement with all of YOU who come and share the joy!

At our meeting last November one of our members mentioned the idea of an educational garden. This idea has been approved by the Executive Committee and is going to our members to seek the necessary support at our March meeting. We have several ideas for a location. If everything falls into place as anticipated, we will be up and ready to show off by 2018 for all our guests at the National Show to enjoy. More details to come.

As always, we are fortunate to hold our tuber sales outside the front door of Longwood Gardens the Saturday before Mother's Day.

One very important highlight to this year is our members, Jim and Vilma Thomas, will be celebrating 50 years of GPDS membership; still growing, still showing. We are honored to have such valuable members!

As winter wanes and another season blossoms, we look forward to sharing our new year in the dahlia garden.

Greenwich Dahlia Society

Ken Pojman, ADS Representative

And so, the 2026 Dahlia season begins! It was an unusually cold winter for those of us on the East Coast. Our first scheduled get together at the end of January had to be postponed two weeks due to a snowstorm, followed by frigid temperatures.

When we finally did meet, four

months of pent-up Dahlia energy was released which resulted in some great conversations and camaraderie. There was much discussion about the stress of on-line Dahlia Sales and strategies for waking up those sleepy tubers from their winter nap. It was a wonderful exchange of information and ideas.

Everyone is looking forward to our future meetings, including the very popular tuber exchange in early May. We are planning to plant a Dahlia garden on the grounds of The Greenwich Botanical Society, our parent organization, and arrange for visits to Members' Dahlia Gardens.

Our 2026 "Dazzling Dahlias Show" is scheduled for September 26th. This will once again be a single day event with the judging and public viewing all happening on the same day. Happy Planting!

Hamilton Dahlia Society

John Mooney, ADS Representative

Zooming right along into another growing season, our annual garden tour was very successful. We have lots of new members and friends who had many questions.

The judging and staging seminar, a week before our show, was very informative: questions such as when to cut blooms for the show, transportation. We encouraged new members with help from the experienced members to set up some vases.

From an environment point of view I do not know how long more we can use the green oasis. There is a ban on in some countries, as well as a ban on the use of peat.

Our award lunch/dinner was very successful. We filled the golf club banquet hall with seventy people. The food was first class, good old meat and potatoes, pasta salad, and desserts. I would say this was one of the best awards dinners we ever had.

The January 26th meeting was one that we were looking forward to. We had the world-renowned plant breeder, Dr. Keith Hammett, speak to us about dahlia viruses. They say if in doubt, throw it out! Thanks to our new Executive member, Nicole Sebok, for reaching out to Dr. Keith once again to talk to us.

The February 23rd meeting fo-

cused on taking cuttings.

The March 24th meeting is another one that we are looking forward to. The guest speaker will be Kristine Albrecht, the hybridizer of the "Ka's" line of dahlias.

The April auction will be a two-day affair, starting on April 24th. The first day for members only and the second day for members and non-members.

The May 11th meeting subject is planting.

The date for the August plant tour of gardens has still to be determined. Show date this year is September 12th and 13th with set-up starting on the 11th.

Canada has lost another great member in the plant world in Lorne Gordon McArthur from Alberta. He was a cornerstone of horticulture in that province. He was behind the Piper Creek Trial Garden, the only one in Canada. You can read the full memorial in the December 2025 *Bulletin*. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Happy growing everyone for 2026.

Kitsap County Dahlia Society

Eric Anderson, ADS Representative

Work is well underway for this year's annual online tuber sale at the end of April. Successful quality control was completed, inventory adjusted, and our website updated for the big sale! Follow updates and instructions for our sale at Kitsapdahlias.org. The sale is open to our membership first, starting with worker bees, then members, and finally the public.

Club Dahlia Gardens, recruiting at our dahlia show, and online sales have helped bring in an ever-growing membership! Many of the new members are relatively new to growing and are more than enthusiastic about learning better techniques of growing dahlias. The many hybridizers in our club are excited to share their growing expertise!

KCDS had great educational programs to get our membership excited for the new season. January started with a presentation of the new ADS Best of 2025, followed by a presenta-

Continued on page 42



A small set of consistent management practices can substantially improve dahlia health and reduce virus spread.

Growing Healthier Dahlias

Lessons from Pioneering Growers

Janell Weiss, LeeAnn Huber, Beckie Curtis, and Ron Miner

Six years ago, LeeAnn Huber, a grower of 5,000 dahlias in south-eastern Pennsylvania, began investigating a season-over-season decline in her cut flower production. When she began growing dahlias from seed, she noticed the seedlings were markedly more vigorous, a realization that permanently reshaped her production approach and clarified why existing cultivars and seedlings grew so differently.

By growing healthy and infected stock of the same variety side by side, LeeAnn was able to isolate the effects of viral infection: infected dahlias were consistently shorter, weaker, and slower growing and produced fewer stems over the course of the growing season. Within 3 years of altering management practices to improve plant health, she reduced RNA viruses to non-detectable levels and maintained those results for an additional 3 years. Likewise, Dahlia Mosaic Virus (DMV) infection rates dropped dramatically.

Ron Miner, who leads the ADS virus team, was first inspired by Evie Gullikson's work on viruses with Washington State University (WSU) in the 1990s. His early experiences – and the eventual decline and loss of some of his “Baron” introductions – shaped his resolve: “At the outset I was surprised to find that some of my best-looking cultivars tested positive

for viruses, including TSV [Tobacco Streak Virus] in particular. Those plants held up for a few years but have declined to a point that they no longer even bloom.” In spite of those losses, or perhaps because of them, and with the support of the Scheetz-Chuey Charitable Foundation and Dr. Hanu Pappu at Washington State University, Ron ultimately achieved what he had sought decades earlier: growing virus-free dahlias on a small garden scale in 2024. That success was detailed in the April 2025 *Bulletin*.

Advances in virus testing capacity and research have bolstered the gains of more recent entrants into the virus-free dahlia effort. Two Midwestern growers, each growing 400 dahlias in their virus-free plots, had field-scale successes. Beckie Curtis in central Michigan has detected just one infected plant (4% of her sample population, and 0.3% of the total field) in each of the past two seasons. She found one plant infected with TSV in the first year and one plant infected with DMV in the second year. Meanwhile, Janell Weiss in west central Ohio has detected zero DMV positive plants for two seasons, sampling 20% of her field in 2025 and 10% in 2024. Although she found zero TSV infections in her first year of fall testing, 8% of her sampled plants tested positive for TSV last fall.

Each of these four growers employs similar strategies for virus control, most notably risk-based separation and sanitation. Risk-based separation is two-fold: new stock is quar-

Assign dahlias to distinct planting areas based on their likelihood of infection. Symptomatic plants and unobserved new stock carry the highest risk. Asymptomatic, untested plants are at moderate risk. First-year seedlings and tested plants that remain asymptomatic have the lowest risk. Maintain as much physical separation between these groups as possible.

