

# Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia

September 2003  
Dandurand

Edited by Nina

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The planting season this year has been a study in patience for some and a puzzle to others. Spring was very wet, it seemed, and the tubers, when they were planted just sit there for such a long time. With the sun finally beginning to shine the dahlias began to produce but many members who gathered for the annual BBQ said that their dahlias were very slow this year. The summer progressed and then we got more rain in August. For a time I really wondered if we needed to buy a boat. As one can see this has been a year to remember.

We took in many flower shows this year in our neck of the woods which did turn out to be lots of fun and a great way to meet new people. Scotian Gold put on a charity flower show where an exhibitor paid to enter and the money went the VON Hospice Charity. This was the first year for this show and it can only get better as the years progress. It was great fun just the same. The prizes were many and all prizes had to do with gardening, which was either a plant of some kind or the ingredients needed to grow it. The big prize was sixty bags of soil amendments in any combination you would like. Please note. Anyone can enter this show in fact it is encouraged with the idea that you don't have to be a "guru" of any kind. The dahlia was promoted there and I look forward to entering next year.

Never having entered shows in this Annapolis area we met lots of really nice people who were so happy to be shown the varieties of dahlia. The Annapolis Valley Exhibition has changed their show schedule to accommodate a much larger list of dahlia entries. This was accomplished in about a ten minute conversation with the show chairperson who was very receptive to the request. So, next year, anyone wishing to enter the Annapolis Valley Exhibition Show only need to preregister. This is done the Thursday before the show and at that time you can pick up the booklet you will need. Also this preregistering is to let them know just how many entries will be entered so they can be sure to have the room. I found everyone very helpful to any request I had. It will be a great way to give the public a view of what can be grown. Anyone wishing more information can contact me as I have agreed to help with their flower committee for next year.

Good news continues in the exhibition end of the society. I was asked last week if I would like to draw up something to show the Windsor Exhibition so dahlias can be shown. This is great for the members in the Halifax area and I will work on that through the winter to see if this is a go. The Flower Committee seems to be ready to consider this direction.

## **Meetings:**

**Held at the Windsor Park Community Center at 8:00 pm, the last Wednesday of every month.**

**These meetings are September - November, January - May. June meetings are held in a member's home. July meeting is a BBQ, August is the Halifax County Exhibition where we hold a dahlia show.**

**For more information please call Nina at 902 847 3255.**

## **Programmes**

**October:** Dividing and packing dahlias.

**November:** Video on Seedlings.

**December:** No meeting. Have a Great Holiday and see you in January

### **DAHLIA SOCIETY ANNUAL BBQ**

The day dawned sunny and the trip to the annual BBQ at Joyce and Eric Higgins' was very pleasant. This year we found that our hosts had an even bigger garden than last year with a large showing of lilies as well as roses and every perennial known to man. This is a must see garden at any time.

The usual cooks did their handy work. Ed, Carol and Mike did the cooking and the rest of us kept checking on them to see how our food was doing. The outside table was groaning with so many different dishes that went along with the chicken, it was really hard to go away hungry. Dessert finished off the meal with coffee or tea for those who wanted it. Thank you again to our hosts, Joyce and Eric Higgins for all their hard work and warm hospitality.

### **BEWARE!!!!**

We learned the hard way this year on the hazards of working in the garden. In a drought situation many insects lack water and their poison is just that much more concentrated. It is very prudent to wear gloves when gardening but many of us are always in a rush so it just gets forgotten. Mike, most times, does have his gloves on but this one time he just reached down to pick up some material to be put in the compost and he was bitten twice by spiders that were snoozing in the pile. He had a swollen hand and a very painful arm and underarm for nearly a week. We were very lucky to have a druggist who was helpful in what was needed but more than anything it has taught us that we always should be careful when outside digging around in the dirt.

### **EDUCATION DAY**

The society had an Education Day at Ed Alley's on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to show us how to disbud, disbranch, and stage dahlias. This was for all members and judges. It was a well prepared program with something for all who attended. Although the day was quite warm, we took in the morning and were treated to a lovely lunch served by Sylvia Alley. Thank you to Ed and Sylvia for having us and all the work they did to prepare for our day.

