

AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY  
NATIONAL SHOW GUIDELINES

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## **Putting on a National ADS Dahlia Show Handbook**

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## **Planning a National Dahlia Show**

Why does the American Dahlia Society want or need an Annual National Dahlia Show hosted by different dahlia societies throughout the United States and Canada?

Since the ADS is all about the dahlia and most of our societies put on an annual dahlia show anyway, why not travel around the country and put the spotlight on one special show each year, hosted by different societies. For the dahlia enthusiasts this is a fantastic opportunity to expose and immerse themselves in new people, and ideas. It is an opportunity to learn more about growing, showing, judging, and hybridization and other aspects of dahlia culture. Plus, you get to meet a wonderful group of individuals from all over the country and sometimes around the world. It can be quite an elaborate affair in a 4-star hotel ballroom, or it can be as simple as a dahlia show at the local grange hall or county fair. But do expect more flowers than usual to show up. The Saturday evening banquet can be a dress up affair with a gourmet meal, or a barbecue in someone's back yard with casual attire. If there is food, and recognition of the show winners and the ADS can hand out a few awards for the hard work done on the ADS's behalf, it will be a successful event.

Typically, the ADS Annual Meeting is held during the National Show where Executive Board members and Committee Chairs meet to inform the membership of their activities and for the members to ratify those actions as required by the By Laws. The Annual Meeting is open to all ADS members throughout the USA and Canada. So, the National Show is an ideal venue for this meeting.

## **ADS National Show Committee – Division of Labor**

**General Show Chairperson**- should be well organized, detail-oriented and a good communicator.

**General Show Co-Chair** – compliments and helps the general show chair.

**Registration /Treasurer** – manages the money, organizes registrations, and communicates with the attendees. Responsibilities include:

- Budget
- Registrations & Exhibitor Numbers
- Registration Packet for Participants – can be organized by others but should be available at the registration booth.

**Show Venue Coordinator(s)** – one or two persons to coordinate and communicate with the show and accommodation facilities. Responsibilities include:

- Accommodations
- Banquet & Meals, Coffee/Tea/Snacks/Water Service
- Thursday Evening Social
- Show Logistics - before and after
- Reserving Seminars & Meeting Rooms

- Reserving Audio/Visual Equipment for Meetings, Seminars, and Show Banquet

**Theme/Logo** - usually decided by the show committee early in the process.

- Theme and Logo to be used in promotion and branding for the show.

**Tours/Activities** - Responsibilities include:

- Buses/ Lunch/Snacks & Water/ Restroom Stops
- Bus Schedule – Best travel routes and timing of stops.

**Show Seminars** - Responsibilities include:

- Organizes seminars for the exhibitors and public such as research updates, hybridizing, Dahlias 101, etc.
- Help organizing a Judging Seminar (the ADS Executive Board can assist with the seminar).

**Publicity** –to promote the show using the ADS Bulletin, Website, Social Media, TV, Radio, & Newsprint

**Show Chair** - Responsibilities include:

- Obtaining Show Containers and Supplies
- Show Layout Design
- Head Table/Court of Honor
- Signage for winning exhibits
- Awards/Ribbons
- Prepare and publish a Show Schedule
- Prepare and print Exhibitor Tags

**Judges Chair** – Responsibilities include:

- Assemble and Manage Judging Teams
- Head Table Management and Judging
- Prepare Show Winners List for Banquet and publication

**Technology** - Individual to coordinate all audio/visual needs during the event.

**Show Photographer and/or Videographer** – to provide a digital record of the event

**Volunteer Coordinator** – organizes volunteers to keep everything and everyone working smoothly.

Keep the National Show Committee small. It's easier to organize meetings with a smaller group. A dedicated group of 8 to 12 main individuals, who get along well, are willing to participate and take responsibility for more than one area of the show (if needed) works very well. It is a stressful time and a large time commitment as the show date gets closer. Remember, your main goal will be to put on a great show and remain friends once it is all over.

### **ADS Responsibilities**

- The ADS provides funding of \$3,400.00 to the host society, which is disbursed a year before the event. This includes funds for an ADS Memorial Award entry of the host society's choice. If the host society does not need some or all the funding it can be returned to the ADS.
- The ADS provides space in the Bulletin, Web Site, Facebook page, and Instagram to promote the show.
- The ADS requests the host society make time and rooms available (and associated audio-visual equipment) on Saturday for progress reports on ADS research projects and a judging seminar. Other seminars can be planned by the ADS or host society and these events are open to all attendees and show guests.
- The ADS requests the host society to make available meeting rooms (and associated audio-visual equipment) on Sunday morning for the Classification Committee meeting and ADS Annual Meeting – open to all attendees.
- The ADS Treasurer will disburse the prize money awarded to a successful candidate winning the Boeke Award.
- The ADS will review the show schedule to verify that it follows the ADS guidelines.

### **Host Society Responsibilities**

- The host society needs to find a venue and make all arrangements for the show.
- The host society needs to provide rooms equipped with audio/visual equipment for the judging seminar, Classification meeting and Annual Membership Meeting and other meeting space as required. If there are extra ordinary expenses associated with providing meeting spaces for ADS activities, the ADS will assist the local society as needed.
- A show schedule needs to be prepared and sent to the ADS National Show Chairperson and the ADS President for approval as soon as it is ready and before printing to ensure all exhibition classes have been included.
- Every National Show should have a section for Arrangements. Participants do not have to grow the flowers they use in their arrangements. The Host Society should supply extra flowers and greens for their guests.
- To accommodate out-of-town visitors the host society should consider having a Photography Section in their show. Traveling participants enjoy being able to participate in the National Show by being able to enter a Photography class.
- The host society must be ready to publicize their show, Arrangement Section, and tour information with Registration Forms on the ADS Facebook page, ADS Web Site, and the March and June Quarterly Bulletin in the year of the show.
- All judging teams need to have a majority number of Senior or Accredited judges and if possible, a local judge to answer questions about local society show rules and procedures.
- The host society needs to have a registration desk. You may provide a registration bag or (goodie bag) holding show information, name badges, meal tickets, tour information, etc.

