

Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia Fall/Winter Newsletter

Edited by Nina Dandurand June 2010



Executive of the Nova Scotia Dahlia Society

President: Carol Dexter	902 668 2921
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Events

- July 18th** Dahlia Society BBQ to be held at the home of Joyce and Eric Higgins in Higginsville. This is a potluck and the meat will be provided
- Aug 18-21** Halifax County Exhibition is held in Middle Musquodoboit. The flower show is large and has the biggest display of dahlias in the province.
- Sept 4th** Dahlia display will be held in the Mic Mac Mall near Winners. Blooms will be sold at the end of the show.
- Sept 8th** Meeting at Captain William Spry Center Spryfield at 7 pm
Bring along some of your best blooms to the meeting
- Oct 13th** Meeting at Captain William Spry Center Spryfield at 7 pm Program - Digging, splitting, and storing your dahlias for the winter
- Nov 10th** Meeting at Captain William Spry Center Spryfield at 7 pm
Slides of the American Dahlia Society National Show in Tennessee USA

Summer Wanderings

We have discussed in previous newsletters about the idea of using pots for various dahlia displays. Realizing this pot buying can get expensive maybe a trip about the neighbourhood can

get rid of that large expense and make it a very small one. I am not one who likes to frequent garage sales but just maybe it is time for me, and many others to try it. People are getting rid of garden tools, and would you believe it, - pots. They will be in all sorts of sizes. The owners may be moving and want to get rid of them. Take a good look at them and see if these pots would suit your purpose.

If you are going to look for pots make sure you know how you may use them. If it is for a pot arrangement try and acquire a size of no less than the diameter of 18 inches. This way you can water the plants well and not have to be concerned they will dry out quickly. A pot arrangement is a series of plants you would put in a pot to either beautify the front of your property such as the entry door or perhaps a patio or any other space on your property you would like to put a pot. Usually I will put a small growing dahlia, a spiky plant and some plant that has a trailing habit. To make the pot look better it would be nice to have most of your plants in the same colour family.

If you are picking up plastic pots they are much hotter for the plants than a terra cotta one would be therefore a good size pot is a good idea. When you get the prized pot home you would be wise to wash it well and let it dry before using it. Perhaps you have found a pot of considerable size and are congratulating yourself on the find. Fill this pot up and put it where you want it to stay all season long because you won't be moving it by yourself. The only thing stopping you from getting a great pot is your imagination. I would love to hear about your adventure at the garage sales. Good luck on your hunt.

Visiting Gardens

The dahlias are planted and each of us plants our dahlias on our properties in various ways. Members who frequent the meetings will of course make friends with some of the members and would like to have them visit. I realize we are all very busy in the summer but if you are comfortable asking and the member is comfortable to accept visitors perhaps a garden visit would be fun.

Some just plant dahlias and others plant everything they can get their hands on so a garden visit would be very good to learn new ways of growing and landscaping. If you want to see dahlias make sure you are planning your visit when the dahlias are at their peak and then you can see the many varieties the gardener has collected. Dahlias grown are a collection to be sure. One year I realized I was collecting a form of dahlia and a range of colours that made me happy but I also soon realized I was missing out on many other lovely varieties so I decided to try new things. Even now, I find I have to look for a different form now and then or even a new colour. A visit to other gardens will bring that fact up close and personal. Sometimes we don't see the obvious and need a little jolt to have it brought to our attention.

When visiting another's garden it is not a good idea to judge the garden itself. Everyone puts plants in places they want them to be as best they can. It is like the decorating of one's home. It is a taste another can never argue with. Personally I love to visit other gardens and the last thing I look at is the one weed that is thriving like it has been taken care of for a reason no one can fathom. I look for new plants I want to grow and I love to ask questions about them because the friends I have are always glad to let me know why they would want to grow that particular plant and how to care for it. The only question I ask myself after that visit is where will I put it?

There is a lovely garden in Annapolis Royal that can encourage any gardener. This garden is called The Annapolis Valley Heritage Garden. There is something for everyone to let the mind wander over and some of the combinations are startling. They have a nice bed of dahlias for the public to enjoy and each year it seems to be changing. Although the bed is small it will grow larger with time. Dedicated

volunteers mainly tend the gardens and their love of this garden is obvious. If you are in the area of Annapolis Royal why not spend some time and go and see it? Too many lovely things in our province are left to the tourists to enjoy.

