

## **The Dahlia Society of Nova Scotia**

Dahlias have always been a popular flower here in Nova Scotia but apart from a few flower show exhibitors who were obtaining quality stock most gardeners were growing the old yellow, pink or red small decoratives with weak stems . After Arthur Haskins visited the National Dahlia Show in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, he began searching out fellow dahlia growers who would be interested in setting up a Dahlia Society. In January 1985 Arthur arranged an organizational meeting where ten keen dahlia growers established a society.

The membership soon grew and has maintained a healthy level of 50-60 members. The society began to promote dahlias at local malls and events with tables of beautiful blooms and lots of grow sheets and advice. This is still a great way to get new members. We have three newsletters per year, an active Facebook page, a home page, dahlia tuber auction, regular meetings with dahlia related topics at each.

We co-sponsor a two day event with a large Victorian Garden located in downtown Halifax where we set up a tent with named cut dahlias on display right next to the gardens own planting of dahlias. This 'Dahlia Days' event also features one of Canada's top floral designers where he demonstrates the use of dahlias which are supplied by the society in his many creations. We hold tuber sales, and we have just started to support small volunteer community gardens with tubers, rebar, tomato cages and grow sheets for their visitors.

We hosted the American Dahlia Society National Show in 1997 and again in 2005 in Halifax right on the waterfront. The society continues to grow slowly but gone are the large rural properties where members grew hundreds if not thousands of dahlias and we had large shows and displays to now where most of our members are urban with small plots and grow just a few dahlias. This has restricted our ability to promote the dahlia directly to the public and has left only the internet to get the information out.

The exploding popularity of the 'Dahlia' has been encouraging and we hope to keep our favorite flower in the spotlight for years to come.