Always disinfect tools between plants while working in the garden. Rotating and immersing blades in a 10% bleach solution for at least one minute between plants reduces mechanical virus transmission.

Implement early, consistent aphid and thrip control strategies to reduce virus transmission by insect vectors.

Become familiar with common virus symptoms, including yellowing veins, necrotic spotting, slow growth, weak stems, and short internodes. Remove symptomatic plants from low- or moderate-risk beds promptly.

Start dahlias from seed, which is the most economical beginning to virus-free plants. Seek new stock from growers who offer virus-tested dahlias or follow practices that minimize disease transmission. Propagate dahlias from plants in your low-risk group.

These steps, when used consistently and year-over-year, have been shown to markedly improve dahlia health.

Photos courtesy Minnesota Dahlia Society & Linda Taylor

Key Strategies for Improving Dahlia Health

Risk-Based Separation

Sanitation

Pest Management

Symptom Monitoring

Low-Risk Stock Development



antined for observation and eventual testing, while tested virus-free plants are grown at substantial distances—often tens to hundreds of feet—from infected or untested stock. To complement this strategy by removing potential virus reservoirs, some of the growers provide weed-free buffer zones around their gardens.

Additionally, each grower practices good sanitation, using multiple cutters any time a plant or tuber is pinched, pruned, harvested, or divided. The majority immersed their cutters in a 10% bleach solution for at least a minute between cuts. For these growers both separation and sanitation are effective in limiting the spread of diseases.

Another strategy, one that several growers acknowledge is underutilized in their dahlias, is pest management. While preventing disease spread by human activity is likely the most impactful intervention, insect vectors also play a significant role. Aphids carry Dahlia Mosaic Virus, and thrips are responsible for transmitting the most common RNA virus in dahlias, TSV and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus. LeeAnn recommends using a strategy to control aphid and thrip populations early, before the pests have a foothold, and with regularity. This may mean treating young plants as soon as they are planted or emerge from the soil.

Starting with healthy dahlias is equally critical. All four growers incorporate seed-grown dahlias into their programs, supported by anecdotal evidence that seedlings emerge free of viral infections. Each grower is selective in what new dahlias they bring in, prioritizing sources that test their propagation stock for viruses. Beckie goes the extra mile to rid dahlias of viruses using meristem tissue culture. She and others also minimize diagnostic costs and increase clean stock by taking cuttings. Beckie describes her process as, "I test at least one plant of each variety that I want to keep each year [in October]. I try to choose the plant producing the best blooms for testing. If that plant tests clean, I use tubers from that plant to make cuttings, so that each year each variety has a clean baseline."

These grower-led practices did

not develop in a vacuum. The growers profiled here benefited from research that preceded and complemented their efforts. Long-term work by the ADS Virus Program, advances in virus diagnostic tools by the commercial laboratory Agdia, the generosity of the broader scientific community, and a willingness to share and learn from each other helped establish the context in which their work could succeed.


While additional trials and research will yield additional strategies, these growers require no further persuasion. Each has noted considerable advantages with healthy stock: taller plants with longer internodes, blooms requiring fewer fertilizer inputs, plants that are resilient under heat and/or drought stress, and a decrease in bloom pest damage. In LeeAnn's words, "Once I have experienced the health difference, I never want to go back. It is important for the greater community to experience the confidence growing healthy dahlias can give. If dahlias are going to remain popular, growers need to have powerful, positive experiences with the plant. A plant population with declining health is not going to provide that." A love of dahlias and a pioneering spirit propelled these growers. Adherence to strategies that promote plant health enabled their success. 🌸

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Club Reports, continued from page 39:

tion of photos from the KCDS Seedling Challenge contest.

February's meeting focused on how to take cuttings, which included important cutting techniques, growing medium, and growing environment. In an effort to get our new members to enter our show, a second presentation demonstrated how to prepare and enter photos in a dahlia show. Samples photos were passed around to demonstrate each photo class entry. KCDS offered mat frames and will critique photos at our next meeting.

Plans are underway for our 101st show. Everyone should plan to attend the first Federation of NW Dahlia growers show of the season August 1st & 2nd!

Knoxville Dahlia Society

Carol Ann Frederick, ADS Representative

There is no better way to learn Dahlia basics than a hands-on experience. KDS provided that to the members in the form of an on-site meeting in the fall at the urban farm of KDS President Kristine Moody, Parkridge Petals. Identifying and gathering seeds from dried blooms was covered first, followed by cutting foliage, digging tubers, washing, and dividing. The fundamentals of using proper tools, cleansing the tools, trimming the tubers, and storing for winter were also covered. Members came away enriched and ready to tackle their gardens!

2025 ended with the KDS annual Christmas party and dirty tuber swap at the lovely home of Kristi Lively. The atmosphere was festive, tubers were plentiful, tasty food was bountiful, and fun was in the air! The turnout was great, and dreams of the upcoming Dahlia season danced in our heads.

In the new year, KDS has plans to introduce guest speakers at the meetings, continue working to establish a Legacy Garden in Knoxville, and hold tuber and bloom sales. Big plans and big hopes for 2026!

The Long Island Dahlia Society is not just about dahlias but friendship and camaraderie. Several beds at

Long Island Dahlia Society

Robert Tobias, ADS Representative

the display garden at Bayard Cutting Arboretum in Great River, New York, have become shaded by Maple Trees that have become bigger and bigger with age and have blocked the sun from the beds. The dahlias in these beds have been doing very poorly. We got approval from the State of New York to add three new dahlia beds to a more open area in the garden that will receive unblocked sun. We are so excited to have even more beautiful blooms in the garden.

The founder of the Wolkoff Garden, Bill Wolkoff, has designed three new beds. Bill has designed all of the existing beds in the garden to date and is responsible for the creation of the garden. Bill will oversee the project and make sure it gets done right. Did I mention Bill is 103, and without his drawings and knowledge this project would not be possible.

The Long Island Dahlia Society meets at a very old barn located near the Wolkoff Dahlia Garden. We have meetings at this location, store dahlias, divided dahlias, and do a great deal of other work at this location. The barn was looking a little sad and needed an upgrade. Thanks to Kevin Wiecks, the Bayard Cutting Arboretum

Knoxville Dahlia Society President Kristine Moody demonstrates how to collect seeds during a hands-on meeting at her urban farm.

Director, and the State of New York. The barn interior is getting painted, and new doors will be installed. It will be so nice to be working in a nice clean barn. We resumed working at the Wolkoff Garden in February at the renovated barn. We hope everyone has a great 2026 Dahlia Season.

