

The Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia Quarterly Newsletter – Jan 04



Well here goes. As a first attempt to write something, anything on this blank sheet of paper that is my computer screen I wonder at Nina Dandurand's genius at accomplishing this wondrous feat for as long as she did. Well done Nina, I know I have big shoes to fill. It is a relief to know that as the new editor for the newsletter I will not be responsible for its writing entirely but will be receiving articles, advice, stories and even recipes from our Society members, many of whom are greatly more qualified than I to speak on the topic of Dahlias. I'm looking forward to my stint as editor and with your help, it will be entertaining and educational for us all.

Appointments

As another Dahlia growing season draws to a close and the tubers are put to bed until Spring (fingers crossed), there are changes to the Membership with the election of new Officers. Thanks so much to those dedicated souls who are passing on their responsibilities and Best Wishes to their replacements as follows:

President

Rod Prouse replacing Arthur Haskins

Vice President

John Proctor replacing Rod Prouse

Secretary

Ruth Graham replacing Carol Dexter

Treasurer

Mike Dandurand

ADS Bulletin

Paul Davey replacing John Proctor

Newsletter

Barry Mackenzie replacing Nina Dandurand

Program Committee

Doug Verge, Heather Drope and Rod Prouse

Publicity

John Proctor

Scenes From the Mall – Bedford Show, Sept 03

A smiling Judge

- and no wonder -

Pam Howden



Hurricane Juan

Those of us who experienced this horror would just as soon never hear that name again much less even think of the storm. We are thankful that we got off as lucky as we did as many fared much worse. However, there were a few lessons learned and I'll pass them on. Normally, our first frost happens around Oct 21st and that would be a signal for us to get our Dahlia garden ready for winter. September 29th answered any questions Fran and I might have had as to when we were going to cut back the Dahlias, because, on the 30th, those that weren't broken were laying flat on the ground. We lost many trees and were housebound until the mess in the driveway could be cleaned up, so of course the plants fell to the bottom of our priority list of things to do. We usually like to leave the clumps in the ground for a few days to give the 'eyes' a chance to emerge as it makes it easier for us when separating the tubers later. After two weeks, we decided it was time to see what was left underground and as we dug we observed that many clumps had eyes that had sprouted, some sprouts were two inches or more in length, talk about a determined plant. In fact on a few clumps the tubers were hardly visible as there were so many large sprouts. My nagging fear is that those tubers have used up next years 'eyes' and may now be useless, time will tell, I guess. Some growers suggest that it is not necessary to wait before digging and separating and that is something I will certainly take into consideration next fall.

In preparation for the storm, one of the objects I chained my little greenhouse to, was a large Maple tree. Of course, the next morning, the maple had completely toppled over and was now lying beside the greenhouse. The greenhouse sustained a two inch crack in one of its plastic panels from a branch as the tree went over. There's a crazy lesson there, somewhere.

Catalogs, catalogs and more catalogs, price lists too

As avid gardeners it is that time of the year to peruse garden catalogues in an attempt to chase away those winter blues and this year I confess that I have gone all out and ordered many new Dahlia varieties, some at reasonable prices, others, well you know.... Some of our members sell tubers and of course there is the spring auction and May tuber sale to look forward to. This doesn't preclude the begging/trading of favourite tubers amongst members as well. Anyway, without further ado, here are some of the quality Canadian catalogues I ordered this year. Please let me know if I have missed your price list or a favourite catalogue.

Ferncliff Gardens
8502 McTaggart Street
Mission, B.C. V2V 6S6
Tel: (604) 826-2447
FAX: (604) 826-4316
WEB Address: <http://www.ferncliffgardens.com/>

Art's Nursery Ltd.
8940 192nd Street
Surrey, BC V4N 3W8
Phone: 604-882.1201
Fax: 604-882-5969
Web Address: <http://www.artsnursery.com/>

Canadahlia Gardens
John Mooney
82 Clifton Downs Rd
Hamilton, ON L9C 2P3
(905) 388-5595

E&S Dahlias, Inc
Ed & Sylvia Alley
468 Shaw Rd.
Berwick North, NS B0P 1E0
Tel: (902) 538-1414
Fax: (902) 538- 1515
Email: rbbluenoser@ns.sympatico.ca
Web Address: <http://www.dahlias.net/htmbbox/esalley.htm>

Dahlias Galore
5245 Selma Park Road
Sechelt, BC Canada V0N 3A2
Phone: 604-885-9820
Fax: 604-885-4841
Web Address: <http://65.108.71.163/index.html>

