

VANCOUVER DAHLIA SOCIETY

Promoting Dahlia Growing Since 1955

Bulletin 4

July – August 2008



Our Website is now
www.vancouverdahlia.com

Next Meetings:

July 16, 2008
August 20, 2008

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE * WALLY KURTH

We have had a late start this year when it comes to planting our 'jewel' dahlias. Most are about two weeks late – the cold, wet weather certainly delayed planting time in May. With the lovely weather as of late June, dahlias are screaming - 'I'm beautiful ... I'm coming!' Each day you can see the plants becoming stronger and healthier. Each one of them has the desire to be on display at one of the many federation dahlia shows. Our dahlia show will be held on August 30th & 31st, 2008.

We have had some outstanding feature presentations at our general meetings. The last two meetings featured Maria Keating and Joan Fairs. Maria made us aware of the value of not removing the larva of ladybugs and lacewings – although rather ugly looking, they are a definite benefit to the plant. Joan made us aware of the art of Ikebana. She inspired us to attempt flower arrangements so that the beauty of shape and design will highlight dahlias and other plants in a pleasing and inspiring form.

We will be featuring *Paul Bloomquist* at our July general meeting. He will focus on pollination, hybridization and seedlings. Paul has originated numerous dahlias over the past ten years. Most of us will have at least one of his

dahlia originations in our garden - i.e. Bloomquist Dawn, Bloomquist Delight, Bloomquist Sparkle, Bloomquist Elizabeth etc. So, please plan to attend and bring a friend. It should be a great program!

In August we will inspire you to prepare you for our annual show. We will have demonstrations on preparing vases, baskets and bowls. This is also a 'must' program that will expand your dahlia exhibition skills! So, keep on watering, feeding and singing to your 'loved ones' [*dahlias*] as much as needed. Dahlias respond to affection and caring. They love to be shown off to neighbours, friends and strangers. Once someone is hooked on growing the most beautiful flower, '*the Dahlia*', there is no turning back!

We will see you at the *July 16th general meeting at 7:30 pm*. Hopefully some of you will want to join many of us at the Judging Workshops in Mount Vernon on July 26th. We will also have a special dahlia staging workshop and clerking class for beginners in our area so that you will have an opportunity to be more informed about what is involved in preparation for the dahlia show. Information is forthcoming. Happy growing!

The VDS meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, except January, November and December in the Floral Hall at the VanDusen Botanical Garden at 7:30 p.m.

Final Tuber Sale Report

Vera Williamson & Tina McNabb

Because of the generosity of many growers, we had an outstanding tuber sale year! The following is a run-down of all sales and expenses.

Sales

Spring Tuber Sale - Apr 5/6	\$ 12,055.00
Burnaby Rhodo Fest - May 4	\$ 483.00
Auction - Apr 16)	<u>\$ 201.00</u>
Total sales	\$ 12,739.00

Expenses

Growers	\$ 5,789.00
Hall Rental	\$ 445.00
Printing and postage	\$ 33.00
Prize coupons	\$ 29.00
Donuts and coffee	\$ 62.00
Sellers lists/signs/tuber sale cards	\$ 90.00
Video	\$ 50.00
Table Rental (Rhodo Festival)	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 6,548.00

Net Profit

\$ 6,191.00



A very special thanks go to: Rosalee Hing, who donated all the tubers for our “Bargain Tubers”; Lance Rogers & Amy, who donated Kathy’s tubers to the Club; Club Volunteers, who dug and divided Kathy’s tubers; Don & Claire Nash, for donating all the new bags for the tuber sale; Richard Zuk, for compiling statistics from previous and current tuber sales and Ralph Kuiper who compiled our “sellers” price list.

Also a big thank you to the growers who donated their tubers for the Rhodo Sale: K & D Pitre, Vittorio Fontana, Dave McIntosh, Vera Williamson, Norm Sharp, Merle Boyes, Bonnie Nagel, Rosalee Hing, Wally Kurth, Sue Croft, Robin Blackmore, The Stewarts, The Rollies, the Zuks and the Stachs.

