

## From the PNDC President...

As our growing season begins in earnest, we can give thanks for some wonderfully mild and sunny weather in May and June. Well, at least for part of the time. From all reports, our tuber and plant sales have been quite brisk throughout our growing region. This is a nice reward for all who work so hard on these sale activities and reinforces the growing popularity of our favorite flower. If you have some extra stock, why not tempt a friend, co-worker or neighborhood acquaintance with a tuber or two and see if you can't spark that interest that might blossom into a mild obsession?

Seems to me, we all started in a somewhat similar fashion. Our Victoria Society will be sponsoring our 2014 PNDC show and banquet. It will take place August 16-17<sup>th</sup> at the West Shore Town Centre Mall.

We very much look forward to being with our Canadian dahlia friends and enjoying the sights of Vancouver Island.

We are again blessed with an ADS National Show in our growing area! The 2014 National show will be held in Tacoma on Labor Day Weekend. There is a link to the National Show Website from the ADS website. (add link) I will be looking forward to seeing many of you and all our dahlia friends at the National.

Best wishes to you all,  
Mike Riordan, PNDC President

## Remembering Bill Mishler...

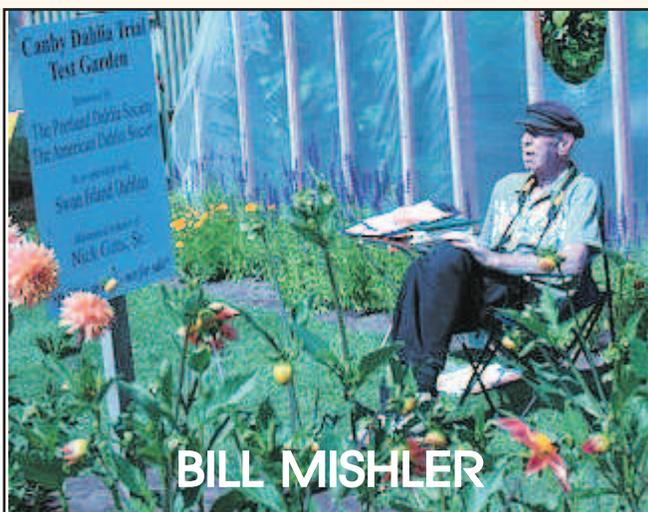
**June 15, 1929 - January 20, 2014**

When traveling by car to show or meeting with a group of dahlia people, there's always plenty of conversation to help pass the time and the miles. My first recollection of his banter had to do with his then first introduction named Woodland's Uptown Girl. He extolled her strong points as if she were flesh and blood. Bill seemed never a loss for words and always had subtle hints to let everyone know how he felt about this or that. My most memorable advice from Bill was his suggestion to look at the competing entries for higher award(s) from about ten feet away and see which one deserved most to be on the head table.

When Bill would talk about things other than dahlias it was usually sports. Besides the Blazers, he loved to fish and hunt. He really enjoyed bow hunting and bow competition. On one occasion Bill was talking about his early life and his work in construction as a stone mason. We were all left with the impression that he never did anything half way and always lived his life to the fullest.

It was not surprising then, that he embraced his idea of a Trial Garden sponsored by the Portland Dahlia Society with all of his enthusiasm. He first convinced the Gitts Family of the advantages of hosting the trial garden next to their show garden. His next step was to convince the Portland Society to sponsor the garden with himself acting as trial ground director. Bill was keenly aware of the need for a trial garden located within the Willamette Valley, since that growing area has a distinct and unique set of growing conditions compared to other areas on the West Coast. The probationary years flew by and before we knew it, we were all a few years older and the Canby Trial Garden was officially ADS fully sanctioned.

When you next visit the Canby Trail ground and take in the acres of floral beauty surrounding you, stop for a moment and thank Bill Mishler for his tenacious vision and read the inscription on his stone memorial.



Holding court with the dahlias at Canby Trial Garden  
Photograph submitted by Judy Stephens



# Tying Up Dahlias ... by Ted J. Kennedy

I remember when I first was thinking about growing dahlias and being turned off by the fact that dahlias really need to be tied up. Dahlias are generally tall growers reaching an average of 4 feet or so. Flowers do not

look all that heavy but when filled with dew or rain they are too heavy to hold themselves up. Branches fall over or lean over and flower stems become crooked after that happens. Entire plants can fall over in a wind storm. So we need to tie up dahlias. I will discuss the various methods.