Bedding, Gallery, Dwarfs and Cut flowers too

Following is the exact transcript from the ADS WEB Site at <http://www.ads.org>, regarding those beautiful Dahlias that may be classified as 'non-exhibition' varieties :

This section of the ADS web site will feature those dahlia that will do very well in your garden and require very little effort or maintenance. We will try to divide these varieties by their best attributes and use. The three types we will show and discuss are:

- 1. Garden Type dahlias** We will state what section of the country they do well in. Some varieties just don't make it in certain areas of the country. The major features of the variety. Where can you get the variety if it's not on the big list of the Colorado Dahlia Society (see the link on this site).
- 2. Cut flower type dahlias.** These varieties lend themselves to use in bouquets and arraignments.
- 3. Border/Container type dahlias.** These little beauties are just the thing for your flower garden as a long lasting color accent. They also are well suited for use in containers by themselves or with other plant material.

We will show pictures of all varieties we talk about so you can see how they look; included with the picture will be cultural information. In addition we will show pictures of gardens that feature dahlias along with other flowers and plants. These will not be pictures of exhibition type gardens ---straight rows with stakes, shade cloth and only dahlias. If you do have pictures of your garden that features dahlias in a garden setting send them on to the webmaster along with a short description of the garden. There will also be hints and practices that will make your dahlia growing less stressful and easy. Please feel free to comment or suggest items for this section. You don't have to be a member of ADS to comment or ask a question.

One variety that Fran and I have taken a liking to are the bedding type, sometimes known as “Gallery” and the catalogues are full of them. For example, along with their exhibition Dahlias, Ferncliff sells a 14 inch waterlily (Suitzus Julie) with one inch Dark Lavender blooms, can you picture it? The nice thing about the bedding Dahlia is that they make great fillers anywhere and once you have amassed a quantity of tubers you now have a really cheap annual when you stop and think about it. Vessies and Dominion Seed House sell cut flower varieties and the “Gallery” which grow about 12 inches tall; they are very sturdy (Hurricane sturdy) and when you space them at 12 inches, they make a cute little hedge, good tuber makers also. Some of the cut flower varieties have found their way onto the exhibition bench in the past. Both Stokes and Dominion Seed sell **seeds** for “Dwarfs”, with Stokes having the better selection. Stokes suggests that the germination rate will be 80-85% at best. They suggest a soil mix with a Ph of 5.8-6.2 which many garden centers sell. Anyway, tubers are a great way to start but if you like to live on the edge; seeds might be an interesting experiment also.

Veseys
PO Box 9000
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada, C1A 8K6
Phone: 1-800-363-7333 or 1-902-368-7333
Fax: 1-800-686-0329 (toll-free)
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Web Address: <http://www.veseys.com/>

Stokes
PO Box 10
Thorold ON
L23V 5E9
Phone: 1-800-2363-72333
FAX: 1-888-834-3334
Web Address: <http://www.stokeseeds.com>

Dominion Seed House
Box 23500
Georgetown, ON
L7G 5L6
Phone: 1-800-784-3037
Fax: 1-800-2382-5746
Web Address: <http://www.dominion-seed-house.com>

Notes from the Field –

4 Oct 03 - Ruth and George Graham were invited by the Nova Scotia Association of Garden Clubs (NSAGC) to give a presentation at the Cape Breton District meeting on the digging and storage of Dahlia Tubers. Originally scheduled for a 30 minute talk with 15 minutes for questions, the talk easily went past the allotted time with 100 plus enthusiastic gardeners in attendance. As Ruth and George laid out their procedure for tuber care it soon became apparent that an explanation behind moving the identification tag to the tuber clump from the garden stake would be necessary. For example, “how did the tag get there in the first place and what kind of stake are you talking about”? So, what started out as a “How to do Your Tubers” soon became “A year in the Life of the Dahlia”, just so the final bit on moving tags would make sense. Ruth

and George had a wonderful time and by the way George tells the tale, so did those in attendance.

Scenes from a Mall



Ruth and the beautiful flower named for her, 'Nova Ruth'



I said there would be recipes...

Last summer Ed and Sylvia Alley hosted an afternoon and “hands on” seminar for all members who could attend. The primary purpose was for Ed to demonstrate the hints and tricks of “Growing and Showing Prize Winning Dahlias”.... or, how to make many really great looking flowers magically appear on a Dahlia plant, for the rest of us.

The following procedures will be explained in more detail in upcoming newsletters, however, here are some of the most important lessons I took away from Ed’s most informative presentation:

- If you can’t plant two of each variety, at least plant like varieties together – this prevents one plant from dwarfing another as they grow
- 2 plants are normally tied to each side of a stake – space stakes at 4 feet for larger varieties
- The process of ‘disbranching’ was finally cleared up for me.
- disbudding for quality blooms

Of course, like all of our successful outdoor seminars and get togethers, this one took place during sunny weather with great amounts of delicious food shared with old and new acquaintances lining the tables on Ed's deck.