Montana Dahlia Society

Eileen Schmidt, ADS Representative

Our yearly dahlia tuber sale was in full swing. Suddenly, a customer asked "Are you offering any Alpen varieties?" A scramble commenced and we realized with chagrin that we did not, in fact, have a single one offered for sale.

As Bill McClaren was our society founder, and hybridized over 100 Alpen varieties, we realized we needed to quickly get on the stick to source and buy as many as we could find. Thus the McClaren Legacy Project was born.

We started out with a couple of members, Martin Rippens and Eileen Schmidt, scouring growers' websites and making phone calls searching for Alpen tubers still on the market. Eileen also put a plea out on various dahlia Facebook pages, describing the project and asking for help. Other members kept their eyes peeled during purchasing forays during the selling season. Our efforts were rewarded when we were able to procure the following Alpen varieties: Cherub, Pauline, Sundown, Imp, Parfait, Bill, Fury, Pearl, Diamond and Pops.

Martin and Eileen then set about taking Alpen cuttings and handing them out to local Society members to increase our stock.

At our annual Dahlia shows and competitions we highlighted the Alpen varieties with a special display of Alpen blooms. In addition, posters were created of our Society founder Bill McClaren, his wife Lois and his many accomplishments in the Dahlia Society world and the general Flathead Valley here in Montana. Members wore special teeshirts with "What About Bill" on the front and Montana Dahlia Society on the back to call special attention to the project.

It was a success! So many people coming in to see the dahlia blooms stopped to talk about Bill and how he was such a positive influence on them. We couldn't be more thrilled and now look forward to offering many Alpen varieties at our next annual tuber sale in the Spring of 2026.

The Montana Dahlia Society held our annual holiday feast with a potluck and very fun gift exchange in November. Gifts included an assortment of tea, a birdfeeder, gardening books, a wind chime, and fertilizer, just to name a few.

In January, our work began in earnest for 2026 with the election of new officers. In addition, the group reviewed many possible projects for the year. One such project involves the creation of a new dahlia community garden at Conrad Mansion, a local historical Victorian built in 1895. It boasts extensive gardens on the grounds, décor of the pioneer period in American history and hosts many weddings and other festivities. Our plan consists of a garden bed in which to plant at least one hundred dahlias of all varieties, as well as fencing to protect the plants and blooms from deer.

Another project is to host a Montana Dahlia Society table at the annual Free the Seeds event in March. This is a gardening and food system educa-



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learning garden which benefit not only the Cedar community but also our Club members. There is the potential of a second partnering opportunity to establish a second community/learning garden within the Cedar community – at the St. Philips Church site. These gardens will allow members the ability to learn about how and when to perform the various tasks associated with growing dahlias and gladiolus. In addition, it will allow the Club to have space to grow seedlings which will then provide an opportunity for judges to judge seedlings on an annual basis. We are planning to host a Judges training session next summer for both our Club and the Victoria Dahlia Society.

The Club is holding its annual dahlia tuber and gladiolus corm sale on April 18, 2026, at the Country Club Centre Mall, and the annual show on August 29 and 30 also at the Country Club Centre Mall. We are also redeveloping and launching our new Club website in the very near future – stay tune for updates on this project.

Our monthly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at St. Philips Church in Cedar at 7pm.

North Central Washington Dahlia Society

Lavern Strawn, Vice President

Out with the old...In with the new! This refers to our setup and presentation of tubers at our Annual Spring Dahlia Sale. The methods of the past needed some updating. The organizers decided to borrow the 'style' of presentation used by some other clubs.

tional event where thousands of seeds are given away, and educational workshops are offered.

A third project planned is in tandem with Glacier Art Museum, whereby Society members will choose a painting and create a dahlia bouquet to accompany and accent that painting. Other projects include garden tours, and a new Week of Dahlias Extravaganza at a local restaurant, where members will provide bouquets along with dahlia names and information throughout the week to customer tables.

With all these projects, 2026 promises to be a busy, exciting, and fun filled year ahead!

Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society

Don Moslin, President

We finished off the 2025 season with a hands-on dahlia tuber splitting workshop that appeared to be very well received. As we move into 2026, members are beginning to wake up their tubers in preparation for splitting if they did not do so in the fall as well as getting them ready for planting later in the year.

The Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society held its first meeting of the 2026 year on Tuesday February 3 and it was well attended. Some of the projects and plans that the Club is looking forward to for the 2026 year. The Club is partnering with the Cedar Community Hall to install a community/



Puget Sound Dahlia Association President Anne Maria Jacobson and tuber sale rockstars Fran Meyer and Stacy DeKoekkoek were all smiles as final preparations were made for the club's member-only tuber sale.

Sorting and packing parties have begun at the barn, where our donated tubers are waking from their winter rest. There is something special about those gatherings. The rustle of bags, the murmur of variety names, and the shared anticipation of blooms yet to come..

Our trial garden in Canby, Oregon filled in record time this year, and we have a waitlist. It is thrilling to see so many new varieties being introduced and so many hybridizers eager to participate. The future of dahlias looks bright indeed.

As spring progresses, soil tests are being studied, amendments are being worked in, planting plans are being sketched out at kitchen tables. Tubers are being checked, coaxed, and gently encouraged to wake up in preparation for planting in late May. It is that magical in-between time when possibility hums quietly beneath the surface.

And before we know it, we will be gathering again for picnics, garden tours, our annual show, and the many wonderful local shows hosted by neighboring societies. There is a full and joyful season ahead.

Puget Sound Dahlia Association

Colin Walker, Vice-President

Puget Sound Dahlia Association is thrilled to celebrate its 50th anniversary promoting growing, hybridization, exhibition, and research on dahlias in the Northwest region of the United States. The club has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1976. Today, it is the host of North America's largest exhibition of dahlias at its annual show, and is the publisher of *Dahlias of Today* and *Dahlias: A Monthly Guide*.

During PSDA's 50th anniversary season, we are pulling out all the stops. We kicked off the year by designing a 50th anniversary logo, which will be available on t-shirts and used

For our club this meant buying new props for displaying as well as new equipment for color printing of labels. It also involved one of our newest members, Tammi Meade, who is very savvy and comfortable on a computer. She has committed hours to developing a very functional spreadsheet which is the source of labels that are printed with information and photos. The hope is that sales will run more smoothly and not be as time-consuming for the shoppers. We hope it will work great.

Also new for us is the 'members-only' sale prior to the public sale, an opportunity to have first chance at the varieties and save 1\$ per tuber. The Club raised the per-tuber price to \$8 this year. We are looking forward to a successful sale.

After another lesson on taking cuttings, it sounds like more gardeners are going to try it. The curiosity and questions indicated gardeners desire the obvious benefit of "more plants."

It is time to feel the pressure of needing to accomplish a lot between one's own garden and helping the club during this busy dahlia season start up. The fresh outdoor air will enliven us as we take in the great feeling of Spring!

