

## The Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia Quarterly Newsletter – Oct 04



Summer? We could say, what a summer! Or, we could say, what summer? It all depends on your point of view. According to one of our local news channels, the Farmers Almanac beat Environment Canada's forecast on just about all counts and their forecasts were mainly opposite to one another which is odd. I must say this is the first summer in many a year that we weren't trucking what seemed like barrels of water out into the garden. Yet, in some parts of the province there was many a good dry spell. Cold for the longest time, we were beginning to wonder if summer was ever going to arrive. We did have some nice days mind you, however, according to my calculations summer didn't really arrive until sometime in late August. Known as a chronic complainer, my words of course, must be taken with a grain of salt. I must say that the garden has not looked better than it has this year with some Dahlias standing a foot tall and others at seven feet, with nice blooms and great stems.

We said good-bye to our good friend Doug Verge on August 3. The attendance for the funeral at St Michaels Anglican Church was close to being standing room only and was a wonderful testament as to just how much he was loved by family, admired and respected by his friends. Every spring, in a small room in the basement, he would start his "Tubulers" so as to take cuttings from each. His unique grow light setup ensured the healthy cuttings would go to the garden in good shape for the summer. He will be missed by his friends in the Society.

### Summer Report

A beautiful sunny day greeted us as we made our way to the summer BBQ at the home of Eric and Joyce Higgins. As always it was a great opportunity to renew old acquaintances and meet new people. The food was delicious and many recipes will be swapped. Of course the afternoon passed all too quickly with just not enough time to meet and talk with everyone. Heather Drope showed us how to prune a Grape vine. The gardens were outstanding. Next year, we'll just have to go for breakfast and stay for supper, I guess.

We missed the growing seminar at Ed and Sylvia Alley's which was a great disappointment. (Somebody locked his keys in the car). Even without the refresher course in Dahlia care, it was also a great opportunity to share great food and of course renew old friendships. Fellowship makes Dahlia growing and gardening all the more fun and I hope that our Seminars continue.

### Speaking of Recipes

#### Sylvia's Broccoli Salad

Fry and crumble ½ lb. Bacon ( set aside)  
1 bunch broccoli, cut small  
1 cup raisins

#### Fran's German Potato Salad

18 small potatoes  
3 slices bacon-cut in cubes  
1 rounded tbsp flour

1 ½ cups green grapes ( cut in two)  
1 bunch green onions, chopped  
1 ½ cups celery ( cut small)  
½ cup slivered almonds  
- add bacon and almonds just before serving

1 tbsp butter  
¼ cup vinegar  
¾ cup water  
¼ cup sugar  
1 tbsp salt  
½ tsp pepper  
1 small onion

**DRESSING:**

1 cup mayonnaise  
1/3 cup sugar  
1 Tablespoon vinegar  
Toss into salad.

Cook potatoes until soft. Peel and slice.  
Add sliced onion. Fry bacon until golden  
brown. Remove from pan. To the bacon  
To the bacon fat, add the butter and flour. Stir and add  
vinegar, water, sugar, salt and pepper. Let come to a boil  
and pour over potatoes. Sprinkle bacon bits on top. Serves  
4-6

**Lemon Cream Scones:**

2 cups all purpose flour  
1 tbsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/4 cup (about 4 ounces) chopped, dried apricots  
grated zest of 1 large lemon  
1 1/4 to 1 1/2 cups heavy cream (whipping cream)  
confectioners sugar for dusting  
whipping cream to serve (optional)

**METHOD:**

Preheat the oven to 425deg. Lightly flour a large baking sheet. Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a large bowl. Stir in the sugar, dried apricots, and grated lemon zest and make a well in the center. Add 1 1/4 cups of the cream, and stir lightly until a soft dough forms, adding a little more cream if necessary. Form into a rough ball and place on a floured surface. Knead 5 or 6 times until JUST combined. Pat dough out into a 1/4 inch thickness and cut with a biscuit cutter or any design you prefer. Bake until risen and golden about 10 to 14 minutes. Transfer to a cooling rack and gently dust with icing sugar.

