



Vancouver Dahlia Society

BULLETIN

March 2026



Vancouver Dahlia Society
Promoting Dahlia Growing Since 1955

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The Vancouver Dahlia Society Bulletin is published five times per year in March, May, July, September, and November. Submissions of text or images can be sent to

thebulletin@vancouverdahliasociety.ca

President's Message

Peter Krueger

What an exceptionally warm winter we have been having! Although we have had a few nights of below zero weather and a number of atmospheric rivers, on the south slope of Burnaby where I live, we have had no snow.

Don't let the warm weather trick you into thinking you can plant your tubers early. We still need to wait until the soil is warm enough. The best indicator of this is to wait until the lilacs are in bloom. That may vary from year to year. You can speed up the process of warming by turning the soil and exposing the cold subsoil to the sun. You could also start your tubers in pots three to four weeks in advance. Once the tubers have started to grow, they are less susceptible to the cold.

Planning for the tuber sale is in full swing. The executive committee has just completed a planning session and many of the volunteer positions have been filled. There will be more opportunities to sign up as a volunteer at the March general meeting.

To get in early at the tuber sale, you may want to consider selling some of your tubers. If you are a first time seller, you will need to get a seller number and price codes from Tina (themcnabbs@telus.net). If you choose not to make your own labels, Tina has offered to make them for you for \$.10 each. You will need to send Tina a picture, the name of the tuber, the height of the plant and the classification. The deadline to get this information to Tina is April 4.

A price list is also available from Tina. She is still working on updating the list and would like to have a list of all the tubers you are planning to sell so they can be added to the list. The deadline to get this list in is also April 4. She also needs to know which tubers you are planning to sell so she can make up the picture boards. Tubers sell so much better if customers can see a picture of the variety on sale.

Last year there was some misunderstanding about when people with memberships were allowed into the sale. We are open from 9 A.M. to 10 A.M. to members only. After 10 A.M., people with memberships will not be given any special privileges but must wait in line with the general public. Memberships can be purchased or renewed at the door.

We have a number of new introductions this year. Lee Pusch is introducing two varieties. They are Viva's Lemon Chiffon (BB-FD-LB) and Viva's Radiant Ruby (BA-DR). These are her very first seedlings registered with the ADS. Congratulations, Lee. They will be available at our tuber sale and also at the tuber auction. Connie Young-Davis is introducing two varieties. They are Connie Zoey (B-LC-Pk) and Connie Sheryl (B-SC-DR). I will be introducing six new varieties. They are PGK Arthur (S-FL), PGK Katrina (BB-SC-LB), PGK Anne (BA-DR), PGK Joel (B-SC-FL), PGK George (BB-ID-OR) and PGK Rylee (BB-FD-DB). These will be available at the tuber sale and at the tuber auction in April. Pictures of my introductions were included in the November 2025 edition of the VDS Bulletin that can be found on our website.

At the March general meeting we will again be having a presentation on how to grow Dahlias from cuttings. I will also be sharing some of my seeds that were collected from PGK Ruth D. (CO-FL) and Lo-Blush (MS-LB). I am hoping that people who choose to grow these seeds will bring them to the August general meeting. There will be a prize for the best seedling.

Please be aware that the April general meeting will be a week later than usual so that it falls after the tuber sale. It will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month rather than on the third.

I hope to see many of you at the March general meeting and at the tuber sale. Meanwhile, happy planning and happy gardening.

Upcoming Events

18 March 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Fireside Room

Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th Avenue (at Oak Street)

Topics: Tuber Sale, Taking Cuttings, Growing from seed.

28 March 2026

FNWDG Workshop (Via Zoom)

Details TBA. For link email
vancouverdahliasociety@gmail.com

18 April 2026

VDS Annual Tuber Sale

Floral Hall,

VanDusen Botanical Garden

5251 Oak Street

See article for details.

22 April 2026 (Note later date)

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Fireside Room

Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th Avenue (at Oak Street)

Topics: Tuber Auction

20 May 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Fireside Room

Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th Avenue (at Oak Street)

17 June 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Fireside Room

Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th Avenue (at Oak Street)

Topics: Connie Young-Davis on How to Grow Fabulous, Show-Winning Dahlias.