- The host society must provide a suitable award (monetary or gift) given in the name of the ADS and named the ADS Memorial Award to an entry of the host society's choice which will come out of the \$3,400.00 provided by the ADS.
- The host society should be aware that there may be guest speakers that would benefit from free lodging while attending the show. Sometimes hotels provide several complementary rooms which could be used for this purpose, and it would be nice to offer them, if available.
- Time needs to be afforded the ADS Special Awards Chair at the banquet for awards presented by the ADS President and Special Awards Committee (normally 30 minutes long).
- An article on the National Show needs to be sent to the ADS Bulletin Editor for the December Bulletin of the year of the show. The deadline for the article submission is October 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Thoughts to Keep In Mind While Planning**

- **First Figure Out What Type of Show** – Simple or Fancy. How many attendees expected? Be realistic, the number of attendees is getting smaller due to age and financial hardships.
- **Location** – easy to get to? Airport accessibility? Car Rentals? Close by restaurants for breakfast and dinner. Many points of interest?
- **Contracts** - There must be good contracts with the show venue. Be aware of liquid damages if quotas are not met (food budget or room nights). Understand the plus/plus hotel factor that adds gratuities and sales taxes to the food costs and may be higher than expected. Offering coffee at the seminars and meetings is a nice touch, however it could be expensive, you may want to just offer water service. Understand your room nights block and the ramifications if not met.
- **Registration** - There are many options. Exhibitors coming from short to long distances who will be exhibiting at the show should have the option to purchase a Full Registration. Hopefully, they will stay in the show hotel and support the efforts of the local society while enjoying the full experience of a National Show. Typically, the Full Registration includes the Thursday evening social, the Saturday luncheon, and the Saturday night banquet dinner. Many people want the full experience offered by the National Show. However, some of their partners will only want to attend the lunch and/or dinner and perhaps a tour or two. Offering a reduced registration just for the Saturday meals is an option. Local attendees who arrive on Saturday morning to enter their flowers may appreciate a reduced Partial Registration that excludes the Thursday evening costs. The ADS recommends that the local society should encourage Junior Exhibitors to compete in the National Show. You should consider a reduced registration fee for Junior Exhibitors.
- **It is useful to give each exhibitor a separate exhibitor number** - different from their usual exhibitor number just for a National Show.
- **Boutique** – carefully consider how much store merchandise you should purchase. It is far better to sell out than have a lot left over. Consider pre-selling a show T- shirts – by adding it to your registration form.
- **Tours** - Many of the show attendees will be new to your area, share what they are seeing out the window while traveling from stop to stop on the tour. Make sure you have budgeted to cover the full cost of the bus even if it's not fully booked. You may have to cancel the tour or

find a smaller bus. Pass the hat on the trip back to the hotel so tour guests can show their appreciation to the bus driver.

- **Gifts for Participants** - Remember, many of the attendees must fit them into their luggage. Something foldable with your show logo is one possibility.
- If the show is held at a different type of venue other than a hotel. Then there may be additional charges such as tables, and tablecloths, tents for exhibitors to stage their blooms and admission charges at venues such as large botanical gardens.
- One of the best ways to learn and understand how to put on a national show is to have members on your team attend at least 1 or 2 shows before your event.

## **Budget**

- This is perhaps the most important step in hosting a National Show. Usually there is a four-or-five-year time frame to work with, and this gives you time to build up funds that will be needed for the event. Your budget team needs to look at every aspect of the show and the accompanying costs. Negotiate hard with hotels/venues regarding the cost of rooms and food; be aware of the additional costs such as taxes, gratuities, cost of audio-visual services, podium, etc. Look at deadlines for booking blocks of rooms so you don't get penalized for rooms that aren't sold. Read the contracts and understand them fully, you don't want to "assume" anything, ask for clarification.
- Many hotels will reduce charges for show facilities on a sliding scale based on the number of rooms booked, so having tours or additional events either before or after the show can help increase booked rooms that could reduce facility charges. When negotiating a room rate try to extend the same rate a few days before and a few days after the show as some participants may wish to come early or stay later as an extended vacation, these add to your total of room nights which could lower facility charges.
- Estimate the donations you expect to receive from other societies and individuals, in addition to the funds received from the ADS. These donations may cover your show awards and prizes. You will need a good estimate of how many attendees you expect. Other dahlia societies can provide information about the number of attendees at their National Shows. Do not be over optimistic, but realistic. Expect that some locals will be attending the show but will not be staying at the show hotel.
- Ideally, your registration fees and donations would cover all the costs of the national show. But you can expect that you will need to spend an additional \$5,000 to \$8,000 to host a National Show. See the Sample Budget Worksheet on the next page.