Now for those of you, (and Barry we won't say who) who want directions on preparing the strawberries for this shortcake: First you must find a field of large luscious ripe strawberries to pick. Once you've eaten some, (just to make sure that they are sweet enough), then you rush home with your precious boxes and give them a gentle wash. Then hull the sweet gems and slice some of them in a bowl. You can crush some too, just to make them nice and mushy. Add a bit of sugar if you wish, but this is not really necessary unless you have a really sweet tooth.

Now for the fun part. Take one of those lemon-cream scones and split it in half through the center. Load on some of the strawberries, some whipped cream, and the top of the scone. Finish it with more strawberries and whipped cream. Pull yourself up to the table with a nice cup of hot tea or cold milk and savor every mouthful. ENJOY!!

Lil Girroir (Dave Steele's best half) **Ed Note:** Do we note a bit of sarcasm here....

## The Shows

**Halifax Westmoor Horticultural Society** - Best in Show-Kari Fruit Salad;

### **Halifax County Exhibition 2004 - *Dahlia Show Results***

This year's show despite the prolonged cold period this spring provided a beautiful display of dahlias for the public to view. Thanks goes out to all the exhibitors who brought what they had in their gardens to make the display. Special thanks goes out to Eric and Joyce Higgins and George and Ruth Graham who arrange the setting up and breakdown of the show as well as looking after supervision during the four day display. The top winners are listed below. It as certainly nice to see some newer exhibitors at the show and a number of novice entries. There were 308 blooms on display.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>
Dec over 8in	Elsie Huston	Ed Alley
Dec 6-8in	Hamilton Lillian	Ed Alley
Dec 4-6in	Hy Sockeye	Sylvia Alley <b><u>Best Decorative</u></b>
Dec under 4in	Rose Toscano	Ed Alley
Cactus over 8in	Camano Sitka	Ed Alley
Cactus 4-6in	Brent Andrew	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Cactus</u></b>
Cactus under 4in	Glenbank Twinkle	George Graham
Semi-Cactus over 8in	Klondike	Arthur Haskins
Semi-Cactus 6-8in	Sunlight Pastelle	Barry Mackenzie
Semi-Cactus 4-6in	Dana Iris	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Semi Cactus</u></b>
Semi-Cactus under 4in	Mary Jo	George Graham
Laciniated 6-8in	Nova Elewyn	Barry Mackenzie <b><u>Best Lac</u></b>
Laciniated 4-6in	Pinelands Princess	Fran Mackenzie
Ball	Mary's Jomanda	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Ball</u></b>
Mini Ball	Hy Suntan	Ed Alley
Pompon	Master Michael	Ed Alley <b><u>Best Pom</u></b>
Waterlily	Juul's Lotus	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best WL</u></b>
Mignon	Topmix Sweetheart	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Mignon</u></b>
Collarette	Sylvia J	Sylvia Alley <b><u>Best Collarette</u></b>
Orchid	Marie Schnugg	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Orchid</u></b>
Any Other Formation	Fidalgo Julie	Fran Mackenzie <b><u>Best OF</u></b>
Largest Bloom	Belle of Barmera	Ed Alley <b><u>Largest</u></b>
Novice Grower	Rose Toscano	Arthur Stewart
Basket - Decorative	Gay Princess	George Graham
Basket - Cactus	Jane	Ed Alley
Basket - Waterlily	Suitsus Julie	Arthur Haskins <b><u>Best Basket</u></b>
Basket - Ball	Robin Hood	Ed Alley
Basket- Pompon	Yellow Baby	George Graham

The BEST ENTRY in show was the ball dahlia "Mary's Jomanda" exhibited by Arthur Haskins

## Truro Exhibition

There was a great turnout by many Society members but unfortunately due to the placement of the blooms on very high Exhibition Benches, it made it very difficult to record the results. Beautiful blooms and baskets made everyone a winner.

## Annual Show Bedford Place Mall

September 10&11, 2004 · Bedford Place Mall, Halifax, Nova Scotia · Chairman: Arthur Haskins

This years show had a total 392 entries, diminished to about half the norm, perhaps due to a summer that never arrived until August, a bounty of earwigs and tarnish plant bugs, ... Some of us believe many are bluffing and saving their energy for a full salvo at our 2005 ADS National Show, September 1 to 4, 2005 at the Westin Hotel, Halifax. Thanks to all the exhibitors, chair and volunteers who make the show a superb display this and every year!

