



News from ADS!

September thoughts from the dahlia patch...

September is the month we have anticipated since the tubers sat in the flats with just hints of eyes. The blooms of August struggled against the heat and long days. September is the balance point, equipoise in the growing year.



In order to bring the plants to their peak and encourage floriferousness, experience shows that it is necessary to remove the spent blooms. One thought is that making seed diverts energy from bloom-making. I suspect that there are more complex chemical interactions that favor deadheading.

Some blooms lose their florets (petals) quickly and begin to form seed pods at what was the base of the bloom. Some new growers sometimes mistake new buds for seed pods, particularly on single flowers. Seed pods tend to be conical, and flower buds are round. Visit this [YouTube presentation](#) on disbudding that illustrates the difference.

Depending on the weather, dahlias may develop powdery mildew on the foliage. This will not likely kill the plant, but it is unsightly in the garden and a fault on the show bench. You need to act quickly once you see the mildew appear. Go to a reliable garden center to get the right remedy. [Read what the Clemson Cooperative Extension has to say about powdery mildew.](#)



September is also the month to identify the most vigorous plants and those with the best blooms. Either mark the tags or make notes on the map you use for the patch. Once frost hits, they all look alike!

And lastly, September is the month to remove all plants that show signs of virus. Visit the [ADS website](#) for more information about virus in dahlias and to learn about ongoing virus research.

From the dahlia patch,
Harry Risetto

American Dahlia Society | www.dahlia.org