Our “Auction” is a fun and competitive bidding for “hard to find” and very “expensive” tubers. The growers that donated these tubers deserve our special thanks.

Vittorio & Angela Fontana - *Vian Vera* Min ID Y and *Vian Shrimp* BB C PK;
 Gordon & Jeanette Stach - *Amethyst Glow* M FD DP and *Maxine* S OR
 Walt & Cory Wynne - *Wyn’s Spicy* A IC LT BL and *Wyn’s Sunnyside* B ID Y
 Paul & Cheryl Howard - *Parkland Tribute* BB FD DP; *Comet* AN DR and *Staleen*
Condessa B SC L

Ken & Susan Birchmore - *Aitara Diadem* BB FD BI

Maggie Cajar - *Vassio Meggos* A ID L

Carole & Gary Rollie - *Tahoma Crystal* ST W

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Finally, we gratefully thank the many volunteers that spent their time and efforts in setting up, providing refreshments, selling, tabulating, taking down and cleaning up at the tuber sale.

Vancouver Dahlia Society Annual Show August 30 & 31, 2008 Volunteers Needed!

Plans are underway for the annual show. Volunteers are needed for a number of jobs. Show set-up starts on Friday August 29th at 5 p.m. It takes about two hours to set up the show. Show clean-up starts immediately after show closing on Sunday, August 31st.

Volunteers are also needed for clerking, ribbons, door, information and membership table and cut flower sales. 6 people for about 2 hours are needed to help set up and clean up for the lunch.

There will be sign-up sheets at the July and August meeting. If there is something you would like to do in particular, please contact Betty at 604 431 8611 or Richard and Jennifer at 604 294 0237.

Many hands make light work, and all assistance is appreciated, whether it be for an hour or two or the entire show!

Clerking and Showing Workshop and BBQ Lunch

Sunday August 3 - 9:30 am to 2:30 pm
At the McNabb Residence
15475 84A Ave Surrey, BC

We will be having a workshop for new exhibitors on Sunday morning from 9:30 to 11:45. If you have never shown at a show before, this is the workshop for you. Topics will include cutting, staging, filling out tags and transporting those precious blooms to the show.

We will have a BBQ lunch, following by the clerking class at 1 pm. Clerking is a great experience, and no previous show or clerking experience is necessary. Clerks accurately record the judges' decisions.

Everyone is welcome to come to the morning session, afternoon session or both.
Everyone is welcome to come to the BBQ lunch.

We will have a sign up sheet at the July meeting, or you can call Betty Girard at 604-431-8611 or Tina McNabb at 604-572-8981 for further details.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Ken and Dorothy Pitre

In 1995 Ken was made an offer not to come to work after working for the Department of Fisheries as a chinook and coho biologist for 33 years. Paul Marten, in one of his budget cuts, offered a buy-out that was too good to refuse, a full pension at age 53. After 48 hours of considering the offer he was gone, much to Dorothy's chagrin.

The first job at home was to get our Richmond yard into shape. We were given some dahlia tubers and then we had the "bug". It wasn't long before we had over 80 tubers. We now work on the 3 "D's", dig, deadhead and do new tubers. Life has gone from "aren't they beautiful" to "we need more room". (How many of us can relate to this - ed.)

Being on a corner lot the dahlias were seen by everyone. We have received many compliments and met many new people because of our dahlias. We have passed this love of dahlias along to many friends and family members who now do dahlias as well.

Dorothy now collects seed but so far we haven't had any genetic miracles, but did receive one ribbon for the most unusual dahlia. We have shown dahlias and won a few ribbons. We have also participated in the last two tuber sales and have spent more than we earned. (Again, how many of us did this too - ed.)