John Proctor, ADS Rep

Name of Prize	Name of Dahlia	Exhibitor	Name of Prize	Name of Dahlia	Exhibitor
King of Show	Sir Alf Ramsey	Dorothy Jones	BA	Brookside Snowball	George Graham
Queen of Show	Hamari Accord	Ed Alley	MBA	Odyssey	Cecil Dexter
Prince of Show	Worton Blue Streak	Sylvia Alley	POM	Yellow Baby	Dorothy Jones
Princess of Show	Rose Toscano	Cecil Dexter	Stellar	Primrose Pet	Ed Alley
Duke of Show	Primrose Pet	Ed Alley	Waterlily	September Moon	Sylvia Alley
Duchess of Show	Yellow Baby	Walter Jones	Peony	Longwood Dainty	Carol Dexter
Best AA	Sir Alf Ramsey	Dorothy Jones	Anemone	Goldie Gull	Carol Dexter
AA FD	Clyde's Choice	Ed Alley	Collarette	Sylvia J	Ed Alley
AA ID	Sir Alf Ramsey	Dorothy Jones	Best Single	--	
AA SC	Inland Dynasty	Ed Alley	Beat Mignon	--	
AA C	Hy Mariam	Carol Dexter	Orchid	Honka	Carol Dexter
AA L	--		NO	--	
Best A	Kenora Wildfire	Ed Alley	NX	Akito no Hikari	Cecil Dexter
A FD	Elma Elizabeth	Ed Alley	Best 3 bloom	Billy	Ed Alley
A ID	Spartacus	Cecil Dexter	Best 5 bloom	2000-09	Carol Dexter
A SC	Kenora Wildfire	Ed Alley	3 AA	--	
A C	Camano Messenger	David Steele	3 A	Spartacus	Ed Alley
A L	Show 'n' Tell	Barry Mackenzie	3 B	Berwick Wood	Ed Alley
Best B	Hamari Accord	Ed Alley	3 BB	Hy Rosa	Carol Dexter
B FD	Castle Drive	Sylvia Alley	3 M	Billy	Ed Alley
B ID	April Dawn	Carol Dexter	3 BA	Hy Mallow	George&Ruth Graham
B SC	Hamari Accord	Ed Alley	3 MBA	--	
B C	Kenora Majestic	Ed Alley	3 Pom	Frank Holmes	Alan&Joan Randall
B L	Tribune City of Dartmouth	Joe Lapierre	3 Other Forms	Honka	Carol Dexter
Best BB	Worton Blue Streak	Sylvia Alley	3 Waterlily	Ken's Rarity	Carol Dexter
BB FD	Hy Sockeye	Ed Alley	Basket	Taratahi Lilac	Ed Alley
BB ID	Chilson's Pride	Dorothy Jones	2004 Intro	Tribune Hey Jude	Joe Lapierre
BB SC	Worton Blue Streak	Sylvia Alley	Arrangement	Oriental Expressions	Ed Alley
BB C	Scarborough Brilliant	Carol Dexter	Flower of the Year	Islander	Ed Alley
BB L	Nova Laird	Ed Alley	Canadian Intro	Nova Evelyn	Ed Alley
Best M	Rose Toscano	Cecil Dexter	1st Yr.Seedling	05-2004	Dorothy Jones
M FD	Rose Toscano	Cecil Dexter	ADS Seedling	--	
M ID	Brookside Cooley	Dorothy Jones	Novice Grower	L'Anresse	John O'Neil
M SC	Mary Jo	Cecil Dexter	Nova Scotia Intro	Sylvia J	Ed Alley
M C	Weston Pirate	Cecil Dexter	Largest Blue Ribbon Winner	Belle of Barmera	Ed Alley
M L					

## **A.D.S. National Show in Seattle by: Arthur Haskins**

The day started at 4:00am with a trip to the airport to catch my flight to the West Coast to take in the American Dahlia Society National Show being held in Seattle. A short flight to Toronto and through US Customs, and then on to Seattle. The five hour flight did not seem that long with an inflight movie and of course a scrumptious breakfast of pretzels and peanuts, you could buy a hot breakfast for some outrageous price but I passed as most others did on the plane (another great idea from Air Canada that bombed). As the plane banked to make its approach to the Seattle Airport I got a great view of snow covered Mount Renier, quite spectacular, and an indication of the beauty of this city.