(1) **Hilling Dahlias:** The first method is not tying them up but instead mounding soil around plants to hold them. This is called hilling them up much as potatoes are grown. As most of you know, Swan Island Dahlias does not tie up their dahlias. Instead, they use a small tractor with a device attached to move the soil onto the base of the dahlia plants. In our trial garden, the flowers are also hilled up and the majority of them are not tied up but some are too tall and need to be tied up. There are differences between your garden and the Swan Island gardens. The biggest difference is that their dahlias are grown in full sun with no shade at all. Just about all of us have our dahlia gardens in some sort of partial shade and dahlias grow much taller in shade (as much as two feet taller or more!). Some growers use a combination of hilling and tying up.

(2) **One stake:** The classic way of tying up dahlias is to pound in a wooden or steel stake (very few people use wooden stakes any more). The dahlias are planted around the single stake. In full sun, four plants are planted about a foot from the stake. If there is shade on one side or there is no access on one side, three plants are spaced around the stake. Plants are tied to the stake as they grow. Phil Mingus used to use this method before he lost the lease to the acreage next door. This method takes more space but is in my opinion the most esthetically beautiful way to display dahlias.

(3) **Dahlias in rows:** Many commercial operations switched to growing dahlias in rows because of the ease of mechanical weeding by the use of small tractors and it is easier to tie up the dahlias. The first garden I saw using the row method was Les Connell's garden in Tacoma. This method is used by most commercial operations with a few differences here and there. Most growers plant the dahlias in double staggered rows with about 6-10 inches between the double row and spacing the dahlias at about 12 inches apart in the row. Usually a drip irrigation T-tape is placed in the middle of the staggered row. Some growers do use overhead watering, however. T-Posts (usually six feet tall) are used. The t posts are placed two on the ends of the rows and two every 10-12 feet along the row. They are about 24 inches apart. In my garden, I plant in 50 foot rows and use 10 T-posts for each row. Baling twine (either 110 pound or 170 pound polypropylene) is run down

the outside of the rows and tied to the stakes. I use two or sometimes three rows of twine. Cross ties are placed every 6 feet or so to keep the plants from falling down in the rows.

(4) **Criss-cross dahlias:** Helen, of Helen's Dahlias, uses a variation of the method above. She plants four rows of dahlia about 16 inches apart and the rows are about 15 feet long. This creates a rectangle of dahlias. She places a t post at the four corners and one halfway for total of 6 t posts. She then uses the baling twine to surround the patch and then crisscrosses the twine between the six stakes. This pattern of twine holds up the dahlia plants from all directions. The effect is both practical and quite pretty. You can easily reach all of the flowers even those in the middle.

(5) **Plastic mesh:** Some people are using plastic construction fence as a mesh to hold up the dahlias. You have probably seen the bright orange fencing around construction sites. I believe that it has 4 x 6 inch mesh and is 3 feet wide. It is tied to t-posts and I believe it is 18 inches off the ground. I do not know whether they use two layers of mesh or just move to original one higher later in the year. The dahlias grow through the mesh without a problem and they say that harvesting flowers and digging the tubers clumps is easy.

## Treasurer Report by Elva Sellens

<i>Beginning Balance 9/4/2013</i>		
	\$11,079.76	☀
Income:		
Dues - members	\$1,050.00	
Dues - societies	\$150.00	☀
Total Income	\$12,280.59	
Expenses:		
Newsletter	\$149.96	☀
#1267	\$79.96	
#1269	\$70.00	☀
Rosters	\$180.43	
#1272	\$15.02	
#1273	\$ 9.69	☀
#1274	\$155.72	
Postage	\$210.64	
#1266	\$66.16	
#1270	\$134.48	
Total Expenses:	\$565.63	

Thank you to these members who donated dahlia tubers and plants for the PNDC auction held at our April meeting: Teresa Bergman, Mike Riordan, Ted Kennedy, Mark Oldenkamp, and Bob Chibante. We raised \$613.00!

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## News from Victoria Dahlia Society ... by Teresa Thom

The club tuber sale in April was a success, proceeds up about 15%. Thanks to the 30 volunteers, many non sellers, but always willing to lend a hand. Thank you to Gillian Brownlee and Thomas Casey-Wolnicki, rookies in the club who did an outstanding job of organizing and making sure everything ran smoothly.