## Sample National Show Budget Worksheet

### Income

| Registrations                     | Qty       |           | Budget   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Full Registration – Exhibitor     | 110       | \$ 145.00 | \$15,950 |
| Full Registration – Non Exhibitor | 65        | \$ 130.00 | \$ 8,450 |
| Full Registration – Junior        | <u>12</u> | \$ 50.00  | \$ 600   |
| Subtotal Registrations            | 187       |           |          |
|                                   |           |           |          |
| Sat. Lunch Only-(with Exhibitor)  | 25        | \$ 30.00  | \$ 750   |
| Sat Banquet Only-(with Exhibitor) | 45        | \$ 50.00  | \$ 2,250 |

### Tours

|                                   |    |          |                 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----------|-----------------|
| Friday Tour-Dahlia Garden/History | 50 | \$ 50.00 | <u>\$ 2,500</u> |
| Total Registration & Tour         |    |          | \$30,500        |

### Donations

#### Organizations

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Hosting Society | \$ 5,000 |
| ADS             | \$ 3,400 |

#### Other

|                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Individual Sponsors – Awards | <u>\$ 2,500</u> |
| Total Donations              | \$10,900        |

### Miscellaneous Sales-Net of Costs

|                             |        |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| T-Shirts, Misc. Merchandise | \$ 500 |
|-----------------------------|--------|

Total Income All Sources \$41,900

### Expenses

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Promotion-Poster, Ads, Website                          | \$ 1,500               |
| Registration-Supplies, Postage, Printing                | \$ 400                 |
| Hospitality-Gift Bags, Signage, Name Badges             | \$ 4,000               |
| Show-Venue Rental, Staging Material, Head Table, Awards | \$14,000               |
| Catering-Thurs Social, Sat Lunch, Sat Banquet           | \$17,000               |
| Tours-Bus & Food  | \$ 2,500               |
| Seminars-AV, Printing                                   | \$ 400                 |
| Entertainment-Thurs Social, Sat Banquet                 | \$ 900                 |
| Special Guests-Honorarium, Travel, Comp Expenses        | <u>\$ 1,000</u>        |
| Total Expenses  | <u><u>\$41,700</u></u> |

Net Gain or Loss \$ 200

## **Fundraising.**

- A host society should plan on having \$5,000 to \$8,000 on hand to supplement their overall national show budget. Currently the American Dahlia Society provides \$3,400.00 in funding for the host society which is dispersed a year in advance of their national show. Ideally, your club will have 4 to 5 years to earn additional funds for the national show through raffles, tuber and plant auctions, pie socials, etc. A show award sponsorship program for your members and other societies has proven to generate income needed for hosting a national show. The dollar amount of these donations can be pre-determined and the opportunity to participate should be announced sufficiently ahead of the event. Many dahlia societies understand the financial needs in hosting the ADS National Show and you should not hesitate to contact the local dahlia societies within the ADS to ask for donations. Also, check with your local economic or tourism development agencies – to see if there are grants or other assistance to help promote your show.
- Selling raffle tickets for a special item or even a silent auction with several items during the show can help raise funds. In the past, some societies have held a “Dahlia Boutique” in a room at the show where dahlia related articles are sold such as T-shirts, cookbooks, handicrafts featuring dahlias, aprons, calendars, etc.
- Acknowledging all forms of financial support is important; a list of donors in your show book is well advised.

## **Tours**

- The goal is to have the tours, except self-guided ones, be financially self-sufficient. Typically, the tours are separate items on the registration form. The fee for the tours should cover the costs of buses, food, water etc. Be sure to check if you must supply a meal for the bus driver as well. It is best to have committee members travel the tour route beforehand to work out a suitable route and schedule for the bus to follow. Verify that a bus will fit into the locations you are planning to visit, and that there is enough turnaround room to turn a bus around if needed. You should allow enough time for unloading and loading at each stop (it usually takes about 20 minutes at each stop to get the guests on and off the bus). The big tour buses usually seat 50 to 55 individuals. There are smaller buses available that seat 12 to 25 individuals. If you do not get enough individuals signing up for a tour, you may have to cancel it. Work with your bus vendor to see what numbers they can accommodate. You should have at least 2 of your members on board guiding the bus driver and lead the group. Be sure to count your guest on and off the bus – you’d hate to leave someone in error.
- Know that some participants can only walk short distances, while others can walk long distances. You may need to provide or have available chairs or benches for those who cannot stand too long. While traveling on the bus, communicate and entertain your guests with where they are going, what they are going to see, point out local points of interest, the history of the area, etc. Make the bus ride fun for your guests by playing a dahlia-related game or giving them a special food treat from the local region. Attendees to national shows do not have to go to someplace special, we’re all gardeners and we want to see how you grow your dahlias. So, stopping at your members’ gardens is a real treat for most of us. If you are visiting private

dahlia gardens you should consider providing portable toilets. Cookies, pop, fruit, and water are nice treats for your guests. Be sure to plan enough time at each location. Supply enough tables and chairs to allow your guests to sit and talk while waiting for the buses to reload.

- One of the reasons for the Friday Tour is to keep the long-distance attendees busy, so you can finalize your show preparations. Another reason for these tours is to give your guests a look at local scenery and points of interest. The tours can be used to hold attendees over another night which could help fill your room night commitment to your hotel.
- At some National Shows there has been a half day tour on Sunday to keep the non-exhibiting guests busy for the final day of the show. This could be a potluck or boxed lunch at one of the local dahlia gardens or a destination botanical garden, nursery, or park. Some participants will leave after the show closes; others may want to stay on another night to attend a Monday tour if offered. A guest speaker on Sunday evening after dinner is a good draw to keep participants another night in the show hotel. The Monday tour can be an all-day affair and allows for destinations at a greater distance from the show venue. After the show finally closes, your local members may want to attend the Monday tour. This is a time when the work and duties are done, and they can enjoy themselves along with the rest of us.
- Don't forget to tip your bus drivers. They are an integral part of your tour team. Pass a hat around the bus and let the attendees show their appreciation of a job well done.