In our backyard we have a vegetable garden that also provides an abundance of fresh vegetables. If you ever want a terrific recipe for salsa sauce we have one. Tomatoes are one of our main staples in the summer.

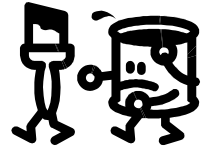
When we are not gardening, we spend a great deal of time on the west Richmond dyke with our dog taking photos of eagles, coyotes and assorted wildlife.

Dorothy also has lots of luck when it comes to the 50/50 draw. We all know where that money goes when the tuber sales come along, don't we Dorothy? - ed.



Can Painting Party Invitation from Betty Girard - July 19, 2008 at 10:30 A.M.

6970 Marlborough Avenue, Burnaby, B.C.



Over the past couple of years we have been running low on cans for our annual show. Although many exhibitors have their own cans we supply cans for those who may be novice growers or may be bringing their blooms from a long way away.

Thank you to everyone who have brought their cans to our last meetings. July 16 will be the last meeting to bring cans - all shapes and sizes are needed. The next step is to paint them black. As many hands make light work, we will be having a can painting party, weather permitting of course, as we don't want black paint flying around the house. Refreshments will be provided. Please call Betty at 604-431-8611 if you need directions.

DATES TO REMEMBER 2008

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|------------------------|--|
| July 16 | <i>General Meeting</i> – 7:30 pm
Pollination, Hybridization & Seedlings |
| July 26 | <i>Judging Workshop</i> – Mt. Vernon, Wash.
Seniors' Centre - 9 am to 3 pm |
| August 20 | <i>General Meeting</i> – 7:30 pm
Preparing for the show – Vases / Baskets / Bowls |
| <u>Aug 30 & 31</u> | <u>Vancouver Dahlia Society – Dahlia Show</u>
VanDusen Gardens - see schedule |
| Sept 13 & 14 | FVDS – Dahlia Show
George Preston Recreation Centre - Langley |
| September 17 | <i>General Meeting</i> – 6:00 pm
Potluck Dinner & Parlour Show |
| October 15 | <i>General Meeting</i> – 7:30 pm
Elections / Cutting & preparing tubers for storage |

50/50 DRAW

Tickets will be available when you sign in before the start of the meeting from Robin Blackmore.

Tickets are 1 for a Looney, 3 for a Tooney and 10 for \$5.00.



We had 44 members in attendance at the May meeting and the winner of \$32.00 was David McIntosh.

We had 39 members in attendance at the June meeting and the winner of \$27.00 was Robin Blackmore.

How To Top Your Dahlias by Richard Parshall

This "how to..." article deals with topping your dahlias. This technique, sometimes called pinching or stopping, should be done for two reasons. First, to encourage lateral branches to start development so that you will have plenty of blooms in time for show season and second, to produce a bushier, sturdier and more compact dahlia plant. This will make your plants less susceptible to high winds and inclement weather. An additional benefit is that because you are actually forcing earlier blooms you will naturally have more blooms during a growing season. (It's true that letting the terminal bud bloom would give you a single early bloom, but then a longer interval would occur before your laterals begin to develop)

There seems to be a natural reluctance for most novice dahlia growers to perform this necessary task. Don't think of it as a beheading but rather as grooming. Along with disbudding and disbranching, which will be discussed in our next article, topping should be considered more like a haircut for your dahlias. Remember that more new growth will replace what you have removed and it will replace it faster.

The technique itself is quite simple. Gently grasp the central growing tip on your dahlia plant and bend it until it snaps off. Be careful not to damage the two emerging lateral branches that will just be beginning to form on each side of the plant tip right at the base of each leaf. This task should be performed early in the morning or in the evening when your plants are crisp with moisture. It may be a little more difficult in the afternoon when they are all rubbery from the sun and heat. Now all of your plant's energy is directed into the growth of the lateral branches rather than the plant's terminal bud.