Club members have been busy the past weeks planting, we all hope for an abundance of blooms for show time. Friday, August 1 will be the start of our P.N.D.C. Judging Workshop. We are pleased to have Wayne Lobaugh Jr. come to present the workshop. Friday evening will be for the show clerks and candidate judges. Saturday, Aug. 2, will be an all day session for other judges. This will be followed later in the afternoon with our club barbecue taking place at Phil and Teresa's, 5025 Santa Clara Ave. (at Puerta Backyarda).

Our club will be hosting the P.N.D.C. show this year, and we hope many of you will come and participate in the show. Whether exhibiting or just observing, we look

forward to seeing and meeting other growers. Any guests from off the island, who do help at the show, either clerking, judging, or helping in other ways, will receive lunch money, and a complimentary show dinner on the Saturday evening.

The show takes place at the West Shore Town Center, 2945 Jacklin Rd., Saturday, August 16 and Sunday, August 17, with staging starting the evening of August 15. Check out our website in July for show catalogue details. You may also contact Phil Newton, our president: philnewton@shaw.ca. with all enquiries regarding the show. Until then, here's to a fabulous 2014 growing and showing season!!



Mon Cher-e (triple display)  
*Victoria & Nanaimo Dahlia Show Flower*

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## News from the Nanaimo Dahlia Society ... by Cathleen Critchley

### Our Dahlia Story

My husband Alan's eldest brother was Peter Critchley and he was a professional gardener in St. Helen's, Lancashire, England. When the city floral displays and boulevards had been planted each year, Peter would bring the leftover Dahlia tubers to us to plant in our front garden. (A sad note is that Peter died of throat cancer because in those days not enough precautions were taken in the handling of garden chemicals). On the way to the bus, folks would look for our garden.

Alan was transferred from England to Toronto, Ontario, Canada for 6 years by his company, so we had to buy our own dahlia tubers and really grow them. It took a few years because until that time we had the best of leftovers.

Six years later, Alan was offered another job, not in England, but in Selkirk, Manitoba. As a consequence we had to start our Dahlias all over again with a very different weather pattern. When Alan retired we lived on Vancouver Island for the winter and took a cottage for the summer in Manitoba, so we did not grow Dahlias for a few years. Then the cottage burned to the ground by arson. We decided to stay on the island all year. Parksville has lots of deer and that was another concern.

Fortunately, we lived opposite from Reg Cluett and would get good plants from him and cut flowers too. One

year as Program Committee for Happy Wanderers in Parksville, I had to get speakers for the monthly meetings.

Reg happily filled a couple of months for me. First to talk and later, as promised, to sell tubers. Everyone was delighted.

In 2011, we moved to a condo in Nanaimo and again, with a garden to start. Because of space limitations, we decided to go with pots. We grew them at their peak and enjoyed them fully. Last year, in August, we just happened to see the Dahlia Show in Nanaimo, and joined the club.

When attending my first meeting, I found that Reg is a member of this society also. It was like coming home!

Nanaimo would like to invite folks to our annual Glad and Dahlia Show on August 23-24 at the Country Club Center. Our dahlias of the year are Mon Cher-e, an origin by Paul McKittrick of Victoria Society, and Hamari Accord. Our show glad is Hendrika.



Hamari Accord (single display)  
*Victoria & Nanaimo Dahlia Show Flower*

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## News from Douglas County Dahlia Society ... by Mark & Ember Nay

Douglas County Dahlia Society has chosen Tahoma Alicia as our flower of the year. Our 2014 show will be September 20 - 21 at the Douglas County fairgrounds in the floral building ( the same building as last year). We'll open the doors at 7 AM on Saturday morning for entries to be brought in and staged.

We will offer our potluck-style lunch on Saturday, so stick around and enjoy some home-cooked food! All are welcome and if you have some time to whip something up, bring it along to share. We have been working with a couple of new members and are all finished with planting. Just enough time to take a deep breath and start weeding!

## News from Lane County Dahlia Society ... by Michael Canning

With another successful fund raising season behind us, Lane County Dahlia Society members are looking forward to those lovely blooms and the show season to come. Can't wait!