### **Some Things to Consider When Choosing a Hotel**

- Perhaps the greatest unknown in hosting a National Show is making the arrangements for accommodations and meals.
- When choosing a hotel that fits all the show needs try to book a date when the hotel would have few if any other conventions at the same time. For instance, if the hotel relies on mostly corporate business, then Labor Day weekend might be a flat weekend for them, and they would be willing to adjust their rates down just to have the ADS National Show fill in that weekend.
- Don't accept the first offer from a hotel, visit others and don't hesitate to play one against the other.
- Make sure you understand what the total costs are in your contract with the venue. Do not overlook the gratuities and/or taxes that will be added to the catering costs.
- Your committee needs to have a check list of all the items you will require from the hotel, and they need to carefully check each one.
- What is the best room price they can offer to your guests and establish that they will offer that same rate a few days before and a few days after the National Show, the reason for this will become clear later.
- How many rooms will they hold in a block for your attendees up to a certain date when they release them to the public at a higher rate? Some hotels will want you to guarantee the sale of this block of rooms or charge you for a certain number if that goal is not reached.
- Negotiate that number down to as low as possible and encourage attendees to register as early as possible to fill the quota.

- The cost of a room for the show, rooms for setup, meetings and seminars need to be established and usually this cost can be negotiated on a sliding scale tied to the overall number of room nights booked by the attendees. In some cases, if a block of room nights is guaranteed, the meeting rooms will be at no cost. This is where it is important to negotiate room rates a few days ahead and a few days after the show to encourage attendees to come early and stay later as an extended vacation.
- An additional program or tour on Sunday afternoon and/or all-day Monday will hold over attendees and help increase your room night totals. The savings could mean a 25% or more reduction in the costs of the facilities.
- If you have a high number of reservations, hotels will sometimes offer a free room night or two, these could be used to host guest speakers or even the show chairperson to keep them on site for the entire show.
- Ask about audio-visual equipment use and cost for the banquet, guest speakers, seminars, and meetings.

### **Picking a National ADS Dahlia Show Venue**

- One of your first choices is to decide what type of venue you want to have for your National Show.
- One option is a hotel or similar facility with room enough for your show, meeting rooms, banquet rooms and lodging for your attendees to stay. A large hotel can offer you a banquet hall for the show and another large space for the Saturday luncheon and dinner banquet. In addition, they can offer a few smaller rooms within the hotel for meetings and seminars. Most hotels can cater for the Thursday evening social, Saturday lunch and the Saturday evening banquet. In addition, they offer coffee, cookies, donuts, drinks, water, etc. for the meeting rooms or staging area.
- Whatever the total costs you agree to with the hotel, they will add gratuities and taxes to the contracted amount (known as “plus/plus”).
- Normally, breakfast is not part of the registration package unless the host society provides it. Most hotels have cafés open early to accommodate their guests.
- Your contract with the hotel may include a total number of guaranteed “room nights”. If the room nights total is not met, you may be charged more – sometimes a great deal more.
- To increase room nights, offer Sunday and Monday tours and/or guest speakers in the evening. You’re trying to cover all those room nights.
- You’ll want to encourage your local attendees to stay the night Saturday and enjoy a full evening and not have to drive home late.
- Occasionally, the hotel will give you a free room night with say 50 room nights booked. You can use these free room nights for guest speakers or other deserving individuals of your choice.
- With this scenario, there’s a lot of worry about not meeting your maximum quotas. Normally you won’t know how you’re doing until the last minute as many people make last-minute decisions.
- Another option is two separate venues, one for the show and another one at a nearby hotel where the out-of-town guests can stay. City conference, convention, or exhibit centers, which

can provide large show rooms, with lots of smaller meeting rooms, and banquet facilities at affordable prices.

- You rent the show hall and any other needed meeting rooms.
- They may be able to cater the lunch and banquet meals.
- You will still have to meet a guaranteed food dollar amount, but usually it is less expensive than the hotel food costs.
- You would also have to plan with one or two hotels close to the conference center so that the show is a short distance away and would be easily walkable or a short drive.
- If planned well, you can use smaller meeting rooms at the hotel for the Sunday ADS meetings and for any meetings on Sunday or Monday evening.
- You'd not have to guarantee as many room nights since you won't have to cover the cost of the banquet hall. Less worry on your part.
- Or, you may have a local historical destination, or large botanical garden that would work for your show location, even provide meeting rooms if available.
- Ask about audio-visual equipment for meetings and the banquet.

### **Questions to Ask When Scouting for a Show Venue**

- When a society decides to host an ADS National Show they need to go in search of a suitable facility. Remember, there will be more flowers and exhibitors than a normal show – this is a National Show after all, and exhibitors want a chance to win something special. Here are a few guidelines to consider.
- Is the facility large enough to accommodate all the entries, arrangements, baskets, photography, special entries, ADS Seedling Bench, head table, etc.
- The facility should have good bright lighting for good judging and the ability to keep the show room cool.
- Does the facility have a loading dock or area for the exhibitors to drop off their blooms prior to staging or placement in the show. Will carts or dollies be available to move containers of blooms. Parking for exhibitors should be close to the loading area and/or staging area.
- Is there a room or area close to the loading dock which is large enough for the exhibitors to stage their flowers. Plan for the staging area to be crowded on Friday and Saturday morning prior to the show. Is the staging area close to the drop off area and large enough for many workstations to stage flowers and close to the show hall to place the staged entries on the show tables.
- Late night show access will depend on what the facility allows; some venues require security personnel on site when the facility is open after normal hours. You may have to pay for the security personnel, which is an added expense for the show.
- Exhibitors who come a day early will need a cool room to keep their blooms fresh; this can be simply a hotel room with the air conditioning turned up high. This cool room needs to be close to the staging area.