### **GARDEN TOUR EXTRAVAGANZA**

This tour to the Eastern Shore was fun. Rod Prowse and Barry and Fran MacKenzie opened their gardens for members to enjoy. Well, let me tell you it was a great day to be sure. We started with Rod's garden because it was closer and met some of our members already there. John and Mary Lou Smith, whom we hadn't seen in a while were there poking around. Shortly after we arrived along came Eric and Joyce Higgins. Rod showed us all of his dahlias and some we didn't have which only made us get the pen and paper out to put them on the wish list. John was snapping pictures. A lot of laughing was going on and then Rod invited us in for a beverage and sweets. No one declined and a good time was had by all. Soon after our taking over of his kitchen, in came Joe and Helen LaPierre with lots of happy comments for the day. The weather was certainly with us giving bright sunshine and warm breezes.

The next stop was Barry and Fran's. There have been a lot of changes since I had last visited so there was much to see. I know that Fran showed me every plant and I didn't miss one. Barry had been a busy person taking out stumps and arranging a new area near his greenhouse he had built last year. He is expanding like all of us and it makes a very lovely picture when you enter the road that leads to their house. We also were treated to a drink and comfy lawn chairs which made us not want to go home. All in all it was a great

day with our hosts working so hard to show both gardens in the area of the Eastern Shore. Thank you all of you, Rod, Barry and Fran so much for a pleasant and relaxing visit.

### **VETERANS GARDEN**

Norm Prowse gave a report on the Veteran's Garden. This is a project the Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia has taken on with Norm keeping an ever watchful eye on what the garden was producing. He told the membership that this year was the best ever for this venture with blooms coming from mid July onward. There were many cut flowers taken into the hospital for the veterans from the garden all summer long. In September some of the blooms were entered in the Bedford ADS show and several ribbons were realized. Not only the ribbons but in the small growers class the Camp Hill Veteran's Hospital took the Best Small Grower, a waterlily, "Figurine" to the Court of Honour. This was well received and delighted all the Veterans and the hospital staff and so it should. Thank you so much Norm, for working on this with us and helping the patients have a bright spot in their daily lives.

There will be a work party to dig out the dahlias at the garden the first Saturday of November. Anyone who wishes to participate is more than welcome. This will start about 10:00 am and it seems it will not take a great deal of time. See you there.

### **STORING DAHLIAS**

The time has come to dig and store the dahlias you have grown for the year. A good thing to do now is consider which dahlias you were not too pleased with and discard them. This will give you room for new ones that you may wish to try next year.

When digging tubers be very careful not to slice into the tuber as you dig. Give yourself lots of room to lift the tuber out of the ground with the shovel. Gently, and I do mean gently, tap the soil off the tubers being careful not to break the necks of the tubers attached to the stem. After you have done this, tag the clump of tubers before you start to wash it off. This way you will not be second guessing yourself as to which is which. The next step is to wash the tubers off trying to get them as clean as possible then let them dry before you start to cut them up. Some people would like to store them uncut and that is your choice. Personally, I find it much better to cut the tubers up in the fall. They seem to be easier to cut than in the spring.

Leave the tubers for a day before storing them which will enable them to dry off from the cutting you have done. After you have cut one specific clump of tubers sterilize your cutters in TSP and rinse with water so that you will not spread any diseases from one clump to the other. When they are dried and ready to put away make sure every tuber has a name on it so that you can identify it in the spring. This can be done with a Sharpie pen. The next step is to place the tubers in the storing medium. I use and prefer vermiculate because I have had great success each time I have used it. When February arrives, open your storage containers and check the tubers for any rot. Remove the rot and restore until it is time to prepare your dahlias for planting.

### **IT HAS BEEN A SLICE**

The time has come for me to pass the job of this newsletter on to another person. Since I have moved I have become involved with so many things that I really had to make some choices in that regard. The summer has taught me people in this area would like to grow more dahlias so I want to help them do just that. With the 2005 show looming on the horizon I also would like to free more of my time to prepare for that great adventure.

You are going to be very pleased with the new editor of this newsletter. Barry MacKenzie has volunteered

to take on the task but I must comment on how lucky we are to have him do this. He is an accomplished writer who likes to research and expand many ideas. Everyone will be very pleased with the direction he is going to take the newsletter. Thank you all so much for letting me put into the newsletter, these last years, what I thought you would like to read. - submitted by Nina Dandurand