Speaking of the fund raising season, The Lane County Dahlia Society would like to acknowledge the great effort of our membership in the annual campaign to pay the bills for LCDS. Without their involvement LCDS could



Lake view Glow

not be the active group we have become. The auctions, sales events, packing parties and more bring us together in a vital way that the monthly meetings can't match. We are grateful to newer members who have stepped up to shoulder some of the load. We would also like to thank our sister societies in Douglas County,

and Southern Oregon for their contributions of tubers.

Boy, it sure looks like a full show season! The national American Dahlia Society show comes to the Northwest again in Tacoma on Labor Day, The PNDC show goes international this year in beautiful British Columbia, Wild Rivers Dahlia Society makes it two years in a row on the southern edges of the PNDC, and the rest of us fit in where we can. It would definitely be possible to go stark-raving mad trying to take it all in. Have fun!

Don't forget about the LCDS show on the weekend of September 13-14 at the Lane Events center in Eugene. This year will be our 51<sup>st</sup> show. The theme is "Dahlias Aglow", and the show flower is the gorgeous incurve Lakeview Glow. We welcome your entries and attendance. Please Contact Cheryle Hawkins at 541-461-8004 if you would like more complete information.

The Lane County Dahlia Society wishes you a productive growing season with lots of prize winning blooms to choose from in your garden!

## Southern Oregon Dahlia Society ... by Paulette Woodward

Greetings from Southern Oregon Dahlia Society! Our show is September 6 - 7 at Pony Village Mall in North Bend. The flower of the year is Hot Cakes (anemone DB red/ yellow) from Swan Island (2008). Our show theme is "Happy Daze" and it ought to be a fun theme to work with. Note - this year Portland and our show are on the same weekend. For a good time, come to the beach!

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of April we held our tuber sale which was average in proceeds but we had lots of tubers. The unsold tubers were donated so our members were able to choose fill-in tubers and Shore Acres could supplement their tuber order. It was our pleasure to

assist our other Oregon societies with the overflow of our tubers. We are blessed not to have a large overhead thanks to Pony Village Mall. On June 7th was the Garden Club and State Park Day in Shore Acres State Park. They held an informative forum for all the garden-related societies. It was a hoot, I think they spiked the punch - public relations at it's best!

For all this to happen we need our troops - what would we do without them? They may not want to be leaders but they don't mind getting their hands dirty or their feet sore. Thank you one and all! Enjoy another growing season with a new set of challenges - the black berries that are on steroids. Love the blooms - Paulette

## News from Wild Rivers Dahlia Society ... by Bob Chibante

Currently we are getting ready for show number two. Taking what we learned and moving on. We plan to extend the head table with additional spots for Novice and Amateur sections. Lately, I have met and given talks to our local garden clubs. Spreading the word the best we can. The trend in our society this year is seedlings. The members have been planting seedlings like crazy. I have also given out seedlings during demos with the other clubs. That involved bringing a seed start tray, letting them remove the seedling, and then they plant them into cells. Every time I meet someone at the local store who received some of these, they can't wait to tell me about how theirs are doing. I understand the excitement. It is what I look forward to the most when I head out in the morning. Of course this year will be crazy. I fell just short of my goal but, did manage to drop 9000 seedlings into the soil. Look for some new things from

the Wild Rivers Society. As far as the show goes, it will be Aug 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. We will have a free drawing for visiting judges and exhibitors. We gave away some nice awards last year. Be sure to bring photos as we do have a photo section. Next step is to find some art. We need sponsors for the show. If you're interested, contact Bob at [dahlias@charter.net](mailto:dahlias@charter.net). We will be sending out the invites shortly and will have casual garden tours. The club garden has been set up more formally this year and a seedling evaluation section has been added for classes. Enjoy the season and may your pest bugs be nonexistent.



River's Novelty

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## News from the Portland Dahlia Society .... by Teresa Bergman

Hopefully all your dahlias are in the ground growing and getting ready to put out some incredible blooms for the shows and your enjoyment. At this early date, I actually have buds on quite a few and some showing color. Of course, these are from ones I left in the ground last year. The others are quite a ways off. I hope many of you plan to attend the ADS National Show which will be held Labor Day weekend in Tacoma. It's so great to have another one in our backyard. That show, however, requires that we change the date of our show. It will be held the weekend following Labor Day, which is September 6 and 7 at the Clackamas County Events Center at Canby, Oregon. Our Flower of the Year is

Rejman's Polish Kid (pictured). If you need additional information about the show, or a show book, contact Ted Kennedy, (503) 655-6951. While in town for the show, please be sure to stop by the trial garden at Swan Island Dahlias, see some upcoming varieties and judge if you are a judge. It would be most appreciated. Hope you all have a wonderful season



Rejman's Polish Kid

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## News from the Seattle Dahlia Society .... by Nicki Tran

Spring was beautiful in Seattle. We enjoyed some lovely warm days in between the rainy ones which gave us a jump start on preparing the dahlia beds. Our meetings for the first quarter focused on soil preparation, starting dahlias from seed, taking cuttings and growing in containers.