15 July 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Floral Hall,

VanDusen Botanical Garden

5251 Oak Street

Topics: Gerri Williams on Floral Arrangements using Dahlias.

19 August 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Floral Hall,

VanDusen Botanical Garden

5251 Oak Street

Topics: Dahlia Show Preparation

5 – 6 September 2026

VDS Annual Show

Floral Hall,

VanDusen Botanical Garden

5251 Oak Street

19 September 2026

VDS One-day Show

West Coast Gardens

1420 172 Street, Surrey

23 September 2026 (Note later date)

6:30 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Floral Hall,

VanDusen Botanical Garden

5251 Oak Street

Topic: Annual Potluck and Parlour Show

21 October 2026

7:30 P.M.

VDS General Meeting

Fireside Room

Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th Avenue (at Oak Street)

Topics: Executive Election, digging and storing tubers.

Getting Ready For Tuber Sale 2026!

The Vancouver Dahlia Society's Annual Tuber Sale will be held this year on **Saturday, April 18th, 2026** at **VanDusen Botanical Garden, Floral Hall, 5251 Oak Street, Vancouver, B.C.**

Sale Schedule

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. – Set up of tables and sellers displaying tubers

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – **VDS Members Only Sale**

10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Doors open for public sale

2:30 p.m. – Doors close and clean-up by members

Rules for Sellers

For buyer quality assurance reasons, the VDS requests sellers follow these rules when attending, displaying, and selling their tubers:

- Only VDS members are permitted to sell and must volunteer at the sale.
- Sellers must have an issued bar code and label tubers according to the specifications below.
- Tubers must be in excellent condition, free of virus with an eye showing. To ensure that the tubers have a visible eye you need to "wake" them up. Place them in a warm room for two to three weeks prior to the sale.
- Tubers of named varieties recognized by the American Dahlia Society must have their details on the label.
- We also have a category for mystery tubers. These are tubers that are not named. They can be placed three to a bag and sold for \$8.00.
- Sellers are required to provide a list of tubers planned for sale to the sales committee at least two weeks prior to the sale so that photo boards can be made up.
- Sellers are required to place their name and contact information on the tuber labels and replace any tubers that do not grow.

- The tuber sales committee reserves the right to remove any tubers that do not meet these requirements.

If you are selling for the first time in 2026, Please contact Tina McNabb at themcnabbs@telus.net for a seller number and bar code. Tina has also agreed to make labels for those who would rather not do it themselves. To do this, she needs the name of the flower, the height of the plant and the classification. She charges \$.10 per label.

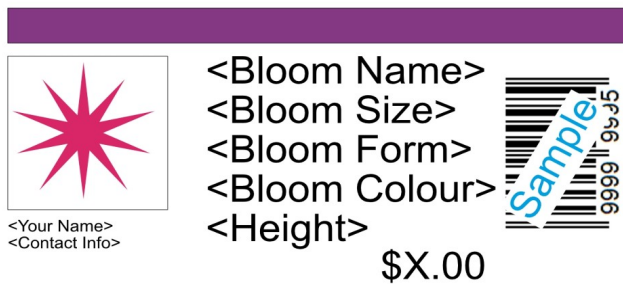
Benefits of Selling at the Tuber Sale

- Recycle and re-home those extra tubers.
- Earn extra money to purchase more tubers!
- Contribute to the VDS as half the sales revenue is a fundraiser.
- After the sale, look for donation boxes where unsold tubers can be placed. Unsold tubers go to subsequent sales and funds support the VDS

Add these varieties to your 2026 shopping list:

- VDS Challenge Flower: Any red or white single.
- VDS Holland Challenge: Any variety by Wayne Holland.
- Federation Flower of the Year 2026: Sandia Bertha
- Federation Flower of the Year 2027: Bull's Blood
- Add a Waterlily to your list for the floating Dahlia exhibit.

Labelling Tubers for Sale



This is an example of a label with a photo and barcode. If you are handwriting your labels, the barcode can be printed on labels and stuck to either your label or to the bag.