Now that you know how and why to top, you need to learn when to top. This is where things get more complicated. It takes approximately 50 to 70 days for a lateral branch to develop into a full bloom. Small varieties usually develop faster than large varieties. Since most shows are in August and September, most dahlia growers will top their plants during the middle of June so that they will have plenty of blooms for the shows. Furthermore, depending upon the size of a plant's bloom, experienced growers will usually leave a specific number of lateral branches on each plant. This is done by topping and then removing one or more sets of leaves beginning at the bottom of the plant and moving up. * The removal of the bottom one or two sets of leaves gives the added benefit of getting the plant up off the ground so that air can circulate around the plant which helps prevent the development of powdery mildew. The following guidelines will help:

A(Large) or AA(Giant) - 2 or 3 sets of leaves (4 or 6 lateral branches)

B(Medium) - 3 or 4 sets of leaves (6 or 8 branches)

Varieties under 6 inches - 5 or 6 sets of leaves (10 or 12 lateral branches)

As the branches grow, some can be removed to allow only a specific number of flowers to develop, especially for the larger varieties. Only allow 3 to 5 blooms to mature on large and giant varieties and 5 to 8 on mediums. Smaller varieties will usually not require disbranching.

Rough Time Table for Topping (Days before Show)

A or AA size - About 70 days before show

BB and Ball size - About 60 days before show

B size - About 65 days before show

Smaller blooms - 55 days or less

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How To Top Your Dahlias - continued from Page 6

Plant growth and bloom time is very dependent on weather conditions, soil type, fertilizing programs and watering schedules. These conditions may vary from year to year and individual varieties may also differ from the norm, so please use the above information as a general guide in helping you grow bigger and more beautiful dahlias.

*Author's Note: Some people believe that the bottom laterals develop into the largest and nicest blooms on a plant, they, therefore do not remove the first true leaves from the bottom. These dahlia growers will count up from the bottom to get the required number of leaf pairs and then top their plants.

2008 VDS Show Awards

It is that time again to start thinking about organizing the awards for our 2008 VDS Show on August 30 & 31.

If you are wondering what you might donate as a gift here are some suggestions by way of gifts we have received in the past: Needlepoint, framed pictures, stained glass window hangers, sculptures, candles, garden tools, vases, pottery, gift certificates, stepping stones and cash donations.

If you are interested in donating, please contact Maggie Cajar at 604-522-6258.

A Special Invitation from Jean Heeringa, Lynden, Washington

Jean is again inviting all Vancouver Dahlia Society members to attend the Whatcom County Dahlia Society's (Bellingham) Annual Potluck Picnic on Monday, July 21, 2008 at 6 PM. Requirements for the evening are something for a Potluck picnic, plate, cutlery and folding lawn chair. Guest speaker will be Vera Williamson doing baskets.

This year the Whatcom County Dahlia Society are going to have a roast pig plus a turkey. There will be a box for voluntary donations for Whatcom County Hospice.

Directions: Jean's new address is 1216 Birch Bay Road, Lynden. Easy to find: Cross border at Peace Arch or Douglas Crossing. Take I-5 to exit 270 which is the Lynden - Birch Bay Exit, turn left, head north for 6 miles along Birch Bay - Lynden Road and you are there. Allow at least an hour for travel time without any delays at the border (don't forget your passports).

2008 Bulletin Delivery

This is the first bulletin that has been sent to members who elected to have their bulletin emailed. If you still receive your bulletin via mail and would like to have it emailed, please advise Betty Girard at 604-431-8611 or vdsmembership@telus.net



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Refreshment Reminder

July Meeting

Sandwiches: Carola Goetze

Sweets: Linda Ayers and Natalie Meixner

August Meeting

Sandwiches: Arlene Brodie

Sweets: Louise Stewart and Ken Brodie



Please bring your own cup to cut cost of purchasing foam cups and to be environmentally friendly.