- The cool room can also contain extra flowers for use in table decorations for the lunch, dinner, registration table and for traveling exhibitors that will need flowers to complete their arrangements.
- Make sure the venue has enough tables for the show, so entries are not crowded. Allow for larger aisles between the tables for more visitors. Supply extra empty tables to facilitate judging of crowded sections; to be removed after judging.
- Add additional tables and space for the Head Table/Court of Honor. Now is not the time to crowd the entries.
- The Head Table/Court of Honor will be the focus point of the show, so is there enough room for it. You can expect many of the exhibitors and show guests to be around the Head Table/Court of Honor while the show is open.
- Use extra care in labeling the winners on the head table. List the cultivar, the Section won, the exhibitor's name and home society in large legible letters. The exhibitors may want to take the label home along with their winning ribbon.

### **Hosting a National Show at a Non-Hotel Location**

- Hosting a National Show where all the activities are located under one roof is probably the ideal situation, but this is not always possible. In some situations, a local hotel may not have the room capacity to host a large show and a banquet plus other needed space allotments.
- A City Convention or Conference Center can provide large show rooms suitable for both the show venue and the banquet venue with lots of smaller meeting rooms available as an effective alternative to an all-in-one large hotel. However, you will still need to find overnight accommodations for your attendees during the show.
- Other facilities may be available and quite suitable for hosting a National Show although not on the same site. For accommodations, several smaller hotels can be used to house attendees and a large meeting hall or two could be used to stage the show and banquet. Most attendees would have their own vehicles or rent one if they fly in, so different sites should not be a problem. There have been National Shows held at large destination gardens like Longwood Gardens, the Chicago Botanical Society, and the Frederick Meijer Gardens to name just a few.
- Some places may allow you to supply your own baked goods and coffee/tea at refreshment times as well. Be aware, if you don't use hotels you may have to supply your own audio-visual equipment and operator if needed. You may even have to rent extra tables and coverings for the show area, and this can be costly. Sometimes if you arrange to have a show at a commercial enterprise such as a garden center you may be able to strike a deal for cheaper rental or even free admission for the attendees for drawing many visitors to their facilities over the weekend.
- There are still more options available. Many clubs have a long-standing relationship with where they normally put on their show. In 2009 the Snohomish County Dahlia Society put on their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show in the Floral Hall in Forest Park where they have held their show for many, many years. They also used other buildings in the park for the full show. They worked with the Everett Parks Department in a most co-operative manner. They held the banquet and meetings in one of the local hotels. It was a wonderful show and even though we couldn't see the show hall after dinner, we all had a wonderful time.

- These are just a few ideas, what's available in your neighborhood? What lovely attractions would you like to share with your dahlia friends that would work for a dahlia show?

### **Meals/Refreshments**

- There must be a close working relationship with the hotel/venue in planning meals. There should be considerations for participants such as vegetarian requests and food allergies. Snack and refreshment breaks must be coordinated for exhibitors entering blooms as well as at meetings and the various stops on the bus tours. On the bus tours don't forget to include the bus drivers in your head count for meals.
- Review the menu carefully and remember this is not a feast for a king but a banquet meal for attendees. You want to have your attendees enjoy a nice meal but there are price limitations. This is the beginning of the negotiations on the food, meals, snacks, coffee/tea service for the total event, Thursday through Sunday. If you can, offer the participants a choice of meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian dinner meal with a salad before the main meal and a small dessert after dinner. The hotel may price the dinner meals separately or charge you at the highest plate amount for all. Normally hotels will not allow you to bring in any outside food or drink. Remember that all the food and drink that the hotel provides includes gratuities and taxes in that order. This can elevate prices drastically, even the lowly cup of coffee. It's nice to offer a cash bar on Thursday evening or Saturday evening before the banquet. Many attendees enjoy a glass of wine, beer, or a cocktail with dinner. Most establishments offer cash bars for a small fee; this will be greatly appreciated by the guests. Be aware that any alcohol related mishaps are not covered by the ADS General Liability Policy.
- Work closely with the food manager at the hotel. They quite often prepare a few additional meals, and it might be possible to squeeze in a few last-minute additions at the banquet. Also check to see how late you can cancel banquet meals without penalty. Work out a way to identify the special meal recipients with the food servers. Check to see if there is a minimum food consumption limit for the overall event and if not met do you have to pay the difference?
- If you plan on opening the show floor late into Friday evening and early Saturday morning before the show, you may want to offer a coffee/tea service with some light snacks, fruit, cookies, or donuts. You may offer the same service for the Sunday morning meetings and again if there will be a Sunday evening guest speaker.
- Attendees normally provide their own breakfast meals. In the hotel or going to an outside restaurant, or coffee shop.

## **The Show**

### **Typical 5 Day National Show Schedule**

**Thursday Evening Social** - before the show, many of the out-of-town visitors will start to arrive. You'll want to have early registrations available. Typically, the Thursday night social includes appetizers and/or deserts along with a no-host bar. Be aware that any alcohol-related mishaps are not covered by the ADS General Liability policy. Some National Shows have included entertainment such as a singer or small band. It is a casual get together to meet and greet our dahlia friends.

**Friday Bus Tour** - is for the out-of-town visitors to keep them busy as you are organizing and putting together your show. This is usually a bus tour to interesting local attractions, museums, arboretums, gardens, local dahlia gardens, or other points of interest in your area. Normally 2 to 3 stops with lunch provided or a lunch stop to buy your own. Leave by 8-9:00am and back by 4-6:00pm with dinner on your own. By having a cool room available to store their flowers the exhibitors can participate in this tour and still have time to stage their entries in the evening.

**Friday Day and Evening** - is for the arrival of flowers, staging your entries and filling up the show tables. The hours that the staging area is open will be determined by the host society and their venue. The information should be made available to all exhibitors. Snacks and drinks can be made available for participants. You'll want the registration table open and available for late participants. If you normally provide vases and oasis for the participants, continue to do so. However, be ready for more exhibitors (in other words – more supplies). If you do not normally provide staging supplies, be aware that exhibitors will be traveling great distances and may need some staging supplies; so, plan ahead.