Sylvia finally gave in to the many requests for her "Ham Spread" and as a bonus will share a recipe she has for "Bucket Pickles" graciously donated by a friend and amended a wee bit by Sylvia. By the way, she says that you will never make another bread and butter pickle after you have tasted these, "they're glorious"!

Recipes from Sylvia Alley

Ham Spread

1 250gm pkg cream cheese, softened
1 can flakes of ham
1 tsp horseradish
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 green onion, snipped
Blend together all ingredients and chill. Serve with an assortment of crackers.

Bucket Pickles

5 cucumbers (or more) sliced thin. Do not peel; I scored the ends with a fork.
1 Spanish onion peeled sliced and quartered
1 large red pepper diced
4 cups sugar
4 cups white vinegar – I heated the vinegar just enough to dissolve the sugar and added the remaining ingredients:
2 tbsp pickling salt
1 tsp tumeric
1 tsp celery seed
1 tsp mustard seed
Layer in a 4 litre "bucket" (a 4 litre ice cream container works well) and let stand for 2 hours then refrigerate. Stays fresh for 6 months in fridge. Enjoy!

Flower of the Year

The Society normally selects a flower of the year to be showcased at our annual show at the Bedford Place Mall each September. Tubers are provided to exhibitors as much as possible to encourage the growing and promotion of a successful variety. This year, in preparation for the 2005 National Show, hosted by our Society, two flowers have been selected:

Tribune's City of Halifax introduced by Joe Lapierre and **(151, A, SC, BR)**
Onabrook Angel introduced by Dorothy Jones **(230, B, ID, LB Y/P)**

The winning flower at our 2004 show will be selected as the flower of the year for 2005. May the best flower win! Our annual show is tentatively scheduled for 11 Sept 2004, at the Bedford Place Mall, hopefully our biggest and best yet, prior to our hosting of the National Show in 2005...Details and updates to follow.



New To Me

By Arthur Haskins

Here are some varieties that I grew for the first time this year that did quite well in my garden.

Weston Spanish Dancer - just like its cousin, Weston Pirate, this variety produces lots of good quality blooms and is a good tuber maker. This English variety impressed me two years ago when I saw it at the National Show in California and I searched far and wide to get some stock of it for my garden. For those of you who are familiar with the variety, Jessica, then this dahlia is very similar but with a smaller flower. Weston Spanish Dancer is yellow with red tips and is a real knockout, great for the show table, a super cut flower, and perfect for garden display. This variety attracted a lot of attention in my garden this year and is well worth having. This variety will be available for the tuber auction at our meeting in April.

Ivanetti - this variety is a sport of the famous ball dahlia Cornel and it has kept all of the Cornel qualities as a super garden and show flower. The big difference between the two is the colour, Cornel is a medium red while Ivanetti is a very deep purple. I saw a number of entries of this variety at this year's National Show in Ohio, and I think it will grow rapidly in popularity. At the present time it is classified as a red and is in competition with Cornel, but I think it will eventually be classified as a purple and will have to compete against Jessie G. Regardless of where it ends up this is a dahlia to grow, a beautiful purple much like Jessie G but in my garden at least it produces many more flowers than Jessie G. This variety may be available at the spring auction as well, or can be purchased from Ferncliff Gardens in British Columbia.

Gitt's Perfection - Those that appreciate the pure beauty of dahlias will be overwhelmed by Gitt's Perfection. This large informal decorative dahlia that I bought at our auction has short petals that are wide at the base and narrow towards the end and terminate in a blunt end give the dahlia a most interesting look. The colour is nothing short of spectacular, a medium rich pink accented by white makes this dahlia an absolute beauty. Lots of blooms for a large size dahlia, a good tuber maker and a true magnet for visitors to the garden.

Kenora Jubilee - Here is another super introduction from Gordie Leroux out in Washington State. Kenora Jubilee is a nice medium size white semi-cactus which pumps out the flowers like there's no tomorrow. There were many top quality blooms, good form, nice white colour, strong stems and the amount of flower makes it ideal for garden and show display. This is a must for the serious grower and its winning record speaks for itself. This one will also be available at our annual auction in the spring.

Millennium - The best way to describe this dahlia is 'wow'. This medium sized lacinated dahlia is a blend of rosy red and white and the colour is beautiful. No shortage of bloom on this one, it tended to flush with as many as ten blooms at a time and have several of these flushes of bloom throughout the season. If you like lacinated dahlias you gotta have this one.

