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Dahlia Talk *from tubers to blooms*

Dahlias, the Queens of September
September 2022



Throwing some shade - photo by Debbie Pavich

The dahlias have moved to center stage. The days are getting shorter, the weather cooler, and rain showers more frequent. The blown and green blooms of August are mostly gone. The September blooms open more slowly and the centers develop to standard.

We are in the Adirondacks and will not exhibit this year. I judged at the New York State Fair Dahlia Show last week. The entries had good form and size. I have seen show pictures on Facebook and the season appears typical as it moves from West to East.

There are about a dozen plants here in our garden, and while the plants are shorter than in Virginia, the blooms have decent size and form. We have had a lot of rain lately, so I have added more liquid potash and nitrogen to the sandy soil. I have added a second tie to most of the plants and have removed the side shoots on the stalks that will make blooms with long stems for cutting. I have seen photos of buds surrounded by side shoots, and they are unappealing. I grow dahlias for the blooms, and I like them to stand out even if I do not intend to cut them.



Some cultivars tend to make buds on very short stems. The blooms become crotch-buried in the foliage on the bloom stem. Because I am not exhibiting, I can remove some of the foliage on the bloom stem. This gives the bloom a longer stem and better position suitable for a vase.

The other problem in September is powdery mildew on the foliage. The easiest response is to remove affected leaves. There are also home remedies ([info here](#)) or products from the garden center. Powdery mildew will not harm the plant. There may be broad and spider mites on the top and bottom of the plant respectively. The broad mites are disfiguring and may stunt blooms. You can cut the infected stems or apply an appropriate spray. If you detect small spidery webs on the underside of the lower leaves, remove them and put them in the garbage.

Unless you intend to groom for seed, cut off the spent blooms to encourage successors. I take the necessity of this on faith. However, plants have weird chemical interactions and signals. Most of us want tubers at the end of the season. Roots and stems develop from similar cells, perhaps there is a connection. [Learn](#) more here.

Every year I give tubers to gardening friends who grow them like tomatoes. They are pleased by the outcome and ask for more tubers the next year. It's all about the blooms, gardeners.



There are dahlia shows and exhibitions all over the dahlia-growing world this time of year.

The snapshot left shows (part of) the Court of Honor at the recent Midwest Dahlia Conference Show in Shipshewana, Indiana. The show was sponsored by the Elkhart Dahlia Society and included exhibitors from throughout the Midwest. It was a great show and a fun time for all!

[Check](#) the ADS website for a show near you.

In the Northwest check out shows listed [here](#).

The ADS National Show, sponsored by the National Capital Dahlia Society, will be held in Virginia September 24-25, near the Dulles International Airport. More information [here](#).



Hope to see you at the National Show,

Harry Risetto

What is Meristem?

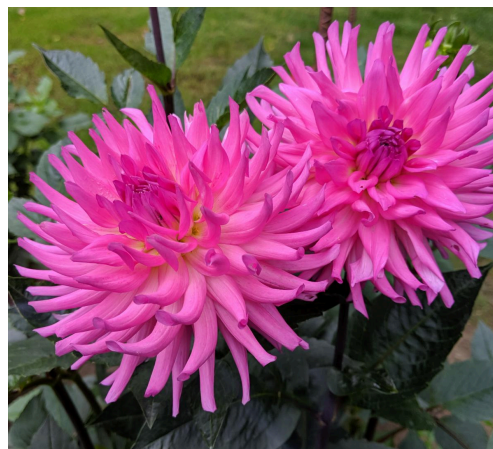
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