Portland Dahlia Society

Twyla Rohde, ADS Representative

Spring Is Calling (And So Are the Tubers) If there is one thing gardening teaches us, it is patience.

As our community continues to expand (what a wonderful "problem" to have), we experienced a few growing pains. We waited all of last year for our usual meeting space to finish renovations, and when we finally returned, it simply did not feel quite the way we had hoped. Transitions can be like that—necessary, but not always seamless.

And then, just like the first green shoot pushing through cool soil, something new emerged.

Our first meeting of the season at the Multnomah Arts Center was a breath of fresh air. The room was full, the energy was bright, and we were delighted to welcome an incredible group of new faces into our dahlia family. It felt like a true beginning. A reset. A reminder that this community is alive and growing, and that is something worth celebrating.

Now, as April unfolds, we turn our attention to the busy, hopeful work of spring.

as advertising artwork for our annual show.

Our show, which is held annually at Sky Nursery in Shoreline, WA, will feature several unique exhibition opportunities. Commemorating the cover of the first *Dahlias of Today*, the club's 50th Anniversary Challenge Flower will be Cheyenne. Cash prizes will be offered for each exhibition division, and exhibitors will receive one ticket per flower entered. One ticket will be drawn at awards, with the winner receiving \$50.

Not an exhibitor? Not a problem! After the success of last year's bouquet sales, the club will once again sell bouquets and market bunches to show visitors. We are excited to introduce the Market Bunch competition to our show, offering exhibitors the opportunity to enter a 7-bloom anniversary bunch and a 10-bloom baby shower bunch in competition.

The pièce de résistance, though, will be what we hope to be a.... well... *spectacular* display. Local societies are being invited to create an entry in the Club Team Spectacular Challenge. Taking inspiration from the massed displays prevalent in other regions of the world, each entry will be judged as a whole and will include multiple vases of blooms. This is the first time we've attempted this, and the entry will require clubs to source blooms from a minimum of three different gardens representing the club's membership.

We look forward to celebrating our club's first 50 years with other folks throughout the Northwest this summer, and look forward to the next 50!

Rhode Island Dahlia Society

Christine Pfeiffer, ADS Representative

Rhode Island Dahlia Society members enjoyed our holiday party thoughtfully planned by Els Shine. Additionally, members generously contributed to the Toys for Tots program. 2026 started with a Zoom program organized by our RIDS President Caroleen Frey. The topic was Mexico- Origin of the Dahlia was presented by Sra. Lupita Trevino, President of the Mexico Dahlia Society or Acocoxochitl. Ass. Ac.

Our February meeting was sched-

uled to be held in our temporary meeting space since renovations to the Cold Spring Community Center are ongoing. Our annual tuber sale will be held on May 3, 2026, date and location to be announced. Our annual dahlia show dates are set for the 2026 season beginning with the Washington County Fair August 15-16. Our 60th Annual Rhode Island Dahlia Show will be held September 12 and 13th at the Cold Springs Community Center, Wickford, RI.

February meeting topic "Preparing to Plant" highlighting tools, methods, and new science for our 2026 gardens. This was the Annual meeting along with the Election of Officers and the review and acceptance of the 2026 budget for our club. All the winter weather allowed us much more time for planning and dreaming of all the various colors and forms of dahlias we are hoping to plant in just a few weeks.

Rochester Dahlia Society

Mary Feasel, ADS Representative

The Rochester Dahlia Society holds its meetings year-round, as we have made good friends as well as fellow dahlia growers.

We have a program every month after our business meeting. It may be a hands-on demonstration on how to start dahlias from seed, or how to take cuttings. Occasionally we have an outside speaker. Already this year we had someone who spoke on gardening advice passed down through the ages; how much of it was based on myths and how much was based on true agricultural college research. That was an eye opener for sure.

In the coming months, we will have potting workshops to get our one thousand potted dahlias started so they will be growing nice and strong, and as many bagged tubers for our May sales.

Here is hoping your winter was mild and your spring early.



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San Leandro Dahlia Society

Beverly Dahlstedt, ADS Representative

As I write this, most of the members agree that their dahlias are dug, divided, labeled, and stored for the winter months. Some members have chosen to leave theirs in the ground, and it will be fun to see if we can tell a difference, come show time. Several dahlias, thanks to the streetlights, are still blooming and will remain a delight to all who walk by.

Our January meeting was the traditional potluck and white elephant gift exchange with several popular gifts: dahlia fabric place mats and an

alligator watering can with the alligator "wearing" red high heels.

In March 2025, Mulford Gardens Improvement Association (MGIA), invited SLDS to start a dahlia garden on a small plot in their park (picture at left). MGIA was familiar with our club because we had rented their clubhouse for our annual tuber sales in recent years. With major help from members Jon, Ellen, and Cris, the plot was cleared, prepped, piped, and ready for planting by mid-June. Jon tended to the garden throughout the summer to observe how the dahlias adapted to the new environment. While we started a little late in the season, dahlias were growing through December!

It seems ideal to primarily grow local California cultivars, especially those developed by San Leandro members, so that they do not die out. Tubers and cuttings from these dahlias will be sold at our annual tuber sale and Cherry Festival as well.

As our tuber sale will be at this park, we will be able to have planting demonstrations happening along with the sale. Perhaps newer members will gain experience and confidence in planting their own tubers by helping in the garden. Jon is looking forward to a teaching environment.

Sierra Nevada Dahlia Society

Shelayne Hammack, ADS Representative

The Sierra Nevada Dahlia Society is just over a year old, with April 2026 marking the anniversary of our first meeting. In a short time, the Society has grown into a welcoming community united by a shared love of dahlias and a commitment to learning together. From the beginning, our focus has been on creating an inclusive space where curiosity is encouraged and growers of all experience levels feel supported.

A defining first year trend of the Society is its strong emphasis on novice growers. Founding members generously share their experience, teach the fundamentals of dahlia cultivation, and offer practical growing guidance. Mentorship has happened naturally through meetings, garden visits, and ongoing conversations. We have helped new growers build confidence while deepening their appreciation for dahlias. At its core, the Society takes great joy in cultivating dahlia lovers in the Sierra Nevada region.

This spirit of openness and outreach was evident at the Society's first dahlia show in September 2025. Though an informal show, the event was a remarkable community success, welcoming more than two hundred attendees and sparking excitement among gardeners and flower enthusiasts alike. The strong turnout affirmed the value of sharing our passion beyond the Society and inviting others to learn alongside us.

Looking ahead, the Sierra Nevada

Huron Plant Technologies, LLC



Custom Dahlia:

- virus remediation
- meristem culture
- micropropagation
- virus clean cuttings



huronplanttechnologies.com



Dahlia Society is preparing for its 2026 Dahlia Show, scheduled for the third weekend in September. Members are already collaborating on planning, staging, and partnerships to present an official American Dahlia Society show that reflects both horticultural excellence and the educational spirit that defines our society.

