



DAHLIA TALK from tubers to blooms



By Dianne Reitan

A NEW ERA

You may recall back in January when I announced my retirement from commercial dahlia farming and my plan to scale down my business from several thousand plants to several hundred plants. Starting with my large expanse in the backyard, I asked Gemini for a rendering of a pergola structure that could hold a shade / hail cloth. I had the desire to plant more perennials, too, and I liked the idea of having some curved beds that would also allow some grass to remain. But alas, the reality of completing a new dahlia garden along with designing and implementing perennial beds proved to much to accomplish in one season.





VIEW FROM THE SOUTH

When my husband Dave helped me measure the area in our backyard for the dahlia structure, it didn't take him long to conclude that two short linear beds was not going to be enough for my dahlia obsession. Knowing that we would never dig up the *'Tree of Jack'*, where our beloved schnauzer was buried in 2018, he took on the task of designing a structure that was U shaped that could leave the Tatarian Maple standing and give me enough room to have double-rowed dahlias and aisles for customers. I'll be able to cut from both inside and outside the structure--love that! I think my little gate is adorable and with the three-foot fence along the edge, we can keep Bart and Atticus, also schnauzers, on their designated grass areas.

The shade / hail cloth from Bootstrap Farmer is the exact one we had on a structure at the commercial farm and it does a fantastic job of protecting the dahlias at 7,000 feet in elevation in a city ranked #3 nationwide for hail storms. Colorado Springs may be a great place to grow dahlias because we lack bugs, but so many gardeners in my hometown have regretted not protecting their plants from destructive ice balls. It may seem strange to put shade over a sun-loving plant, but dahlias are not fond of excessive heat past 90 degrees and we have been known to have stretches of really hot weather here along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains.



DIANNE'S CORNY GARDEN SIGN VIEWED FROM EAST PATIO

I'm still pinching myself that I get to grow my organic dahlias in my very own backyard this season! No more losing an hour driving every day traveling to the leased land. No more waking up at 5 am to get to the farm to get the work done before I can no longer handle the heat inside the plastic hoops. No more weeding because I get to have wild land grass surrounding my beautiful flowers. This summer, I get to go out with my morning coffee and my pups and enjoy my dahlias on my own terms. And hopefully with more time I can research, design and plant some more perennials, too.

While I am loving my new lifestyle, it is strange not to be planting dahlias amongst the cattails and gorgeous grove of century old trees on the north side of town. I won't miss the hard work but I sure do have a better appreciation of what our food and flowers farmers go through in order to provide our products in the stores. I'm grateful my flower farm faced one of the busiest roads in the city and now my customer base is set for my small boutique-like company. I'm also excited to be heading up a new group--the Southern Colorado Dahlia Society! If you live in my part of the country, scroll down for more information and plan to join us! Here's to a great dahlia season for all of us.





DAHLIAS FROM MY COMMERCIAL FARM LAST YEAR

Find a tote that fits your wagon. Cut out the top and affix chicken wire. After transporting your dahlias in water from your garden, disinfect your tote for bacteria and let air dry.

Dianne's
tips &
TRICK



COLORADO *Springs*



We did it! The Southern Colorado Dahlia Society was launched May 2 at [#puravidagardencenter!!](#) Everyone is so excited to have a monthly meeting the first Saturday of the month to be together with their fellow dahlia peeps! We are going to learn so much from each other and have so much fun! Come join us June 6 at 10 am where we will be discussing dahlia hygiene and diseases as well as staking and other tips. Field trips are being planned to visit dahlia gardens AND Save the Date for the Colorado Dahlia Show on Sept. 5.

2026

SPECIAL INVITATION

Donate today to the *ADS National Show Endowment Fund* and your gift **GROWS** with a **TRIPLE MATCH** from Eleanor and Wayne Shantz!

ADS Donors

Eleanor and Wayne Shantz



Visit dahlia.org/about/donate

Securing the Future: The ADS National Show Endowment Campaign

The heartbeat of our ADS community lies in the excellence of our national exhibitions. To ensure these showcases remain a permanent fixture of our heritage, we are thrilled to announce a significant push for the ADS National Show Endowment Fund. This fund is designed to provide a permanent, sustainable financial bedrock for our national shows, protecting them from economic fluctuations and ensuring that future generations can experience the same caliber of artistry and competition we enjoy today.

The Goal: A Legacy in the Making

We have set an ambitious but vital goal to raise \$150,000 for the endowment. This will allow the annual interest earned from the endowment to be granted to societies with the commitment and capacity to host future national dahlia shows. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community members, we have already raised \$45,000 toward this total! Now, we are looking to bridge the gap through a special commemorative campaign.

Honoring Eleanor and Wayne Shantz

In a cornerstone moment for this fund, a naming gift pledge has been established to honor the lifelong dedication of Eleanor and Wayne Shantz. Their impact on our organization has been profound, and this endowment will serve as a lasting tribute to their legacy. To reach our goal, we are launching a tiered matching campaign to inspire individual and society-level giving:

- The Shantz First Match: Every dollar donated by individuals or societies will be matched 1:1, up to the first \$25,000. **This effectively doubles your impact the moment you give.**
- The Board Challenge: If—and only if—we successfully meet that first \$25,000 goal, the Board of Directors will consider a second match of an additional \$25,000. If both matches are triggered and met, we will be well on our way to our \$150,000 target!

How You Can Participate

This campaign is timed to align with your mid or year-end charitable giving goals. We are seeking support from:

- Individual Members: No gift is too small when every dollar is doubled.
- Affiliated Societies: Help us honor the Shantzes by contributing as a collective group.

The campaign will run through **December 31, 2026**. However, please consider giving by **August 15th** as we would like to verbally recognize endowment donors at the 59th ADS National Show & Exhibition in Michigan at the awards banquet on Saturday, August 29. By contributing now, you aren't just giving a gift; you are ensuring that the ADS National Show remains a vibrant, well-funded reality for decades to come. Let's honor Eleanor and Wayne by making this vision a reality. Double your impact today. Visit our donation page to contribute to the ADS National Show Endowment Fund. Thank you!

dahlia.org/about/donate/ads-national-show-fundraising-effort





2026 NATIONAL DAHLIA SHOW GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

REGISTRATION
IS NOW **OPEN!**



*Dianne Reitan
Martin Kral*



DAHLIA TALK
CO-AUTHORS

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