Calling all Gardeners

All successful societies depend on the participation and generosity of their members for success and in our little club there is no shortage of generous folk, however, we always need:

- the inside dope on tarnish plant bugs, earwigs, slugs, aphids and thrips to name but a few
- Articles, stories and anecdotes
- Hints, tips, tricks, recipes and (s-h-h) secrets from your part of the Province
- Photos, drawings and sketches, and finally the kitchen sink
- **Please, please, please** let us know when a garden show, sale or fair is happening in your area
- What would you like to see?

Miscellany - Members who have an e-mail address are urged to forward it to the editor (me) for inclusion into the mailing list.

My mailing address is: Barry Mackenzie
 634 Myers Point Road
 Head of Jeddore, N.S.
 BOJ1P0
Phone: 889-2423
e-mail address: mackd@eastlink.ca

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month except December, July and August. Refreshments and snacks by members on a rotational basis

Location – Windsor Park Community Centre, 7:30 – 10:00 p.m. If crossing the McKay Bridge, follow the sign to Windsor Street. When you come to the lights at Connaught and Windsor, stay left. Take the first right on Connolly st., turn left at the steam plant (the big silver chimney) and go through the open gate, drive past the curling club through the next open gate. The community center will be on your left with lots of parking available....Or, if you are coming from the other direction, turn left into Windsor Park off Windsor St, take the first right and follow the road past the Auto Club through the open gate. The Community Center will be on your right.

The June meeting is usually held at a member's house at their invitation and our urging, the same goes for the BBQ in July and growing seminars, yum-m. August and September signal the onset

of the summer and fall fairs, usually some of us can be found out and about displaying our flowers, some of which might even be Dahlias.

Important Dates and Things to do:

Jan-Apr 04 - inspect tubers for rot – throughout the winter as required,
– Start cuttings – to increase chances for more stock of a favourite Dahlia

Tech Stuff:

We watch a great gardening call in show every Saturday at noon on the W Channel, hosted by Ken Beatty. If you have a problem with Fungus Gnats (resemble tiny fruit flies) like we do whenever we open a bag of pro-mix, he suggests Safer's "Trounce" for house plants and pouring a little cooking oil down the drain of your sink as that is where they sometimes hatch. I don't know if doing this and having a septic tank is a good idea though. Sure enough, we were leaning over the sink the other night (nothing on TV) when lo and behold some of the little critters were flying out of the drain. He pronounces them 'Guh-nats', which I think is hilarious.

How to take a stem cutting

Start tuber in a flat with gro-mix,

When first shoot reaches 3-4 inches, 3 sets of leaves

Separate shoot from tuber 1/16 inch above tuber with a sharp, clean blade (fig 1 a)

Trim shoot to just below the lowest leaf node and strip off leaves (fig 1b)

You should be left with a shoot with a top set of leaves and leaf nodes at the bottom

Dip the shoot into rooting hormone #1. Plant

Note: if the shoot is long enough, some strip off a second set of leaves, so that what remains is a bottom node, a center node and a top set of leaves (promotes lots 'o tuber growth)

Plant in moist pro-mix below the second set of nodes to encourage rooting at the bottom and the center of the plant

Cover with a plastic bag to retain humidity. Rooting should take place in a few weeks

Many people use coffee/Styrofoam cups with holes punched thru the sides at the bottom to allow drainage. Snip the leaves to encourage rooting and discourage transpiration (moisture loss). A periodic watering or spray with NO-DAMP is recommended. When your little seedling keels over like it was nipped off at soil level, that is "Damping off disease"

Fig 1 a and b



leaves snipped in half



The Dahlia growing year is a challenge to say the least and it's a wonder we are all still sane after some of the "Garden Phenomena" we encounter. Certainly, we question this crazy addiction we have at times for this innocent and beautiful flower. At the end of the growing season, there are always lessons learned which we will apply to next years garden in hopes that barring bad weather, everything will grow perfectly. Still, if I get this Quotation right, "a garden is not a good place for a perfectionist".

Speaking of perfection:



Pictured above is "Dahlia Pinnata" by Pierre Joseph Redoute (1759 – 1840)

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA: 2004 Membership Renewal Form

NSDS dues are \$5.00 single and \$7.00 for family in Cdn funds

Name _____

Single: (\$5.00) _____ **Family: (\$7.00)** _____

Make cheque payable to: the DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

**Mail to : Barry Mackenzie
 634 Myers Point Road
 Head of Jeddore, N.S.
 B0J1P0**