Vancouver Dahlia Society

BULLETIN

July 2026



Vancouver Dahlia Society

Promoting Dahlia Growing Since 1955

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thebulletin@vancouverdahliasociety.ca

President's Message

Peter Krueger

The Dahlias are starting to bloom and the show season is fast approaching. We have two shows this year. The first one is on the Labour Day weekend at VanDusen and the second one is two weeks later at the West Coast Gardens in Surrey. It takes a lot of volunteers to pull them off and the show committee will need your help. Opportunity will be given at the July and August general meetings to sign up for volunteer positions. Especially important is that we find someone to stay until closing on Saturday so that Betty doesn't have to stay all day.



For the July general meeting we have invited Gerri Willms to do an arrangement workshop. She will use the blooms that we provide so, if you have any blooms in your garden, please bring them so she has lots to choose from.

Thank you Sandra, for your presentation on Dahlia photography. Now we can use what we have learned to take pictures of our Dahlias. Please remember to take them from the side of the bloom and not from the top. Make sure the blooms are fully mature and exhibition quality. The best time of day to take pictures is in the evening or when the sky is overcast, not in the full sun. Send your pictures to Tina (themcnabbs@telus,net) so she can update our photo registry. Include the name of the Dahlia and the classification.

Andrew, our Bulletin editor, is also looking for pictures of your blooms and your garden to include in a final Bulletin for the year to be published in November.

We are having two open houses (or open gardens) this summer. The first one is on Saturday, August 8 from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. The second one will be on Saturday, August 15 from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. Three gardens are registered for each of these days. The addresses are included in this Bulletin. There is still room for others to open their gardens on either of these dates. If you are interested, please let me know at the July meeting or through the club email.

Happy gardening and see you at the meetings and shows!

Upcoming Events

15 July 2026
7:30 P.M.
VDS General Meeting
Floral Hall,
VanDusen Botanical Garden
5251 Oak Street
Topics: Gerri Willms on Floral Arrangements using Dahlias.

25 July 2026
10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
Judges Training
Snohomish County PUD,
Everett, WA.
and
Agnus Dei Lutheran Church,
Gig Harbor, WA.

8 August 2026
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
VDS Open House
[redacted]

15 August 2026
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
VDS Open House
[redacted]

15 August 2026 (one day only)
Fraser Valley Society Dahlia Show
7:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
King Road Church Gym
32068 King Road, Abbotsford, BC.
Entries (no staging available) 7:30 - 9:30 A.M.
Judges' and Clerks' meeting 9:30 - 9:45 A.M.
Judging begins 9:45 A.M.
Awards 4:30 P.M.
Show Closes 5:00 P.M.

19 August 2026
7:30 P.M.
VDS General Meeting
Floral Hall,
VanDusen Botanical Garden
5251 Oak Street
Topics: Dahlia Show Preparation

29 – 30 August 2026
Nanaimo Gladiolus And Dahlia Society Show
See nanaimogladiolusanddahliasociety.ca for details.
Judges and Clerks are needed. RSVP by 1 August 2026.

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.

Gerri Willms
July Meeting Guest

Gerri joined the BC Floral Art Society after she retired more than 10 years ago; she is presently Program Leader and President of the club. She is also a certified floral art judge and is a member of the Society of Horticultural and Floral Design Judges of BC.

Gerri tells us she is constantly learning more about floral art herself… by organizing and participating in her club's monthly program, entering flower shows, judging, taking advanced judging courses, and doing demonstrations. When she travels to England and Europe or anywhere, she tries to take in flower shows, visits famous gardens, and watches the "trends". Next March, Gerri will attend the World Flower Show in Sydney, Australia and, along with Ann Peters, will design an honourary exhibit and do a demonstration on behalf of the Canadian Western Association of Floral Art Clubs. The connection the Vancouver Dahlia Society and flower arranging clubs have in common is the affiliation with the BC Council of Garden Clubs, and BCCGC is the official coordinator of flower arranging courses. Gerri will be the demonstrator at our meeting on July 15th and will give us some tips and design info to prepare us for the floral art portion of our Show in September.



Transporting Blooms To A Show
Betty Girard

Many of us have marvelled when Connie and Colin drive up with their van just loaded with flowers. Colin has made custom made wooden braces that hold all of Connie's entries in place. As she unloads each layer, he undoes the next brace until more than 100 blooms have come out of the van. It reminds me of the scene in Mary Poppins where all of her wonderful belongings come out of a single carpet bag.

That is probably the highest tech system we see, but then there is everything in between. Perhaps a family member has been pressed into service to hold your precious entry on their lap or you have repurposed pop bottles and milk crates. Jennifer has these wonderful reinforced cardboard boxes that once held lab beakers that she has used for years. Personally, I prefer to tie my vases into the corners of milk crates. It isn't the most efficient use of space, but generally I can fit all of my entries into my vehicle.