I arrived at the Hilton Hotel where the show was being held at about 11:00am Pacific time and decided to get something to eat as the pretzels and peanuts had worn off long ago. In the lobby I met up with some dahlia friends from Kentucky, Betty and Chip Willburn and we decided to travel downtown and get some of the local cuisine. We decide to take the local transit which took us down on the waterfront to the City Market, wow!, what a place. The building was quite old and had multiple floors and each one was packed with vendors selling everything from flowers to fresh fish to jewelry to leather jackets. The sights and smells were fantastic, and yes there were a number of restaurants and we settled into one with a great view of the harbour and ordered a local favorite, clam chowder served in a sour dough bread bowl. After lunch, time was spent viewing the many stalls especially the flowers, there were people making off with both large and small bouquets of flowers and most of them had some dahlias in them. To see a flower stand about six feet deep and twenty five feet long and a solid carpet of colour is quite spectacular, and there were several of these in the market.

Then it was back to the hotel and a chance to meet many other dahlia friends that I had not seen since last years show. Thursday evening featured a Hospitality Evening and featured a selection of various cheesecakes and refreshments. I met up with Sylvia and Ed Alley who were munching on some of the wonderful cheesecake and coffee. This was a chance to meet old dahlia friends and to encourage them to come back to Nova Scotia for the National Show next year in Halifax. Many indicated they were planning to come as they enjoyed the last show held here so much. The next few days were busy with the bus tour on Friday which visited three wonderful dahlia gardens as well as the dahlia trial garden at Point Defiance Park. . Lots of new varieties to see and some older ones that we have not grown made the tour quite informative. Saturday saw everyone up bright and early to see the exhibits and to begin the judging. Terrible weather hit the area a few days before the show but they still managed to have over 4000 blooms on display, and there was excellent quality of blooms as well as numbers. Some of the top winners were Embrace, Cornel, Barberry Red Dwarf, Mascot Maya, Chimacum Troy, Camano Pet, Aitara Cloud, Northwest Cosmos, and Valley Porcupine. Many fabulous 50 dahlias won blue ribbons, but some new ones made an impact as well. The afternoon after judging was filled with several workshops and talks by a number of world class dahlia personalities. I had a chance to talk about the different styles of making dahlia baskets with one of the best on the West Coast, Vivian Connell. The panel discussions were very interesting listening to growers from other parts of world and how they promote dahlias in their country. Saturday evening we enjoyed a wonderful banquet and awards presentations. I had the opportunity at the ceremony to invite everyone to come to Halifax for next years show, and I think everyone said they were coming. Sunday featured morning meeting on classification of dahlias followed by the Annual Meeting. Then it was off again on the buses to visit some more dahlia gardens, one of which had been underwater just a few days before. It was sloppy going between the rows but to see some of the new varieties, well worth it.

Monday morning Sylvia, Ed and I strolled down the street to a very interesting restaurant called the Seven Coins, named after some sort of stupid fairytale or something? Anyway the Eggs Benedict and coffee were great. The trip was over much too quickly, we headed to the airport to catch our flight back to the East Coast, only to learn there was an hour delay in our plane leaving Toronto which was to pick us up and take us back.. No problem! We had a two hour stopover there anyway, arriving in Toronto we learned that a security breach in

Halifax was to delay our flight by another hour, putting us in at around 1am. There's something to be said for walking everywhere you go. Despite the delays we all had a wonderful time visiting a beautiful city, seeing our dahlia friends, and of course taking part in a dahlia show that is second to none, in what is the hot bed of dahlia growing in North America. The Federation of North West Dahlia Growers which is made up of about 14 Dahlia Societies put on a fabulous show with super hospitality, and deserves a pat on the back for a job well done.