Flower and Vegetable Shows

We are not always so busy in our gardens we can't stop and visit events in our area that will give us ideas for gardens. I have compiled a list for the gardeners in District 5 or as you will, the Annapolis Valley Region and beyond and wish to share this with you. This list enables the gardener to visit other flower shows and there is a date and time so the calendars can be planned to allow the time off for this very necessary fun.

Events

- June 18-19th St Mary's Anglican Church – Glorious things Flowers and Art and Tea
Contact person Nina 847 3255
- July 11th Basin Gardeners Association Strawberry Tea and Garden Tour Venue to be announced. Contact Myra at myra484@eastlink.ca
- July 13th Bridgetown Garden Club Flower Show and Tea held at Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall on Alexandra Ave , Bridgetown. 1-3 pm. Admission \$5.00 adults and \$2.00 Children. Contact Charles at 902 0432 or carberr@ns.simpatico.ca
- July 16th Wilmot Garden Club – Baptist Life Center in Middleton entry 2 pm
Contact person – Paul 847 1001
- August 7th Valley Gardeners – Kings Tec Research Center – 1 pm
- August 18-21st Halifax County Exhibition Middle Musquodoboit
The largest display of dahlias in the province as well as a large flower show
- Aug 21-22nd Charring Cross Garden Club – New Ross Fair Grounds
Contact Person Marie 689 2981
- Aug 22nd Nicholville Garden Club Flower and Vegetable Display and Tea
Nicholville Community Hall corner of Victoria Rd and Harmony Rd
Contact person Nina 847 3255
- August 28th Annapolis Valley Dahlia and Gladiolus Display – Greenwood Mall
Contact Person – Nina 847 3255 - sale of blooms at closing of display
- Sept 4th Nova Scotia Dahlia Society flower display held at the Mic Mac Mall in Dartmouth beginning at 10 am near Winners
- Sept 17-19 Hants County Exhibition held in Windsor Nova Scotia

A Black Dahlia?

By Arthur Haskins

For years the experts have said there is no black dahlia and there never will be one. Well the experts will soon be eating those words as the American Dahlia Society

will soon have to add black as a colour to their classification list and there is a variety just waiting to be the first candidate. Not to be released until 2011 “Verrone’s Obsidian” a black orchid dahlia is on trial in a Nova Scotia garden this summer and early indications seem that it will be a big winner. It is not only black in colour, but has excellent orchid flower form and loads of blooms. It was developed by Roland Verrone a dahlia grower in Washington State and named for the local black glossy volcanic lava rock found in the area. Keep an eye peeled for this one; it will be a great addition to the dahlia patch.

Foliar Feeding Dahlias

Foliar feeding is the spraying of the leaves of a plant with a diluted liquid fertilizer. The mixture is diluted and should not be mixed strong because it can burn the leaves of the plant. A process of absorption begins immediately due to the molecular structure of the liquid fertilizer and the plant being similar. Foliar nutrition is not a substitute for plant feeding but is a supplement to it much like the reasoning behind the fact we take supplements in our own diets.

Some plants are mistakenly planted in soils unsuited to their habit and this will prevent the plants from taking up the micronutrients needed to thrive well. In alkaline soils with a PH greater than 7.0, micronutrients such as iron and zinc form insoluble compounds and renders these nutrients unavailable to plants. This is the reason it is necessary to understand the soil PH process required for plants in the gardens we tend. A gardener can adjust the PH of soil to suit the plants placed in those areas. However, our good intentions, the adjustment needed between soil and plant can take weeks so foliar feeding would be a good way to give the plant in question a nutrient boost. This will feed the plant until the soil nutrients become available again.

Some transplants benefit from foliar feeding until the roots are strongly formed. The plant is dependent on stored nutrients to maintain it. When the stored nutrients are used up the plants ability to become established is reduced. Foliar feeding will help in this respect.

Sometimes when the soil is too cold even if the air is warm, growth can be limited. The cooler soil inhibits the soil's micronutrients from converting nutrients into forms available for the roots to absorb. The foliar feeding method allows the plant to begin growth before the roots can take nutrients from the soil.