- The size should be a minimum of 4" x 2"
- Try to add an identifying colour or symbol on the label, this makes it easy for pickup at the end of the day. (The example has a coloured bar at the top.)
- You no longer need to put your seller number on the label, it is in the bar code. However you still need to put the price on the label for the public to see.
- The price goes down in the right bottom corner.
- On the left side can go either a photo (preferred; It needs to be your own photograph, not a picture from the internet) or just the description. First Dahlia name, size, form, colour, and the height it grows.
- In the left hand bottom corner put your name and phone number or email address. This is so a buyer can contact you if they have any concerns about the tuber they purchased.
- Lastly, please attach your label to the *outside* of the bag. This makes it easier to view the tuber inside the bag. Plastic sandwich bags work best. Place a small amount of medium: wood shavings, vermiculite or peat moss, into the bag to protect the eye and to absorb any moisture. Staple the bag shut with the label attached.

For further information contact the VDS at vancouverdahliasociety@gmail.ca

New introductions for 2026 by Connie Young-Davis!



Connie Sheryl (B SC DR)



Connie Zoey (B LC PK)

Special Entries At The Show

Betty Girard

Every show has special entries which are determined by the show committee. We are obliged to lay much of the show out in a set way which is decided by the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers, but special entries are where we can display local creativity.

The specials are an excellent place to start entering Dahlias if you haven't shown before. The competition doesn't tend to be as stiff, and the prizes are usually pretty good! The specials change every year and are determined by the show committee. This year our special entries honour our long history of floral art with a little Canadiana thrown in for good measure.

In 2026 the following special entries will be at the main show:

- VDS Challenge: Any Red or White Dahlia (single bloom)
- Bowl of Dahlias
- Vase of 12 Dahlias
- Floating Waterlily
- People's Choice
- First Time Exhibitor

In 2026 the following special entries will be at the late show:

- Baker's Dozen Vase of Dahlias
- Holland Challenge (any Dahlia originated by VDS Life Member Wayne Holland, usually prefixed with *Hy.*)

Please consider entering one of these special sections in 2026. It will make for an even more lovely display!

Surprise Results

Sue and Ken Birchmore

We are reporting on the results of our project we did as part of our requirements to become senior judges.

Our experiment was to grow three identical types of Dahlia tubers in three different soils and report the differences in the resulting plants. Our choice was SK's Daniel (M FD DR), a new variety that we hybridized. We planted four Dahlia tubers in different soils. Unfortunately two were mislabelled (the only two in our garden!), However we had another one planted elsewhere.

The first one was planted using no new fertilizer. The second was planted utilizing Sea Soil. The third one had new fertilizer, including sand and pesky wood chips.

The results were not at all what we expected. All the plants started to bloom in the same week. There was no discernible difference between the quality or quantity of the flowers that these three plants produced. We didn't pinch the stems, which resulted in no noticeable difference in the heights of these plants.

Perhaps our soil was already healthy enough so that different fertilizers and even a lack of new fertilizer would not change the results.

Looking forward to great blooms from new varieties and old favourites in 2026.



Growing In Pots

Wayne Holland

I am in the Okanagan. It is dry. We have Pocket Gophers. Trapping gophers works but only *after* they eat your Dahlia and announce their presence. Poison works too, but can influence unintended animals. So I have gradually moved all my growing into pots. This is my report.

The potting mix I use is one third Promix or similar with garden soil and a time release fertilizer. Osmocote is available and Miracle Grow as well. My soil is a bit alkaline but most Coastal zones tend to be acidic and a bit of lime is appropriate. Dahlias are often listed as needing a lot of feed. The truth is they need regular nutrients over time. Typical fertilizer washes away, so slow delivery is better. Just a small hand full into the wheelbarrow as you mix up your pot fill. Get your filled pots ready and where you want them before planting. Really big pots can handle three seedlings.

You can stake beside the pot if it will be in place all season. If you plan to move it, you can put three bamboo stakes in it and tie together at the top. The stakes make a good spot for a label.

Seedlings will be happy in a two gallon pot. Tubers can use a bit more space. In the garden I dig a hole and plunge the pot, burying the bottom third or more. Roots will escape, but also the tuber zone will be cooler. This is quite important for my climate zone. I need to water every dry day in the Summer. Normal stopping keeps the plant compact and less wind vulnerable.