**Saturday Morning** - staging and placement of exhibits will be finished early Saturday morning. You will want the registration table to be open on Saturday morning for late arrivals at the show. Typically, the placement of exhibits ends at 9:30 am and then the judges meeting is held. At the judges meeting any general announcements will be made, and the final judging assignment will be announced. It's prudent to have at least one competent judge from your area on each judging team to be sure the team judges correctly to your local rules and standards. Judging continues until all classes are judged and results are given to the Judges Chairperson, and all winners are at the Head Table.

**Saturday - Lunch** – plan the start time for lunch to ensure that all judging is completed including the Court of Honor/Head Table guest speaker's presentations.

**Saturday Afternoon** – this is an opportunity for all of us to learn something new. The host society should plan on having at least one or two meeting rooms with audio-visual equipment available for a judging seminar and informative seminars. The dahlia enthusiasts and the public enjoy seminars on growing techniques, hybridizing tricks, propagating with cuttings, etc. A panel of experienced growers answering any number of questions on dahlias is welcomed as well. Also, this can be an opportunity for discussion about our on-going ADS research programs on the virus and gnome projects. Late afternoon can be for personal time, enjoying the show, meeting other growers, or just taking a nap before the evening activities.

**Saturday Evening Awards Banquet** – typically the evening begins with a social hour starting at 6:00 pm. A cash bar will be welcomed by the guests to wind down after a long day of activities. Be aware that any alcohol-related mishaps are not covered by the ADS General Liability policy. Dinner can commence at 7:00 pm and during dessert, the ADS Officers like to take some time to speak to the attendees and to honor local and out of state individuals that have contributed to the success of the American Dahlia Society by passing out special awards. This usually takes approximately 30 minutes. We encourage the host society to present awards to the show winners and other attendees. Seeing pictures of the actual winning entries on a screen while passing out the awards, is always greatly appreciated by the attendees. The awards can be cash or merchandise; it is a National Show, so try to make the prizes a little better than usual. Also try to make the winning ribbons a little bigger and brighter than usual. After the banquet and awards, it is always nice to be able to walk through the show hall again without the public, to be able to talk about the entries, to take pictures, and to personally congratulate the winners.

**Sunday Morning - 9:00 am to 10:00 am – ADS Classification Committee Meeting** - This is when the ADS Classification Committee discusses classification issues, changes, and notifications. It's usually quite lively and interesting, open to all attendees.

**Sunday Morning – 10:00am to 12:00pm – ADS Annual Meeting**

This is the Annual Meeting for all members of the ADS. During the meeting, reports are given from Officers, Regional Vice Presidents, and Committee Chairs on the activities of the prior year. The members ratify the actions of the Executive Board for the past year, and we receive a report and recommendations from the (earlier) Classification Committee Meeting. There will be no New Business other than those actions required by the By Laws, open to attendees.

**Sunday Afternoon** – This is an opportunity to hold onto some of the out-of-town attendees for another night stay in the hotel (to maximize your room nights with the hotel), and to add some fun to your local participants that are waiting around for the show to close. If you plan a half day tour it can be to one of your local grower's home gardens; dahlia enthusiasts love nothing better than seeing how someone else grows their garden. A boxed lunch on the bus, or at the first stop is all that is necessary. Perhaps there is an interesting shopping mall, museum, or local attraction close by that would be suitable. Many individuals leave the show on Sunday after the ADS Meeting and the show closes. If you are planning on another tour on Monday, you may want to plan a small event in the hotel on Sunday evening.

**Sunday Evening** - Usually, dinner is on your own. After dinner is a good opportunity for another informative seminar, or possibly an updated report on one of the research projects the ADS is involved in. If you have a guest from overseas, this is a good opportunity for them to make a presentation. These can be good draws as many will want to see how dahlias are grown and/or exhibited in other countries.

**Monday Bus Tour – All Day – 8:00am to 5-6:00pm** - This is an opportunity for your local members to join the out-of-town attendees in the fun part of a National Show now that the stress of the show is over. This tour may be longer with 2 to 3 stops with longer stays at each stop. Typically, lunch is

provided or can be made available for purchase. Usually, dinner after the tour is on your own, or you might have a potluck put on by your society. This is the tour your members will want to attend, make it special. Participants may be leaving the hotel when they get back from the day tour, or they will stay another evening, again helping with those room nights.