Select liquid or soluble fertilizers with nitrogen in the form of nitrate. Dilute the fertilizer as directed on the product label or to ½ strength if you are doing frequent feeding. Mist spray to the point of drip runoff. Do not apply foliar feeding in the very cold or very hot weather. Early morning or evenings are good times for this task to be done.

Remember, foliar feeding should be used as a “shot in the arm” for plants not as the only means of nutrients a plant has to survive. I invite you to try this form of feeding, experiment with it and see if you realize a difference.

New Dahlias

Each year many of us add to our collections by buying new varieties of dahlias. These dahlias come from near and far but they still need to adjust to the soil we plant them in and the various climatic conditions of the new garden home. It would be an advantage to catalogue the growth behavior of these new varieties so you can either adjust what you do or make decisions about that variety that will help you to find where the process is going.

You will want to know how the plant blooms, and how many blooms it did have. When the plant blooms was it true to form? In other words if it was supposed to be a formal decorative did it have a proper form or did it have a flaw? If you take care of the new variety, as you should, such

as watering and feeding on a regular basis, you should be rewarded with great results. If by chance there were a few things not up to your standard it may be that you should let the plant grow and acclimatize in your soil and garden conditions for another year. Once this has been done you can then make a firm decision to either keep the new variety, give it away, or if it is really bad throw it away.

Another point that should be noted is to see how many tubers, after all the proper care you gave it, this plant produced. This can mean the plant is not a good tuber producer by habit or something you did was wrong. By taking the notes of the new variety you can know these bits of information and can let others know so when they plant the variety they know they won't or will have a certain expectation of tuber count.

Many clubs buy new tubers for the members to try enabling the club to have good varieties to work with. The Annapolis Valley Dahlia and Gladiolus Society bought tubers for each member to grow. The members were given forms to catalogue the progress of their plant they were raising. After this they were given a list of the tubers the club bought and who was growing them and were encouraged to go and "visit" the new additions. This was an idea to have the members visit each other's gardens and talk about their dahlias.

Not everyone in the club is well versed in growing dahlias as yet but I guarantee each new dahlia grower will be very diligent in the care of the new dahlia under their eye. After the tubers are harvested and they will be helped with that, they will be stored in a safe place and given to the members in our give away in the spring. The information gathered about the new variety will be given to the members and any changes the following year will be noted. We look forward to a fun year of growing.

BBQ 2010

The yearly BBQ for the Society will be held at the home of Joyce and Eric Higgins. For those of you who have never been to the annual BBQ you are missing a treat. It is a time for all of us to relax and socialize with a plate of food in hand.

Joyce and Eric have a lovely garden and they are more than willing to show us around and talk about their gardens. Each year it seems they get bigger so there are always changes to notice.

The Society provides the meat and it is catered so all we have to do is bring salads, desserts and so on. If you want to know what to bring you could phone Joyce at 902 384 2764 and she will be able to let you know what she needs.

There will be a map included in this newsletter and bring along your cell phone just in case you get lost. We look forward to seeing you there.

CUT FLOWER VARIETIES
My Top Choices For Cut Flowers-by Arthur Haskins

Arthur Haskins has given us a list of varieties of cut flowers, if grown in our gardens will give us much enjoyment. I know many of our readers have said how they enjoy “Arthur’s Picks” and how they look for the varieties at the tuber sales.

ANDREA CLARK
CHERWELL LINNET
COLWOOD HOPE
CORN BRIDE
CORNEL
CRAZY 4 JESSIE
CRYFIELD HARMONY
DANA IRIS
DEVON EVA
FC FIREGLOW
HOLLYHILL PINKIE
HOLLYHILL RENOIR
IVANETTE
JOWEY INGRID
KEN’S CHOICE
KLONDIKE
LEMON FIZZ
TARATAHI RUBY

MAGIC MOMENT
MARY TERESA VLOET
MISS DELILAH
OLD EVELYN VLOET
PARKLAND MAGENTA
PRIMROSE DIANE
RUSKIN DIANE
RUSKIN PENELOPE
SKY ANGEL
SNOHO DORIS
WESTON SPANISH DANCER
WHITE HAMILTON LILLIAN
ORETI ELLA
SHINKYOKO

If you would like to comment on anything in the newsletter please feel free to call me at 902 847 3255 or write me a note at
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