Our membership tuber sale in early April was a huge success. At this writing we're now making preparations for our public tuber & plant sale held April 26 -27. As a lesson learned from last year's sale, we have improved our tuber labels with adding the plant height. It seems that more and more customers want dahlias for a deck or small garden and need to know how big they will get.

We also try to have a photo of every dahlia we sell since people always want to see the flower they are buying. And now with the days of smart phones, we make sure to have some available at the sale to look up photos if we need to.

We're looking forward to another ADS National Show so close to home. Tacoma is less than an hour from Seattle so this is a real treat for us. If you're coming from out of town for the show, we invite you to stay a bit longer to visit our beautiful city and even attend our show!

Our 57th Annual Dahlia Show is September 6-7, 2014 and our show flower is Verronne's Morning Star, a white Orchette. Check out our website for more details.

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## ADS National Show in our backyard!

A great opportunity presents itself on Labor Day weekend, 2014, in Tacoma, Washington. Some of this country's best dahlia growers will be gathered at the 48<sup>th</sup> ADS National Show at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center in downtown Tacoma.

Hosted by the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers, organizers have a slate of activities that start Thursday, 8/28 that include garden tours, seminars, ADS meetings, an awards banquet and of course, the national exhibition of blooms! If you are interested in the culture of Dahlia growers, this is the chance to immerse yourself in it.

For show exhibitors, the Convention Center will be open from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, August 29th and on Saturday, August 30th from 6 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. The judging begins at 10 a.m. The show is open to the public from noon to 5 on Saturday; 10 am - 4 pm on Sunday.

All in all, this will be a rare close-to-home opportunity to meet with folks from all over the country who have the same passion for growing Dahlias as we all do. Although the show dates are September 1st and 2nd, the special garden tours are planned for Thursday (8/28), Friday (8/29), and Monday (9/1). Depending



on the date, you will be treated to a tour of gardens belonging to Roland Verrone, Wayne Lobaugh, Les and Vivian Connell, Ken and Marilyn Walton, Al Kaas, Dick and Danielle Parshall, and Ken Greenway. Each tour is \$40 and must be registered for in advance. To view a schedule of events, registration information, exhibit entry, and lodging information at the show, visit the show website at [www.nwdahlia.org/2014nationalshow](http://www.nwdahlia.org/2014nationalshow)

In addition, there are many dahlia shows that are in the vicinity of the Tacoma region. Keep in mind that Victoria Dahlia Society will host the PNDC Dahlia Show August 17 -18 in Victoria, and Nanaimo Dahlia Society will host their show August 23 -24 in Nanaimo. For more information go to the PNDC website at [pnecdahlia.com](http://pnecdahlia.com).

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# Dahlia Pests ... by Wayne Shantz

Lane County Dahlia Society

To identify and control dahlia pests asks that one decide on a strategy. Many Lane County members adhere closer to an organic approach than to a caustic chemical. Regardless of approach, though, an earnest dahlia grower needs to observe, recognize and identify what symptoms and conditions appear in the garden. For a grower to systematically spend about ten minutes daily slowly circulating through growing dahlias, carefully scrutinizing each plant for potential problems allows for quick treatment and additionally can alleviate later problems. The old adage, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure may deter future headaches.

Relatively speaking, the dahlia has no more enemies than any other flower. Careful garden hygiene usually limits some of the normal pest problems that exist in a dahlia landscape. By nurturing a proper growing condition, one can limit many potential difficulties. The conditions in Lane County may differ somewhat from other regions and countries, yet some principles of garden care can reduce the amount of disappointment because of insect damage. Common pests that Lane County members confront include aphids, thrips, earwigs, red spider mites, cucumber beetles, slugs and snails.