## Letters, we've got Letters

I've received two letters so far on the topic of "how I got started in Dahlias", which will be included in forthcoming newsletters. The first was received from Marjorie Fowler. It was hand written on pink lined paper with a flowery design at the top. I was so touched at actually receiving a hand written letter that I tried and tried to scan it into the newsletter. Unfortunately it took up too much space, so here is the typed version.

Dear Barry:

Responding to Rod Prowse's "What bit you" suggestion for items for future articles, here is my recollection of how I got started growing Dahlias. Perhaps you can use it. I've enjoyed belonging to the Dahlia Society and got to know some great people. I hope someone will take up your challenge to do a brief history. Sincerely, Marjorie Fowler.

When I grew up in Lunenburg, Dahlias weren't grown in many gardens - perhaps a few of the old red ones with weak necks. One of the first flower shows of the Westmoor Horticultural Society was staged in the small shed on the Larry O'Connell Field on Chebucto Road. I can vividly remember when Wilf Armstrong (who then lived in Dartmouth) arrived with a stunning display of Dahlias, mostly large Cactus and Decorative varieties. I was amazed at their size and beautiful colours and no doubt was "hooked" on growing them. Wilf brought slides of his gorgeous blooms to several district meetings and encouraged us to grow and exhibit them. After the Dahlias Society was organized, I started a Dahlia bed and acquired some of the Tubers available which I grew with modest success, and eventually was brave enough to exhibit a few of them. Later, I joined the ADS (American Dahlia Society) and became a judge. During the 90's, John and I attended several ADS shows in the Eastern USA plus the ones in Hamilton, Ontario and Vancouver, BC. These shows were the highlights of our vacations. We still grow between 25 and 30 dahlias - in the same bed, but now John has to do 90% of the work involved. We look forward to seeing how they turn out this year. Marjorie E Fowler.  
Thanks Marjorie, I'm sure everyone will appreciate your letter as much as I did.

## Tips and Tricks

We met fellow members Earnest and Fran Wilson at the Bedford Show. They were down for a visit from their home in Sydney BC. They had to shield their flowers from the sun this year as there was just too much of it. Poor dears. Anyway, here is the tip of the year. Earnest takes an empty soup can, stuffs some Kleenex in it and then he inverts it onto his Dahlia stake. The next morning he goes from plant to plant, emptying earwigs into a bucket of water as he goes. Manny Baker discovered the same thing quite by accident using a flower pot.

Nicholas Laffin from Bras D'or has a super fall tip. He spread spruce boughs on his garden in the fall and took them off in the spring. The needles that stayed behind must have had an effect on the soil because both his potatoes and Dahlias did well with no damage from cutworms or wireworms. I called Nicholas as I had never heard of this one before and he told me that the critters were actually lying dead on the ground.

## To Lime or not to Lime

Last fall as we prepared our beds for winter I thought that since I had never done it before, perhaps now would be a good time to spread lime on the garden. Thinking for a change, I dug up some soil samples and took them up to the Agricultural College in Truro. They cost \$12.50 each. A few weeks later I received a detailed report in the mail advising me that I had low phosphorus fertility in the one sample and medium fertility in the other sample. (different gardens) They made recommendations for which fertilizer to use and how much. Because my soil Ph was 6.3 and 6.5 for each sample, they suggested that I should **not** put limestone into my gardens for a couple of years, wow. In Nova Scotia it is kind of a fall custom to lime....For a soil Test Report of your own or for information, please call:

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Quality Evaluation Division

Laboratory Services

PO Box 550

Truro NS B2N 5E3

Tel: (902) 893-7444

FAX: (902) 893-4193

E-mail: [larsima@gov.ns.ca](mailto:larsima@gov.ns.ca)

Web Page : <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/qe/analytical/soilsamp.htm>

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The busy time of the Exhibition season is over. The blooms are available for all, with no cutting restrictions or rules; no special "don't touch that one" blooms. You've eased up on the heavy disbudding. Fantastic bounty. Then the rains begin . . . and stop . . . and the blooms return . . . and on . . . and on . . .and then the frost.