ORGANICALLY GROWN IN
**COLORADO
SPRINGS**

CLASSES | TUBER SALES
INDIVIDUAL RETAIL BOUQUET SALES



Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society

Lucy Propst, President

The Mission of the Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society (SEMDS) is *Promoting & Supporting the Growing, Showing, and Enjoyment of Dahlias in our community.* To support that mission, we work with our members and the public throughout the year to help them learn more about dahlias.

Our Vice President, Sherree Kneller, just completed a series of three zoom sessions reviewing the ADS Judging Modules Training for Candidate Judges.

This month, on April 11th, we will present a Make & Take Dahlia Class hosted by Telley's Greenhouse in Troy, MI. The workshop is for those interested in learning how to grow dahlias. Students will pot-up a dahlia tuber to take home and learn about dahlia care. SEMDS volunteers will provide one-on-one instruction during class.

In mid-August we will have a Dahlia Staging Workshop where we will talk about how to prepare to show your dahlias. The workshop includes, transporting blooms, tools needed, understanding the show booklet, and bloom staging. Workshop participants will get to practice staging blooms.

And each month the SEMDS hosts a Dahlia Talk via zoom. Members can ask questions of experienced dahlia growers. All participants will have the chance to discuss topics on the issues we are currently facing and share with others their methods for growing dahlias.

Photos by Sheylane Hammack and courtesy Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society

2025 Photo Contest 1st Place,
Class 5 - Dahlia Shows & Personalities:
Sierra Nevada Dahlia Society
by Sheylane Hammack

The SEMDS Tuber Sale is always on the first Saturday in May. The sale begins at 8:00 am but excited customers queue up as early as 7:00 am. As we are a non-profit, we keep our prices low; \$5/tuber, \$10/plant; we want to introduce people to the joy of dahlias not price them away. This is held in the barn at Telley's Greenhouse in Troy, MI.

It is not only learning, but our society also comes together in the winter at the Bloomfield Township Library for meetings and at member gardens throughout the growing season to get to know each other better while walking through the blooms.

Snohomish County Dahlia Society

Lynda Quinn, ADS Representative

Greetings from the Pacific Northwest in Washington State! Some of our members are getting ready for spring and are already busy starting their cuttings and seeds indoors. Others are still digging dahlias.

Our Club Holiday Potluck was in December, complete with holiday table decorations and party games! A good time was had by all.

For 2026, Jim Eldridge begins as our Club's new President as well as several other new officers. Monthly meetings have been very well attended, and we continue to have many new members. After each business meeting, we are fortunate to have wonderful education cultural presentations; most recently on taking cuttings, and a slide show on 2025 ADS New Introductions. We are looking into implementing a Mentoring Program for newer club members.

Our upcoming spring events include a member only tuber sale and auction at our monthly meeting on April 9, and a public sale on April 11 and 29.

Like you, we are anxiously awaiting the 2026 growing and showing season. We look forward to seeing our friends and exciting new blooms!

South Sound Dahlia Society

Karen Knudson, ADS Representative

Greetings from the area of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Shelton in the state of Washington!

We are welcoming new members and look forward to seeing them in person at our meeting at a Mexican restaurant the last Tuesday of each month. Meetings have been well attended with lively conversations, and often the questions and resulting tips may be as valuable as the scheduled program. Some folks conduct their own experiments over the years. For instance, would a 2B pencil work better than a black marker on tags? What about a #6 pencil? And maybe write on both sides of the tag - or bury it out of the sun?

We have been encouraging members to go to the judging seminars held in our area. One member has advanced from Candidate to Accredited Judge.

In the next couple of months, while we hope for some breaks in the winter rains, we will be looking (salivating) at pictures of new ADS introductions, discussing taking cuttings, and how to propagate seedlings - often with a challenge.

We are looking at our tubers and are setting some aside for our Tuber Sale at the Olympia Center on April 18th. One member has decided eighty varieties is more than she can manage (Do I really need more than one red? Oh, but this one is so pretty!) and so is downsizing. Some are potting-up individual tubers to give as plants to friends. It is very satisfying to hear them rave over the flowers they then "grow themselves."

We are impatient to wait for when the lilacs bloom, or Mother's Day, or when the dirt reaches 60 degrees. One member, who will be traveling much of the year, has already lined the eaves of the house with plantings of tubers in 5" pots, with some gallon pots for bigger flowers, while praying there will not be a hard frost this winter.

For more on what is up, check our Facebook South Sound Dahlia Society.



Southtown Dahlia Society

Sue Fitzgerald, ADS Representative

Hello from the Southtown Dahlia Club, serving the Chicago "Southland" and surrounding suburbs. We are excited about starting a new year of dahlias and dahlia friends. Keith Hill (pictured at top right) was selected to be the new President of SDC after "interning" under Robin Hill's direction last year.

We thank Robin, who was an energetic manager of SDC for many years and will continue to co-chair our annual Dahlia Show, now as 1st VP. John Kwak is now the treasurer. Sue Fitzgerald has now been elevated to Judging Chair after her years of Senior Judge and continued judging education.

Congratulations to Keith, Robin, and 2nd VP Jenny Jones for successfully completing Accredited Judge tests thanks to the tutelage of Marian Landerholm of CSDS. You may have met these and other SDC members at the 2025 ADS National Dahlia Show at the Chicago Botanic Garden. The President's Choice Bloom for our 2026 Dahlia Show will be Islander.

A new category for our Fall Show will be called the Heinz Memorial Flower to commemorate the life and legacy of Heinz who passed away in July 2026. This year's bloom will be Nick Sr., which Heinz loved. We hope you will make plans to come to Chicago for the SDC 89th Annual Dahlia Show, 9/5-9/6, 2026 in Crestwood, Illinois. Details on our website.

Continued on page 52



I planted my first dahlia tubers less than a decade ago, shortly after retiring from a career I loved: owning and operating a large used bookstore. When I moved from a colder climate to northwest Washington State (Zone 8b), I found myself starting over in a very different way.

A single book launched me as a gardener: *Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades* by Steve Solomon. Learning about soil fertility, growth phases, and nutrient timing reawakened a love of science I had as a boy.

That perspective sharpened when I encountered dahlias for the first time, through an episode of *The Joe Gardener Show* in which Joe Lamp'l interviewed Kristine Albrecht. Hearing her talk about tubers, hybridizing, and bloom types was intoxicating. I read every dahlia-growing book I could find and planted my first tubers in the spring of 2018. They bloomed, and they returned the following year. I did not yet understand how or why, but I knew I had found a plant that fascinated me.

I followed a familiar path for many growers, expanding my plantings, learning propagation and storage, growing dahlias from seed, and experimenting with different techniques. At every stage, success brought new questions. Eventually, I realized I was not just trying to grow better dahlias. I was trying to understand why they behaved the way they did.