## **Publicity**

- You cannot do too much publicity for any show; it should be directed to attract both dahlia enthusiasts and the public. The prime vehicles to advertise the National Show are the local societies website and/or social media sites. In addition, opportunities to advertise in the ADS Bulletin, the ADS website, and the ADS Facebook and Instagram sites will be provided. There are two groups you want to direct the publicity to. The first being promoting the National Show to members of the local dahlia societies within the ADS to get them interested in attending a National Show; some may even want to exhibit blooms. The second group to promote the National Show to is the public where your main aim is to get spectators to view the show and perhaps join your local dahlia society or a dahlia society near where they reside.
- You want to put as much publicity out as early as possible to other societies as well as your own society because you want good support from all ADS societies for this event. You can post a Save the Date announcement on the ADS website as early as nine to ten months prior to your event; you can coordinate this with the ADS website manager
- In March in the year of the show, you can have the ADS send information about your show and activities to the ADS Reps of the local dahlia societies.
- The ADS will offer as many pages as you need in the Spring (June) Bulletin in the year of the show. Information to include are the dates, location, the show registration form, the hotel or lodging information, show events, tours, and local points of interest. **Remember that the deadline for each Bulletin is six weeks prior to the first of the month of issue.**
- In addition, a link to your show website can be added to the ADS website. Contact the ADS website manager to arrange this.
- The longer attendees stay at the host hotel the more room nights you accumulate which could lower your room rental charges, so promote local attractions to encourage people to make a mini vacation out of the trip to the show. The ADS has a great ADS website, so take advantage of that outlet and of course place lots of good information and photos on the ADS Facebook and Instagram pages to stir up lots of enthusiasm to attend the show. In addition, the ADS Publicity/Social Media Committee may have information that will help you with promoting the National Show.
- Grab any free publicity you can get, be it in newspapers, radio, television, local Real Estate pamphlets, bulletin boards, farmer's markets, seniors expos, garden clubs or whatever. You never know who will see it and be interested in attending. To encourage the public to come and view the dahlias on display plan to place articles with colorful photos in local newspapers and be sure to have someone at hand during the show to do an interview. Some local newspapers or TV stations may be looking for interesting feature stories at that time of year. Radio interviews with local growers or a dahlia expert giving tips on a local garden show can draw attention to the show. It is amazing how a bouquet of dahlia blooms dropped off at a

television or radio station may help you get noticed. Also, check your local economic or tourism development agencies to see if there are grants or other assistance to help promote your show.

- The more visitors you attract, the greater the chance these people will gain an interest in growing dahlias and sign up as new members of your society. Be sure to have some information on growing dahlias and on how to join your society as a handout for the public at the information table at the show.

## **Registration**

- Once your budget has been worked out, you can set the price of registration. Host societies try to keep the registration fee comparable to the recent past, allowing for inflation of course, but some areas have a higher cost than others. The registration fee for prior National Shows has ranged from \$80 to \$150. Although the registration fee should cover the major expenses such as meals and facilities rental, some societies cover extra items that make their event more memorable for the participants. It is not uncommon for the host society of a National Show to spend \$5,000 to \$8,000 on the show.
- Once you have determined the fee for registration, tour(s), and other events you will need to prepare a registration form for the show. The registration form should request each registrant to provide the following information:
  - Contact information including email address
  - Home dahlia society
  - Entering Artistic Design - yes or no and approximate number of entries
  - Entering Photograph Section – yes or no and approximate number of entries
  - Judging or Clerking
  - Judging Status
  - Exhibiting – yes or no and approximate number of entries
  - Exhibiting Division or Group (Novice, Amateur, or Open – Small or Large Grower, etc.)
  - Show Tags Needed – yes or no and if needed, approximate number of tags requested
  - ADS Seedling Bench – yes or no and approximate number of entries
  - Meal Options
  - Tour Options
- Once a registration form has been printed in the Bulletin or posted on your society's website, it is time to prepare to accept registrations from those attending the National Show. Some societies set up a separate bank account for the show and as registrations come in, the monies are deposited into this account. When a registration is received the participant's information should be placed in a spread sheet or other database. Also, at this time an e-mail needs to be sent acknowledging their registration. Most shows have the attendees book their own accommodations at the hotel but designate one individual from your club that will deal with the hotel if there are any problems.
- Each attendee will be given a registration packet containing name badges listing their name, city and state and their home society, meal and tour tickets, the complete show schedule, and judging and clerking assignments and a schedule of events. Some societies place all the

registration information into a bag or tote featuring the show logo. Included in this bag are pamphlets of local attractions, various promotional material for local businesses, some small snack items, and a bottle of water.

- The registration desk needs to be up and available early Thursday afternoon or evening for the first arrivals to check in. These early arrivals may be attending the Thursday night social and Friday's tour. The registration should be open Friday before the tour for late arrivals and in the afternoon and evening closer to the show hall for those arriving with blooms for the show. Finally, it needs to be open early Saturday morning for those arriving late before the show opens. The registration table will then become your Information Table for the attendees and the public. For the attendees it should cover information on show events, meetings, meal locations, and points of local interest. For the public, the information table should offer dahlia growing and exhibiting information and promote membership in the local society and the ADS.

### **Notes for Attendees**

- Exhibitors from other areas should be told what type of containers will be used and any supplies they will need to provide for themselves.
- Everything required by the exhibitors such as containers, oasis, water, entry tags, etc. should be in the staging area.
- Hours for entering blooms need to be advertised to all exhibitors ahead of time.
- Some societies stage all night before the show usually starting 4-5 pm on Friday and ending 9 am on Saturday morning when the judging starts.
- Other societies will transport their staged entries and place them on the show tables Friday evening to 9-10 pm and early Saturday morning before judging begins.
- Much will depend on what the facility allows; some venues require security personnel on site when the facility is open after normal hours (for which you may have to pay).

### **Show Schedule**

- The show schedule for a National Show is not very different than that of your regular society show. However, there are just a few stipulations made by the ADS regarding the show schedule at a National Show. There needs to be complete color classes for all single bloom entries as outlined in the current ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias. In addition, there needs to be an Arrangement Section. A Photo Section is desirable, but not mandatory.
- There must be a class for the ADS Seedling Bench and the rules for this specific class need to be printed in your show schedule. *"ADS SEEDLING BENCH EVALUATION: Offered in cooperation with the ADS and open to all exhibitors. Entries consist of 3 blooms from the same seedling grown for at least three years. Exhibitors, show officials, and judges must read and adhere to the rules for Seedling Bench Evaluation printed in the current ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias"*. Exhibits can be in one container or in three containers (for the larger flowers).
- The host society may add additional classes or "Specials" to match what they would normally have at their own show such as five bloom entries, challenge flower, first year seedlings etc.