**Aphids:** Any serious dahlia grower knows that aphids, soft-bodied insects, can cause serious damage to a dahlia garden. They appear in large colonies of black, green, or many colors in between and will use their piercing, sucking mouthparts to feed on sap, which in turn, causes other problems since they can transmit disease from one plant to another. In fact, without intervention, they can contaminate a whole garden.

To control these vectors that may carry disease is nigh unto impossible. Entomologists indicate that aphids carry the virus on their mouthpart and penetrate soft tissue within a few seconds or minutes before infecting the plant. A grower can devise a recording system that will identify infected plants. Thus, in the fall or at the time of digging clumps, these affected plants should be used for planting stock, only as a last resort.

Infestations begin when several winged aphids leave a plant saturated with aphids and locate another suitable host plant. These aphids deposit wingless aphids on a plant before moving to another plant. The young nymphs quickly become mature in 7 to 10 days after which they can reproduce live young. In this viviparous state, these females can rear a number of broods, each having the potential to have 40 to 60 offspring. A few aphid colonizers can increase an aphid population by thousands of aphids. If a plant becomes so stressed with them, the condition encourages new winged aphids to perpetuate the process; these newly liberated, winged aphids will then contaminate new host plants. In the spring, the aphid further adapts for survival; females will lay eggs in a secluded spot and begin the cycle anew.

Aphids move slowly and attack the choicest, most succulent parts of a plant. Young aphids, mainly smaller in size than the adults, feed on buds, shoots, stems,



leaves, and ray florets (petals). One of the offshoots of aphid feeding is a sugary liquid often called "honeydew."

This sticky substance attracts ants. If growers espy ants attending to certain plants, they can safely assume that aphids are in close proximity.

Aphids are quite easy to control, but nothing can overcome early detection. No one can predict where a colonizer will land. Examining the bud areas and the undersides of leaves is a good way to intercept these pests. By looking for small nymphs, few in number, the grower will deter heavy growth of aphids before large concentrations of aphids establish mature colonies. A number of organic aids are available on the Internet. Simmer oils can suffocate the aphid, but one must be careful not to use these sprays on a hot day. A white mineral oil can curb aphid transmitted virus diseases including Cucumber Mosaic virus. One can augment the dahlia patch with beneficial enemies, such as ladybugs and lacewings. Due to exponential increase of aphids, these insects may not be able to provide that much of an impact. Aphids are obvious and provide an easy target, especially for a contact spray. The bottom line? Keep aphids from dahlias.

**Cucumber Beetles:** The cucumber beetle is one of the notorious pests in Lane County. These quarter-inch greenish-yellow bodied bugs with 12 spots on their wings chew leaves and floral parts with gusto. Their erratic flight patterns make them difficult to control. In early spring, they will fly to dahlias from host plants, either weeds, vegetation, or other surrounding crops and take up what seems like permanent residence. Yellow dahlias hold the highest attraction for them and then white, albeit they will lurch on the whole color spectrum. One grower swears that if he sees one beetle on a bloom, there will always be two.

Cucumber beetles tend to lay their eggs in the soil near a stalk and surrounding area of a plant. To deter them from this practice in the dahlia patch, one can mulch early, which hinders the lifecycle. To negate the hatch decreases future problems; beetles become active when the temperatures reach around 60 degrees Fahrenheit. During the season, they can produce up to three generations with an egg count of up to 300 eggs. Sixty days is the normal lifespan. Avoid planting cucurbit species nearby, such as gourds, squash, melon and cucumbers among others.

To control the beetle population, growers need to inspect young plants with up to five pairs of leaves closely and when they find evidence of beetle handiwork, they can either make homemade yellow sticky traps or buy commercial ones and place on a stake at heights of 18 inches to three feet. Two strips, one placed lower and the other placed higher have advantages. Usually, the higher strip will catch more. Spiders can also play a role in beetle control; they reduce the feeding rate and also induce beetle emigration. Although many dahlia growers fail to realize it, spiders are a gardener's friend. Someone needs to erect a bat house, create a bat habitat, and



experiment with bats since they are voracious insect eaters. One Lane County member uses a small vacuum cleaner and has rigged it so he can suck these pests into a jar that keeps them from escaping. The cucumber beetle is a bane for dahlia exhibitors. With good organic practice, one may control and overcome the use of more caustic chemicals.