Although I had never been active on social media, I discovered a large and generous online dahlia community. With no active American Dahlia Society chapter in my county, my questions led me both to grower discussions and to Google Scholar, where I began reading published scientific papers on dahlia hybridizing, diseases, fertility, propagation, and related horticultural topics. Many of these papers were dense and technical, but they contained insights that growers could benefit from if the material were translated carefully.



Photos courtesy Minnesota Dahlia Society & Steve Lloyd

ADS Trial Gardens

Heidi Zierdt, Trial Garden Evaluation Chair

Spring has officially sprung, and in the world of American Dahlia Society (ADS) trial gardens, that means one exciting thing: Seedling Class of 2026 entries are officially on their way! Across the U.S. and Canada, trial garden directors are opening their mailboxes to find carefully packed tubers, big hopes, and more than a little hybridizer pride inside.

For many hybridizers, sending off a seedling to an ADS trial garden is a big milestone. Equal parts practical evaluation and proud-parent moment, it is when years of careful selection finally leave the comfort of the home garden and step onto a standardized stage, ready to be judged alongside other promising newcomers and established stars. It takes patience and a healthy dose of realistic expectations, but the trial gardens are one of the most valuable tools the ADS offers for evaluating new cultivars.

Of course, no seedling strolls into a trial garden straight from the seed tray. Long before that happens, it has already survived intense, and often-times ruthless, scrutiny. After making crosses and germinating seeds, hybridizers grow dozens, even hundreds, of seedlings knowing that most will not make the cut. The first few years are brutal. Mixed form? Nope. Weak centers? Absolutely not. Colors that cannot make up their minds, stems that refuse to stand up straight, or blooms that look nice one week and

questionable the next. Thanks for trying. The compost pile awaits.

The lucky few that remain are the ones that keep impressing season after season. By the third or fourth growing year, a truly promising seedling begins to separate itself from the pack. Since the ADS Trial Garden Program is designed to evaluate exhibition-quality dahlias, hybridizers should be judging their seedlings just as critically: form, color, substance, stem, foliage, bloom position, and floriferousness all matter. While seedlings technically become eligible at three years old, many veteran hybridizers recommend waiting four years or more. Year three, especially, has a reputation for revealing many inconvenient truths!

Once a hybridizer feels confident a seedling is ready for its moment, it is time to apply to one or more of the eight ADS trial gardens. It's up to the hybridizer to contact each trial garden director directly, and entering multiple gardens is strongly encouraged. Different regions mean different climates, soils, and growing conditions, and a seedling that thrives everywhere is definitely a seedling worth bragging about! Reservations for the upcoming season are typically made in late fall or early winter (November through February) and usually require nothing more than a friendly email. If space is available, the director will confirm the reservation. Contact information, forms, and details are all available in the "Know" section of the ADS website under *Trial Garden*.

I Learned About Dahlias by Writing About Them

Steve K. Lloyd

Writing became my way of thinking through that material. The articles I began writing for my website often started with questions I could not yet answer. Writing forced me to slow down, verify claims, and confront the gaps in my own understanding. DahliaDoctor.com grew out of that process. Through it, I began publishing science-grounded articles that I wrote myself, aimed at growers who were deeply interested in dahlias but mostly lacked formal scientific training.

What Dahlia Doctor is not is a set of gardening rules. It is a knowledge architecture built around a few core ideas. Evidence comes first. Sources should be traceable. Observation must be separated from inference. Rather than telling people what to do, I focus on the when and the why. Most gardening advice offers instructions. I am more interested in helping growers understand context, timing, and biological limits.

As my articles became more technically ambitious, I ran into the limits of my own background in chemistry and plant physiology. I now use artificial intelligence tools as tutors, organizers, and editors, not as authorities. That boundary became clear during an online discussion about solarizing soil

to eliminate pathogens associated with crown gall in dahlias. An AI-generated summary confidently claimed this was a proven treatment and cited sources that turned out to be nothing more than prior Facebook discussions. The AI had recycled unverified opinion and treated it as evidence.

AI helps me ask better questions and manage a technical library. It does not decide what I believe or determine what I write. That responsibility remains mine.

Over time, reading, writing, and growing have changed how I garden. My tolerance for uncertainty has increased. Dahlias are remarkably adaptable, and that flexibility can mask what they actually prefer. I now rely less on schedules and recipes and more on windows, phases, and ranges of response. I observe more. I intervene less.

What I hope growers take away from Dahlia Doctor is not a checklist, but a way of seeing. Sometimes there is something we can do to guide dahlias toward a better outcome. Often there is not, and recognizing that can be just as valuable. If readers leave my site asking better questions than they arrived with, I have done my job. 🌸

When spring rolls around, shipping begins. Tubers are usually sent out in early April, while rooted cuttings follow in early May. Trial gardens require at least three tubers per variety, and since dahlia tubers can sometimes be... let's say unpredictable, sending a fourth is often a smart insurance policy. Throughout the growing season, gardens are maintained according to ADS Trial Garden guidelines, ensuring consistent care, fertilizing, and grooming across all entries and all gardens.

That consistency is what makes the information coming out of the trial gardens so valuable. Every entry is grown under the same conditions, allowing judges to make true side-by-side comparisons with both established varieties and other new seedlings. When blooms reach their peak in late August or September, ADS judges evaluate each seedling using the ADS Seedling Evaluation Scorecard. At the end of the season, scores from each garden are compiled and shared with the hybridizer. To earn a passing score, and a place in the *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*, a seedling must score 85 points or higher.

From the first bloom in a backyard bed to evaluation in a trial garden, the journey of a seedling can easily stretch across five years or more. For hybridizers dedicated to improving the genus and contributing to the broader ADS community, trial gardens remain one of the most informative, meaningful, and rewarding steps in introducing a new cultivar to the dahlia world.

If all of this sounds like an impossibly long wait for your seedling's big debut, never fear! There are plenty of ways to stay busy in the meantime! One excellent option is to reach out to your local society and sign up for the ADS judge training course. If that feels a little too intense, you can dip your toes in by working through the judge training modules available on the ADS website.

Either way, it's time well spent. Hybridizers who understand exactly how seedlings are evaluated are far better equipped to select, refine, and champion varieties that can truly shine in a trial garden! 🌸



Southern Tier Dahlia Society

Andrea Blackwell

Hello from the frozen tundra of NY! An unusually frigid, cold January found many of us inside busy planning our garden layouts, dividing tubers, waking up tubers for cuttings, dividing tubers, and gathering gardening supplies, setting up tuber trades, and buying tubers. (Oh, and did I mention dividing tubers?!).