- All National Show judging teams must be made up of a majority of ADS certified judges. All judging teams need to have a majority number of Senior or Accredited judges and a Clerk. If possible, one of the judges should be a local judge to answer show procedural questions and local societal show rules.
- The show schedule needs to be sent to the National Show Chairperson and the ADS President before printing to ensure that all classes have been included.

### **Judging the Show**

- Judging and clerking at a National Show is a great opportunity for all the participants to learn from each other, it is a chance to see how judges from various dahlia societies view what's important in an entry and what isn't. Also, it is interesting to see how other societies put together a show including exhibiting divisions, classes/sections, and special entries. In addition, you will find yourself making lifelong friends from across the country.
- On your registration form you will ask if the attendees plan on judging or clerking at the show; you will need to know what their judging status is. Once you have a list of who will be judging and clerking you will be able to put together your judging teams before the show, with a little tweaking of the judging schedule on the day of the show. Try to put one of your local judges on each team to answer any questions and help explain the local judging protocol. The ADS prefers that most judges on each team be ADS judges. Distribute the Senior judges throughout the teams and fill in with Accredited and Candidate judges as needed. If you have an abundance of clerks, add a ribbon placer to the teams. The initial list of judging teams and their clerk should be in the registration packets.
- Recording/Clerk Sheets need to be provided to the clerk of each judging team to accurately record the class, number of entries, names (or exhibitor number) of the winning exhibitors and dahlia names, and any higher awards that are won.
- The host society should provide a Classification Table (along with a current ADS Classification Handbook, a current Composite Listing of Dahlias, and a Color Chart) close to the staging area. Those exhibitors with new or undisseminated cultivars that are not in the ADS Classification Book can choose to have their dahlia(s) classified before the show. Once given the classification number, and signed off by the classification team, the entry can then be placed in the appropriate class in the show area.
- The dahlias that are classified by the classification team will be judged as classified. Once given the classification number, and signed off by the classification team, the entry can then be placed in the appropriate class in the show area. This is a good job for one or two of the out-of-town Senior judges that are not exhibiting and any dahlias and can give this job their full attention.
- An extra current ADS Classification Handbook, the current Composite Listing of Dahlias, a Color Guide and perhaps the current Judging Manual should be available at the Head Table for reference.

### **Head Table/Court of Honor**

- The Head Table/Court of Honor should be the focus of the show. It should be placed in a prominent location with plenty of room for people to congregate and enjoy the winning entries. It is advisable to provide a small sign for each exhibit on the Head Table/Court of Honor which identifies the award, name of the cultivar, and the exhibitor's name. Both the exhibitors and the public would like to know this information. Also, large, and flashy ribbons for the top winners are appreciated by both the exhibitors and the public.

### **ADS Special Awards**

- There are two ADS awards that shall be given at a National Show and included in the show schedule:
  - The ADS Memorial Award - is given by the show committee to a Head Table/Court of Honor entry of their choice. It receives a cash or merchandise prize which is funded by the \$3,400 (or other amount) provided by the ADS to the host society.
  - Eugene Boeke Award – each National Show shall have a special section for single entries of Eugene Boeke introductions. This special section will be open to all classes of exhibitors at the show. The winner of the special section shall be placed on the Head Table/Court of Honor and awarded a \$1000.00 prize paid by the ADS.
- During the Saturday night banquet, the ADS leadership likes to take some time to speak to the attendees and to honor individuals that have contributed to the success of the ADS by passing out special awards. This can take up to 20 minutes.

### **Final Report for the ADS Bulletin**

- The final piece of business in closing your National Show is to have someone write an article about your show for the December issue of the ADS Bulletin. The article is due before October 15<sup>th</sup> and should be sent to [ADSBulletin@dahlia.org](mailto:ADSBulletin@dahlia.org). Include as many activities as you want. Add pictures too. Let those of us who couldn't make it wish we had.

### **Audio/Visual Program – Picture Memories of the Show and Events**

- At some National Shows there is a designated individual (or more) as “event photographers” taking pictures throughout the event. With the ease of use and the quality of newer cell phone cameras, event pictures can be taken easily and unobtrusively for all to enjoy. Take pictures of the winning entries on the Head Table/Court of Honor and then prepare a Power Point presentation to be shown during the Banquet. It is always appreciated to see a picture of the winning cultivars while the exhibitor is being honored for their entry.

## **Hosting the ADS National Show Recap**

- Hosting a National Show is a lot more work than holding your regular dahlia show but the benefits far outweigh the extra work. The opportunity to showcase the dahlia and your local society to the public can often lead to signing up new dahlia growers at the show. I'm sure most of you never thought of joining a dahlia society until you saw real blooms on display. This is also a time for your local growers and exhibitors to show off their special talents and perhaps encourage some of your new members to jump into exhibiting because it is such a special event. Due to the fact several volunteers are needed, the event serves as an opportunity for members of your society who usually stay in the background to come forward and offer their assistance because they may be looking for an opportunity to get involved. During and after the National Show, I'm sure your members will feel a sense of pride and accomplishment for putting on such a great event and bring fond memories for years to come.
- After the show is over and the gear is put away until the next show season, have one last meeting of the show committee. It is an opportunity to go over every bit and piece of the show – what worked? What didn't? What was important? What wasn't? What was successful? What wasn't?
- Are you still friends? Would you do it again in five years' time? How would you do it differently? How soon would you agree to be part of another National Show? Will you support the next National Show with money or better yet, travel and be a participant?

On behalf of the American Dahlia Society, thank you for all your hard work. The ADS would not be here without people like you.

If we've missed something, or you've experienced something unusual that others will find useful, please contact the National Show Chair at [national-exhibition@dahlia.org](mailto:national-exhibition@dahlia.org). Thank you.