I find that I'm always quite ready for the end of the blooming season. It's not a sad time at all. Rather it's an exciting opportunity to see what the UNDER-GROUND HARVEST has produced. Those fabulous tubers that the Dahlia makes so freely. Well usually there is a good crop, but it is never certain! What will you find when you dig? What about that new, expensive one that bloomed so well? Will you be able to plant lots of it next year? There seems to be some mystery about digging and storing Dahlias, but it is very easy. This is what to do.

Cut off the top growth. Leave a few inches of stem exposed above ground to act as a handle and as a place to tie the variety label. Some folks move the stake label to the stem right away, even before digging. Remove the stake. The stem should not be full of water, nor hollow enough that water could fill it. If it is water filled, you must dig immediately and trim the stem back to solid tissue. Sometimes rot will have already produced those brown streaks that extend into the healthy white tissue of the tuber. This is a bad sign. If the variety is replaceable, give up and discard it on the spot. Benomyl CAN work, and I'll try it if I have to. Now I've gone and scared you! Well, unless you have brutally disbranched or cut extremely long stemmed blooms, you will not get this problem in normal cultivation, so relax.

The tubers are quite safe in the soil for a week or two as long as the ground does not freeze. Some people like to divide their garden tasks into stages and cut down and clean up at one time, and then dig a few days later(after a rest!). Many feel that the eyes plump up a bit and are easier to see. I don't like to leave them like that myself, so I dig in small sections of 10 or 15 clumps immediately after topping.

Use a spade or shovel, round or straight edge, but with a good strong handle. Do not use a garden fork. A fork won't cut the fine roots free and much more damage will be done. Insert the spade straight down about 9 inches

out from the stalk and continue around in a circle. Then work the spade in and under and lever the whole mass up. Not too much. If it is stuck, you will have to spade around again and cut all the feeder roots. When free, push down on the handle some more and if you are strong enough, lift the whole mass out of its hole and, while still on the shovel, bounce it gently once or twice to get rid of some dirt. If it is too heavy, most of the dirt can be removed with your fingers and judicious small shaking movements using the stalk as a handle - and then lift it. Clean away any easily removed soil and set aside. Dig another one. Etc . . . Don't forget to label them! This is where the crowd will split into different treatment techniques depending upon many very important personal differences.

Technique #1. Leave the dirt on. Let dry. It is very important to do the drying in a COOL area to prevent shriveling. The dry soil will largely fall away. Trim the stem and all surplus & long, thin roots. If you have a root cellar or frost free, dirt floored shed, this will be sufficient - in fact it is ideal! Perhaps a covering of newspaper and/or a dusting of fungicide. This is Ferncliff Garden's technique (our major local specialist grower). Cutting the clump into separate tubers can be done at any time, however it is critically important to allow a COOL drying/healing/callusing time. Remember - the tuber is a living, growing thing. Give it a chance to heal.

Technique #2. Wash the dirt off. Let dry. A cool drying period is so important. It is probably the one thing that most determines successful storage. Cutting the clump into individual tubers is best postponed for a few days to allow the development of a tough surface skin. Cool, but no frost of course. Then divide. Chemicals can be used at this point, but many are finding that nothing, or perhaps some Sulphur, is quite sufficient. I find it convenient to pass the cut tubers through a wettable sulphur bath because I want them wet anyway so that I can write their name on them with an Indelible Pencil. Let dry & heal for at least a few days. Once properly dried and cured and with healed cuts, the tubers can stand amazingly warm conditions without shriveling. I have had tubers in a shed all summer that are still plump in August! The Dahlia survives its wild Mexican dry dormant season because of the WATER that it stores. Proper curing is the key. Give the natural survival mechanisms a chance.

Once you have divided, I recommend Vermiculite & plastic bags for convenient storage. I have tried SAND - too heavy! Peat Moss - too drying! Soil - too variable. The clear plastic vegetable bags at the supermarket are excellent and big enough to hold a typical divided clump. Add a 4 inch pot of dry vermiculite - the bag doesn't have to be full, but full is OK. The purpose is to create a micro environment of dry Mexican mountain soil. If spoilage does occur the vermiculite soaks up the released juices and largely prevents the spread of disease. Do take a look once in a while, through the clear plastic bag. Don't tie it, just fold over firmly. Wear a Filter Mask when working with vermiculite or perlite. They are cheap insurance. Get some. I mark the bag with labeled masking tape and pack them into grape boxes. 18 boxes = 300 clumps and about 2000 tubers.