Our society also gathered together to enjoy a fun luncheon with current and new members. We plan to continue to plan for our annual tuber sale and auction, scheduled for April 25th. It is our biggest event.

Additionally, we are planning two shows on August 18th and Sept 12th. We have also planned out our meetings for the year 2026. So, let us keep counting down the days to spring, to warmer sunshine and thawed, workable ground!

Southwest Idaho Dahlia Society

Vickie Holbrook, ADS Representative

The Southwest Idaho Dahlia Society is enjoying a season of growth, learning, and shared leadership while maintaining the steady guidance of our experienced officers. As we concluded our recent two-year term, we encouraged members to step into new roles, to keep our society running smoothly.

Our board continues to blend continuity with fresh energy. Educational programs, tuber workdays/sales, shows, and outreach efforts are underway with a spirit of teamwork. Our membership continues to grow as new dahlia enthusiasts discover the joy of these flowers

Looking ahead, our monthly meetings will focus on helping members grow the very best dahlias they can – whether for personal enjoyment, exhibition, or sharing with others. We are excited to meet with Mark and Temala Baker of Heron's Nest Dahlias (Firth, Idaho) for an in-depth session on taking cuttings. A virtual judge's training is also scheduled for July 25 to

further support members interested in exhibiting and gaining judicial credentials.

We have set our fourth annual show for September 26 at Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) in Boise. The later date should offer growers a welcome, cooler, respite from Idaho's summer heat. Rooted in education and fellowship, we look forward to a vibrant, colorful year ahead.

Whatcom County Dahlia Society

Allison Lingbloom, ADS Representative

As we all begin to emerge from the winter routine of dahlia tuber checks and writing planting maps there is much excitement over what the 2026 growing season has in store for us!

The Whatcom County Dahlia Society was delighted to celebrate our 40th Anniversary in 2025. Our July meeting was a panel of founding and original club members sharing memories over the last forty years. We are excited to have a wave of growers joining WCDS, many of those pursuing dahlia exhibition and club involvement. We have four members who qualified in 2025 to advance to Candidate Judge status! Several of these members were first time exhibitors in 2025 and easily found their way to the head table. Our board welcomed four new members, eager to help us thrive for the years to come.

The 2025 Seedling Challenge was so much fun, we opted to do it again! Packs of twenty seeds from the Boley's waterlily patch are sold for \$10 each. All funds are distributed back as prizes for best bloom (\$50), worst bloom (\$50), and participation (\$20 each). Several of these blooms were worthy of keeping another year! Both hosted at Bloedel Donovan Park in Bellingham, WA.

Our tuber sale is April 4th, 2026, from 10am-2pm Our show is September 12th and 13th, 2026. Birch Bay Dahlias will be hosting another Judge's Training Event at their farm on August 29th. You can find more about our club at our website.

Washington State Dahlia Society

Felicia Soleil, ADS Representative

It was a mild winter this year, although a wet one, in the Pacific Northwest; however, we are really looking forward to getting our hands dirty and those tubers planted to start a new season of beauty and astonishment!

After a fun year-end holiday party in December, our club began the new year with an inspiring presentation of the ADS 2025 varieties that made the cut and began dreaming of new acquisitions and what we can accomplish with our collections this year. WSDS held our first public tuber sale, learned how to grow out cuttings to multiply our favorites, started "eyeing up" our stored tubers.

The Trial Garden is supervised each year by our esteemed WSDS member, Terry Schroeder, whom you may recognize as a very experienced grower, judge, and current ADS Secretary. We are privileged to have Terry's expertise in our club. The Trial Garden also provides unlimited learning opportunities for us as WSDS members. In May, work begins on soil prep, followed by planting, tending, pinching, disbudding, tying up, and pest management every Tuesday morning by a group of volunteers headed up by Terry until the season ends. There are an average of sixty or so dahlias each year being trialed, plus a few "buffer rows" for control purposes. It is quite an undertaking!

Our WSDS monthly meetings are also held at the Trial Garden during the summer months for additional learning experience (and a pie social!)

We round out all the planning and preparation with our annual show held over Labor Day weekend. With exhibitors from throughout the state, including many revered hybridizers from the Pacific Northwest, it is truly a coming together of dahlia lovers. 🌸

Dahliyah's 100 Dahlias

Pat Looney

The pictures say it all. Dahliyah made a poster with 100 dahlias for a kindergarten assignment of 100 things for the 100th day of school; however, it is just the beginning.

After reading a Facebook post, a phone call and several emails here is a little about Dahliyah's story. Dahliyah is six years old and is a kindergarten student who loves art, music, horses, the color "rainbow" and loves her dahlia flowers.

Dahliyah was introduced to dahlias by her great grandma who has been planting dahlias since her mama was very little. The hobby, more of a passion, is now third generation dahlia lovers. Dahliyah is now the proud owner of *Dahliyah's Dahlias* where she participates in every step of the growing process from tubers to full beautiful blooms.

You can normally find her "smelling her flowers" – a beautiful and loving joke in our home – or toting around gloves, a shovel, clippers and usually covered in mud and dirt. She has been selling tubers, cuttings, and plants through social media, church, family, friends, and our local markets since she was just 2 years old and is growing – as much as her flowers – every year.

When Dahliyah came home saying she needed a project with one hundred items for the 100th day of school, she immediately thought of her flowers. Quickly she and daddy began working on the project. She carefully chose each flower because of her favorite colors, their names, what she has grown, and because she insists she must have "every color of the rainbow." (Please do not tell her there are no blue dahlias.)

There are ninety-nine pictures on the board, the 100th being the beautiful Dahliyah Joy. One hundred beautiful "Dahliyah's" for her project! Dahliyah intends to save up for her "future life fund" and she is doing a fantastic job at it



She is happy to teach; educate and inform others on how to properly care for dahlias and the next steps they need to take. She also continues to learn more and more, asking questions all the time to make sure she is doing her best to take care of all of her flowers

This last year, she had over one hundred dahlias on our property. This does not even begin to include the other flowers like sunflowers, hollyhocks, roses, tulips, and other flowers, along with a vegetable and fruit garden that she helps in tending.

"Dahlias became even more special after Dahliyah's little sister, Grace Lynn

was born with a neurological disorder called bilateral Harlequin Syndrome where half of her body will change color due to a circulatory issue. Through the process of growing the dahlias, we discovered sports blooms that represent a similarity to our daughter's rare condition. Dahlia "sports" really helped us appreciate the beauty and glory that God puts into every piece of our family...even the flowers. All sports are named Grace Lynn."

With young entrepreneurs like Dahliyah growing and selling dahlias for their "future life fund" the future of dahlias is bright. 🌸

In Memoriam

ROLAND VERRONE

Roland T. Verrone, 79, of Indian Trail, North Carolina, passed away peacefully on January 24, 2026, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. A



devoted father and family man, Roland is survived by his son Steven (Michelle), his brother Richard and many beloved nieces and nephews.