The most striking thing I have (finally!) learned is how to harvest and cure the tubers before dividing. Half a century ago I was in the old half underground shed at Ferncliff and I noticed that they brought in the harvest covered in dirt. I thought this was just a work flow issue. Everybody I knew washed the dirt off asap before the tubers came into the house. Well, look at the photo; a seedling from Hy Beacon (ID name Beacon 1 White), that has just been un-potted and

trimmed after a three week rest in a dry, frost free shed. Some sprouting occurred on the ten inch stems I left, but that *prevented* tuber shoot development. Apical dominance suppression. All my pots were lifted, tops cut back to ten inches, and moved into the frost free resting area.

Ferncliff was emulating the dry Winter Central American mountain weather where the tuber is primarily a water storage strategy. So I stumbled upon this perfect way to let the tubers do what comes naturally. No desiccation and excellent surface skin development (curing) that stiffens the tuber and reduces breakage, but also seals in the moisture so the tuber does not dry out. Soil goes back into the pot to be used, along with amendments, next year. Just stack them up out of the way.



Quest For Tubers

Vancouver Dahlia Society member Janis McGladrey is hoping other members can help her find a tuber of Kelgai Ann. If you have one to spare, or know of someone who does, please contact her at j.logs@shaw.ca



Wayne Holland's massive collection of protective pots to ward off gophers.



Dahlia Kelgai Ann

If you're on a quest for tubers, email thebulletin@vancouverdahliasociety.ca with the details!

The Last Word

Andrew Murdoch

Who owns a Dahlia?

This would seem a simple question to anyone who has attended a tuber sale, but some Dahlia breeders have been trying to exert influence where it no longer reasonably should.

Such is the case with the Dahlias of Kristine Albrecht. She has taken the unusual step of registering a trademark on not only her Dahlias' usual prefix – KA's – but also on the Dahlia names themselves. Plant Breeders Rights and Plant Patents exist specifically for the purpose of protecting a cultivar developer's interests, but the process is long and expensive, and so it is usually reserved for agricultural plants which can take years or decades of interbreeding to get just the right traits. Albrecht bypassed that in favour of the simpler method of protecting not the plant itself, but its name.

Using trademark law to create rights where they don't or no longer exist is not a new thing. Authors or their heirs have been using this tactic to effectively extend copyright for decades. For example, the science fiction novel *Armageddon 2419 A.D.* by Philip Francis Nolan is, after nearly a century, in the public domain. New projects based on it can't easily proceed, however, because Nolan's family, through a holding company, own a trademark on the name of the novel's hero – Buck Rogers.

Ironically, Albrecht showed considerable nerve in registering a trademark on the name "Khaleesi", a term from George R.R. Martin's novel *A Game Of Thrones*. While the term was previously trademarked in reference to the novel and its subsequent TV series, neither Martin nor HBO appear to have thought of registering it as a trademark for agricultural products, and Albrecht took full advantage of that oversight.

At issue, however, is what has been done with those trademarks. Albrecht describes herself as a breeder of Dahlias only, and grants licenses to commercial growers with access to more land

to grow and disseminate her Dahlias in large quantities. But what she has also done is state that, going forward, any of her now-trademarked Dahlias cannot be sold by private individuals without her permission (and a cut). Although she has reversed this stance when it comes to Dahlia societies and their sales, it has nonetheless had a chilling effect on their desire to carry them, lest they expose themselves to liability.

Originators of new varieties do deserve recognition and some financial gain from their efforts, but unlike the agricultural products that take a great deal of time and expense to hybridize, it seems excessive to apply that same level of control to a plant that was produced with three years' of growing and the luck of the genetic draw. Had Albrecht marketed herself as the originator of her varieties, it might have made her stand out more than delegating that to others under threat of legal action.

It also flies in the face of centuries of agricultural and horticultural tradition. Plants, of course, are self-replicating and so a grower of either food or flowers has always made their living based on the final products they produce, not on whether other people have used their seeds or split their tubers. Hobby gardeners are often notoriously generous with others in sharing and re-sharing seed or other material to propagate more plants, and keep the cycle going.

It is that generosity that may be Albrecht's undoing. Trademarks can only protect against commercial sales of an item, not giving it away. Even if others sell them, the only way to keep a trademark is to protect it through legal action, which is a costly proposition no matter the product or business.

In the end, Albrecht's business plan may have made her merely more reviled among Dahlia lovers than revered. The Mother of Dragons, or Dahlias, stands to get burned.