Some have tried coating with wax to help keep the tubers from drying out. The key element for safety is to use a double boiler. Easily made or bought at a second hand store. The wax never gets hotter than boiling water. Use a tongs of some sort. Tubers MUST be surface dry and cured is even better, so that subsequent shrinkage will not promote wax cracking.

Place the tuber into the hot wax and immediately pick it up with the tongs, hold to drip for a couple of seconds, place onto newspaper. Roll a variety up in newspaper cabbage rolls. Write on the outside. Keep as cool as possible - not freezing. Tubers treated this way are a bit more tolerant of warmer storage. Some claim slower starting in the spring, but I dispute this. I have stopped doing it as my storage is cool enough not to need it. Waxed tubers are wonderfully clean to handle! Also, the occasional rotted one is somewhat contained by its shell, and neighbours are protected by theirs.

My storage is in an unheated basement room that also serves as a wine cellar.

During the whole digging/cutting season you should keep a note pad handy and jot down a few things.

- those with LONG tubers that need a bigger digging circle next year!
- those which make skinny, poor tubers that you DON'T want to use for breeding.
- the perfect tuber types that you DO want to breed.
- the few tubers that will need special, early treatment in the spring. Maybe special starts in pots or perhaps those which will be used to take cuttings.
- if you are really organized you could note how many you have of each variety. Maybe on the masking tape on each bag? This makes planning for your club tuber sale a lot easier.

You are bound to break or spoil a few, but never mind, everybody does! You'll have plenty.

If you only need a few for next year you can take a chance and leave them in the ground, with a really good layer of mulch, and dig and divide in the spring. Maybe you'll be lucky . . . lots of people are, but the better varieties are often the least tolerant of waterlogged conditions. And you will miss the excitement of seeing just what has grown under the ground. And then there is that 'Pot Root' idea, but that is another article. Good digging!



**How we did it:** Notice the plump eyes that that will become next year's flower on the top photo. Separate the tubers from the main stem, ensuring that you have eyes on each tuber. Discard the "Mother" tuber (dark brown tuber in second photo). Tools we use are tree loppers, pruning saw, box-cutter type knife and pruners. Some tubers slice off quite nicely with a sharp knife, others, dynamite. Once they have dried for an hour, maybe a

few, you will be able to write the variety name on each tuber with a permanent marker, sharpie pen, or indelible pencil if you prefer. As mentioned in the article above, the tubers must be given time to heal/cure. Usually, after 24 hours, the tuber should be dry and firm to the touch, if not wait longer if necessary. Many people use a small amount of vermiculite or peat moss in a sandwich bag to store their tubers. Last year, what really worked well for us was layering our tubers in a large plastic container with a lid (3feet long, 16 inches wide, 15 inches high), purchased at Home Depot or Wal-Mart. A layer of vermiculite on the bottom, a layer of tubers, keeping them away from the sides and ensuring they didn't touch one another, all the way to the top, finishing with a layer of Vermiculite. We hardly lost any, which is almost 100% better than we did the year before, considering the crazy temperature fluctuations in our basement last fall and winter.

Well, another season has come to an end and what a season it was. Weather seemed rather extreme this year and I still have a question as to whether summer ever arrived. Now it's time to put things to bed for the winter and have a nice rest from our hard summer work. Everyone is pretty much Dahlied out right about now but once the Catalogs start arriving over the winter and we order that next prize winning tuber, the excitement will return. We'll see you at the Dahlia meetings where it's always fun to visit with those you haven't seen for awhile. Our next Newsletter will be in January, talk to you then.

**DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA: 2004 Membership Renewal Form**  
**DSNS dues are \$5.00 single and \$7.00 for family in Cdn funds**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **APT** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/Town** \_\_\_\_\_

**Province/State** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Code/Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone and or E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Make check payable to: The DAHLIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA**

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