His life was one of service and leadership, starting young when he earned the rank of Eagle Scout. As a senior judge and mentor, Roland taught classes on all aspects of dahlia culture as well as dahlia hybridization and judging and served on the Evergreen State Dahlia Association board. He joined the US Airforce after graduation and was a life member of the VFW and the America Legion.

Roland was dedicated to the art and science of growing stunning blooms, transforming his gardens into living masterpieces that inspired everyone who visited. Roland's interest in dahlias began in the late 1980s when he was encouraged by Evie Gullikson to start growing and exhibiting dahlias at local shows. His hobby grew into a business with the establishment of "Verrone's Pride of the Prairie" dahlia garden and he eventually introduced more than 50 named varieties through the American Dahlia Society.

Two of his most notable introductions included Verrone's Sophie, 2006 Evie Gullikson winner, and Verrone's Morning Star, which won the 2013 Stanley Johnson Medal. He was inducted into the NW Federation of Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame in 2022.

Roland's life was a testament to what can happen when one person's passion is shared with an entire community. His flowers still bloom, as does his spirit in every gardener he taught, every show he judged, and every dahlia that carries his touch.

THERESA CHADWICK

Theresa Chadwick was our Data Entry person at our annual show here in Nanaimo, BC as well as an honorary member and her contribution to the creation of our computer program which we use for tallying the winners of the show today.



Theresa carried a deep sense of community and advocacy throughout her life. This was evident when she was crowned Miss Ladysmith in 1974.

She graduated from Nanaimo District Senior Secondary and went on to work for the government within the Ministry of Social services before joining the faculty of Vancouver Island University. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in 2007 and Bachelor of Education in 2010, along with an Associate of Arts and Science diploma. Theresa was a passionate and professional photographer.

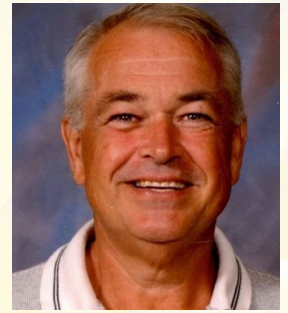
On a windy, rainy evening in December of 2025, Theresa was taken from this world by a freak accident in the town where she was born and had lived her life.

Theresa first came to our show with her father who was a dahlia lover and grower. She would help him with filling in the show tags. After her father's passing she continued his legacy growing dahlias, especially "Zorro" which was his favorite.

She was always willing to help in any way. Her smile and laughter will be greatly missed.

CHARLES CRAIG

Charles Craig passed away at his home on December 20 at the age of 78. He served one term as Badger State Dahlia Society president and after that, moved into the role of show chair.



When he did so, he declared "You can make more change as show chair than you can as president." Charles also took on the role of judging chair for Badger State and served on the American Dahlia Society's Classification Committee.

He got his love for dahlias years ago after spotting dahlias in a neighbor's yard in Indiana. He was a familiar face at the Wisconsin State and Indiana State Fairs, where he was a regular exhibitor. He also competed fiercely at Dahlia Society annual shows in Milwaukee, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan as well as in many Midwest Dahlia Conference shows.

He was always willing to share his knowledge with anyone that would listen. If you ever staged near him at a show, you probably heard him say "A point's a point!" when deciding whether to put a bloom on the table or not.

When Charles was not working with his dahlias, he was teaching school - first as choir director and later as coordinator of the Gifted and Talented program. For years he sang in his church choir at Luther Memorial in Madison and he loved helping to make pfeffernisse cookies with the folks at St. James in Verona for their Fall Fund Raiser.

Charles will be missed by family, friends, and growers, especially those of the Badger State Dahlia Society.

The American Dahlia Society, Inc.

Financial Report for 2025

Charles Miehm, Treasurer • treasurer@dahlia.org

The year turned out to be very positive, as dues and store sales continue to increase. The National Show Endowment Fund continues to grow. Due to the Stock Market doing well, the investments have grown over the past year. The financial condition of the Society is sound for the foreseeable future.

BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2025

Unrestricted Funds

Ameriprise Investment Account	\$ 9,038.69
Ameriprise Investment Account Money Market	\$ 25,673.50
Vanguard Investment Account	\$ 59,918.45
Wells Fargo Bank Operating Account	\$ 84,035.46
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	\$ 178,666.10

Restricted Funds

Ameriprise Investment Account: Boeke Bequest	\$ 63,600.06
Wells Fargo Bank Checking Account Virus Fund	\$ 7,850.84
Wells Fargo Bank Checking Account Tony Evangelista Memorial Fund	\$ 7,388.21
Wells Fargo Bank Checking Account Memorial Fund	\$ 650.00
Wells Fargo Bank Checking Account National Show Endowment	\$ 1,275.00
Wells Fargo Bank Savings Account National Show Endowment	\$ 39,188.22
Wells Fargo Bank Savings Account Genome Project	\$ 38,277.79
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	\$ 158,230.12

Other

Store Inventory	\$ 60,193.00
TOTAL OTHER	\$ 60,193.00
TOTAL ADS ASSETS	\$ 397,089.22

OPERATING INCOME & EXPENSES

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

INCOME

Advertising	\$ 1,563.00
Donations - General Fund	\$ 164.00
Insurance	\$ 5,235.00
Membership - Dues	\$ 86,156.25
Silent Auction - Spring Planning Meeting	\$ 1,075.11
Store Purchases	\$ 11,691.30
Vases	\$ 5,077.07
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 110,961.73

EXPENSES

Awards	\$ 803.33
Ameriprise Transfer	\$ 2,220.00
Bank Fees	\$ 5.00
Bench Evaluations	\$ 245.69
Board email (Group Vine)	\$ 153.00
Board Zoom account	\$ 174.61
Bulletin	\$ 35,154.38
Honoraria - 2025	\$ 500.00
Insurance - Cyber Coverage	\$ 975.00
Insurance - D & O Coverage	\$ 951.00
Insurance - Liability Coverage	\$ 2,752.00
Logo Design	\$ 2,350.00
Meeting Projector	\$ 770.96
Membership Expenses	\$ 47.69
Membership Class books	\$ 15,380.60
MemberLeap	\$ 4,760.00
National Show '25 C'tral St.	\$ 3,400.00
PayPal/Stripe/Square Fees	\$ 1,553.31
Photo Contest	\$ 355.00
Spring Planning Meeting	\$ 1,365.00
Store Expenses	\$ 3,299.17
Tax Preparation	\$ 645.00
Treasurer Expenses	\$ 196.99
Vases	\$ 4,421.72
Website	\$ 3,279.44
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 85,758.89
OPERATING SURPLUS 2025	\$ 25,202.84



May the lines to your spring tuber sales be long, and your show and prize funds prosperous.