**Earwigs:** Earwigs frustrate dahlia growers. When they leave their garden in the evening, they have admired a number of near perfect specimen blooms, but in the morning they look aghast at clear-cut holes chomped in leaves and petals. Yet, no apparent guilty culprit appears. The earwig has eaten voraciously during the night and now hides in a curled leaf or some dark, damp crevice. Generally, the earwig is a clear suspect if no evidence of another pest exists during the day. To confirm suspicions, the grower needs to check the plants at night when earwigs are active and indulging in a delicious salad.

Although earwigs have wings and can fly, they do so poorly. They tend to hide in lush shaded vegetation or in dark, cool places, such as under stones, piles of grass, leaves, boards, woodpiles, weeds, damaged fruit, and other debris or organic mulch. Earwigs need and are attracted to moisture; they appear reddish brown with forceps or pincers, usually about 5/8 inches long. Females lay eggs in the early spring, which will hatch in 70 days. Later, when the climate warms, a hatch will take about 20 days. Unlike most insects, the female looks after her nymphs, guarding them tenaciously. Although they have somewhat of an ugly appearance, fortunately, they are harmless.

Many gardeners control the earwig without chemicals. For sure, garden sanitation is an imperative, which includes severing leaves at the bottom of dahlia plants. To rid the garden of all kinds of rubbish and other earwig hiding places will alleviate earwig prowess. In addition, the grower can control the earwig by trapping. Inverted pots filled with straw placed on the top of a stake will attract these nocturnal creatures. In the morning, the trapper takes the accumulated earwigs and shakes them into hot, soapy water. Wetted rolled up newspapers, corrugated cardboard or a short piece of hose will entice them as does a small tin can baited with a half-inch of fish or vegetable oil placed near dahlias. Growers can place these traps throughout the garden just before dark and shake them into a hot water solution in the morning.

For serious exhibitors, they can inspect the bloom carefully making sure that no earwigs are in the bloom, and then smear Vaseline on stems just below the floral head or opening bud. Although it seems somewhat messy, it is quite easy. Put some Vaseline in the palm of the hand and rub around the stem. The day's heat will also aid in spreading the Vaseline so that earwigs do not actively cross the barrier. Some growers have found Sluggo Plus, expensive, organic and granular, to combat the earwig as well.

**Red spider mites:** Oregon's Willamette Valley usually entertains red spider mites in late summer and early fall when the temperatures rise and the relative humidity wanes. The mite population explodes when the

temperature soars, around 80 to 85 degrees F. Another reason for infestation occurs because of increased dahlia vegetative growth, which provides excellent feeding conditions for these tiny pests.

Hopefully, while growers inspect their dahlia plants daily, they will keep alert for a leaf mottling that usually starts at the bottom of a plant. Although they see the damage on the upper side of the leaf, the undersides of the leaves harbor the mite population. The mites puncture the leaf and suck sap that in turn causes hundreds of stippled, small pale yellow pinpoints on the leaf surface. As a heavy infestation progresses the leaves, shrivel, become somewhat crisp, dry, and eventually drop off. Usually, the red spiders continue from the bottom leaves and work toward the plant top. If left alone, they will either ruin or certainly weaken the plant and then transfer to another plant nearby. Make sure to burn infected branches and do employ a remedy. Do not use vegetation for compost.

During a female's lifespan of several weeks, she can lay dozens of eggs. In ideal conditions, a mite can develop from egg to adult in a week, but development usually takes much longer, especially earlier in the season. By looking at the underside of leaves, growers will observe small red dots, sometimes with webs that cover the surface. They will not have to wonder if a problem exists. One application of a spray, chemical or organic, will not alleviate a problem. To control these critters, they will need to apply sprays several times at 5 to 10-day intervals.

Red spider mites are not easy to control. Lane County Dahlia Society members maintain that employing certain organic growing techniques will decrease the number of such infestations. In addition, mites do not like moist conditions. One way to disrupt their lifestyle is to spray ice-cold water on the underside of foliage. Growers can keep a spray bottle in the refrigerator in order to deter localized infestations. A weekly, heavy stream of water from a garden hose will disrupt as well as dislodge them. In all instances when combatting them, they must make sure to spray the undersides of the leaves thoroughly. When purchasing plants, they should inspect the leaves carefully for mites. Additionally, horticultural oils and miticidal soaps are also available, but soaps do not affect eggs. Oils and soaps always require thorough coverage of infected plants.