And if your trip is long the air conditioning has been on full for the flowers with the seat heaters doing their best to keep you warm. Whatever way you decide to transport blooms, it is important that the stems remain in water and the blooms are not allowed to bang into each other as you go around corners. Of course, the smaller blooms are a lot easier to transport and a lot more forgiving if they get jostled around.

There will be vases and show supplies at the VanDusen show on the evening before and the morning of the show. Please consider bringing a bloom or two in and there will be lots of help in getting them on the showbench.

Volunteer Opportunities At The Show

The Show Committee

Volunteer sign up sheets will be at the meeting but the show committee wanted to highlight a couple of important roles in addition to many other jobs that are needed.

- Show Records and Awards
  One or two volunteers are needed to assist with completing the show records and compiling the awards on the Saturday morning of each show from 10 am to noon. No experience is necessary but attention to detail is needed. Susan will be bringing a laptop and creating spreadsheets for this, and will need assistance with result collection and data entry.

- Show Properties
  One or two volunteers are needed to load their vehicles with show properties being stored at Jennifer's in Coquitlam and moving them to VanDusen on Friday September 4th at 3 pm and returning them to her garage on Sunday September 6th. You don't need to do both trips, but could do either drop off or return.

- Coffees and Lunches
  A volunteer is needed to pick up donuts and muffins for Saturday September 5th and coffee, donuts and muffins for Saturday September 19th for 7 am.

Please consider signing up for a volunteer role at the show. Your assistance is appreciated!

Getting (and Keeping) Dahlias in "The Book"

Betty Girard

"The Book" in this case is the American Dahlia Society Classification and Handbook of Dahlias which is published annually and available online at dahlia.org

This pocket-sized reference book is indispensable to anyone who shows or judges Dahlias. It contains the standard form definitions for all Dahlias and lists the names, form, colour and hybridizer for every Dahlia that has been registered with the ADS and has won at least three blue ribbons in the previous two years. It also has the classification numbers and synopsis of the wins for each variety in the previous year. It also lists any special awards that a variety may have won.

The Fabulous Fifty and the Cream of the Crop listings that are compiled from The Book are excellent ways to pick the very best varieties for growing and showing. These can be brand new varieties or something as old as Little Beeswings (P F) which, despite being introduced in 1909, still won 13 blue ribbons and higher in 2025. If you like something a certain hybridizer has introduced you can use The Book to find out what other varieties are available. For instance, Peter has 23 varieties in the current edition.

Finally, if you have a special Dahlia that you would like to see or to remain in The Book, consider showing it. If it gets a blue ribbon or higher at one of our shows that information goes directly to the ADS classification committee for inclusion in the following year's edition.

Calling All First-Time Exhibitors!

Betty Girard

We have a special class at the VanDusen show for first time exhibitors and there is a great prize! No experience is necessary! If you have never shown before this is a great way to get your feet wet. There is no limit to the number of entries you can enter. There will be staging supplies and entry tags available at the show on Friday from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. and on Saturday morning from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. There will be volunteers to assist you.

It is easiest just to transport your bloom(s) to the show in a pop bottle or a narrow-necked vase. Try and cut the stem long enough to have a pair of leaves.

Good Luck!





Call For Photos!

Andrew Murdoch

By now, if we're fortunate, at least a few of our Dahlias should be in bloom. So, of course, now is a good time to start photographing them!

Once again this November we will publish an all-photos issue of the Bulletin, featuring nothing but pages and pages of your blooms! And there's no better time to start collecting photos than as soon as they start.

When submitting photos, please do not put any writing or captions on them but do include your name and, for pictures of individual flowers, the name of the cultivar, if known.

Send your photos to the Bulletin email address, thebulletin@vancouverdahliasociety.ca by November 1st, 2026, and share the beauty of your gardens with all the members.

The Last Word

Andrew Murdoch

At last, Summer is upon us!

Perhaps the time we gardeners look forward to the most, it is a time of warmth, of growth, of beauty. It is when we can at last appreciate the hard work we put into our yards and gardens and see the beautiful results.

All time spent in Nature is precious and special, but Summer encourages it to entirely new levels. It invites you to enjoy the outdoors simply, immediately, without pausing to add new layers of clothes, sometimes without even bothering with shoes.



No other time of the year reminds us of our connection to the Natural world quite like Summer, and we can revel in it with all our senses. There is the feel of the Sun on our skin, the scent of flowers and herbs, and the sight of beautiful Dahlias. What better way to experience our relationship to the Earth?

As always, we garden to bring a little bit of Nature closer to ourselves, and in so doing, ourselves a little closer to Nature. With plants and bees and butterflies surrounding us, it becomes our own little oasis securing us in another world.

Take a moment. Take many moments. Take the time to watch the ever changing shapes of flower buds as the gradually work their way open, day by day. Marvel at each new thing you discover in the morning. Lose yourself again in the thrill of revelation that was the whole reason you started planting in the first place.

Autumn can wait, but it won’t. Summer is here now!