**Slugs and snails:** The Pacific Northwest climatic conditions act as a mecca for slugs and snails. Any dahlia grower needs to combat these ubiquitous creatures in order to protect growing plants and emerging sprouts poking through the ground. These nocturnal mollusks will feast on tender leaves and sprouts, often mowing them to the ground. An ongoing prevention program is in the best interest of the gardener.

Slugs and snails possess some intriguing characteristics. One should not ignore the nightly pursuits of these pests since they leave a trail of slime. This slime becomes a signpost for all slugs and snails in the area, providing a pathway for the next feast. It is imperative to disturb the slime network. These pests containing both a male and female reproductive system and thus, under the proper conditions, can populate an area quickly. They can lay



eggs almost anywhere in the soil; these eggs may lay dormant for years, and then under proper, moist conditions hatch. The slug in particular has the ability to stretch to 20 times its usual length. In order to squeeze through extremely small openings.

In order to prevent slug and snail infestation, growers should plant dahlias away from the preferred hiding places, such as shrubs with branches near the ground, any decaying matter, boards, rocks, and shady, moist areas. To further inhibit infestation, they can pull weeds, break up dirt clods, and provide barriers. Slugs and snails do not like abrasive materials, such as sand, gravel chips, 3-tab shingles, sandpaper, wood ashes, hair and fur. Inventive gardeners have tried many baits including beer. Apparently some slugs and snails have a beer preference, some brands being much more enticing than others. Natural allies include snakes, toads, ducks, and particularly Rhode Island Reds.

Many growers use a form of metaldehyde baits, but if used, they need to protect birds and pets. Apparently, these baits now include a bitter ingredient that protects life. Stores sell an array of iron phosphate baits including Sluggo Plus, which will kill earwigs, cutworms, sow bugs, pill bugs, slugs and snails. Scatter this granular product uniformly around chosen plants. Slugs and snails will ingest the bait and die within 3 to 6 days.

**Thrips:** Thrips, microscopic in size, fly into the garden stealthily; they possess good agility and can also carry disease. From the egg to the adult stage usually takes 21 days; they first overwinter in the soil in the pupa stage; in early spring, they exert the most havoc when male and female adults increase in abundance, punching holes in a leaf surface in order to feed. For dahlia growers, they should consciously observe their plants each day since obvious symptoms will appear if thrips may be ravaging small plants just emerging. If the leaves appear somewhat twisted, misshapen, or undersized, thrips may be the culprit. Later in the season, populations of thrips are generally low.

For more thorough recommendations for control of pests, one should use the Internet to find out what the latest recommendations are and also join a local dahlia society. [www.dahlias.org](http://www.dahlias.org) is a good place to start.



## PNDC election ahead - 2014 roster is here

An election of PNDC officers will be held at the fall meeting in Victoria, B.C, Saturday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the 2014 PNDC Show. The nominees for office, agreed to at the April PNDC meeting, are: President – Mike Riordan, Vice President – Ted Kennedy, Treasurer – Elva Sellens, and Secretary/Newsletter Editor – Cheryle Hawkins.

The 2014 PNDC Roster of Members and Judges has been distributed, so by now all members should have their roster. If you notice a correction that should be made to names, phone numbers, addresses, or e-mail addresses, please let, Elva Sellens know. She can be reached at [elvasellens@charter.net](mailto:elvasellens@charter.net)

## 2014 PNDC Dahlia Shows

### Victoria Dahlia Society

August 16-17

West Shore Town Center, Victoria

### Nanaimo Dahlia Society

August 23-24

Country Club Centre

### Wild River Dahlia Society

August 23 - August 24,

Gold Beach, Event Center on the Beach

### Portland Dahlia Society

September 6-7

Clackamas County Fairgrounds

### Southern Oregon Dahlia Society

September 6-7

North Bend, Pony Village Mall

### Lane County Dahlia Society

September 14-15,

Eugene, Lane Events Center

### Douglas County Dahlia Society

September 20-21,

Roseburg, Douglas County Fairgrounds

## April meeting minutes will be sent soon

Forgive the delay..due to the complications of trying to plant our dahlias, work my job and many other activities related to my dahlia society involvement, I am behind a bit. Soon I will send the minutes of our general membership meeting held April 5th at Castlerock, WA. In the meantime enjoy the June edition of the PNDC Times!

Cheryle Hawkins, Secretary and Editor



Gabby - so cute and maybe a future dahlia grower?

Photo submitted by Marge Conn