Yeovil & District Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society

NEWSLETTER

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In this Newsletter, Gareth Richards (our Show Secretary) starts with reports on the 2026 Early & Late Shows. We have updates on new dahlia varieties and oasis replacements by Neal Hatch.

YEOVIL & DISTRICT CHRYSANTHEMUM & DAHLIA SOCIETY EARLY SHOW REPORT

By Gareth Richards

Yeovil & District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society held their open early show the weekend of 19th & 20th September. Again, the show was well supported by exhibitors and members of the public alike.

It has been a particularly record-breaking hot summer, and our Vice Chairman said it was a particularly hard time for Dahlias this year. The exhibitors showed true spirit and dedication this year and still produced some fantastic blooms for the judges. Despite the difficult growing conditions, the number of entries across dahlias and chrysanthemum classes was actually up on 2025. In any event, the quality of all the blooms was still quite excellent.

The society would like to thank all exhibitors and the judges that made this a successful show.

DAHLIA RESULTS

The Len Allen Memorial Trophy for the Southwest of England Dahlia Championship was supported by 3 entries. The judges awarded the 1st prize to Roger Downting from Yeovil for his entry of *Kenora Valentine*, *White Vals Candy*, and *Deborah's Kiwi*. Roger also won the NDS Silver medal for his display



Roger was also awarded the Chris Burnett Trophy for his 3-vase exhibit of *Marston Karen*, *Normandie Farewell, Josudi Hercules* and was awarded the NDS Bronze Medal for this entry. Roger was also awarded the Walter Burroughes Memorial Shield for his 2 vases of *Hillcrest Candy*. Roger also won the Red Challenge, with his *Kenora Wildfire*, the 2 Vase Challenge with his entry of *Ryecroft Jill*, *Josudi Hercules* and also the Members Shield and Voucher for most points awarded in Dahlias and also 4 more wins in other classes this year, making him the standout Dahlia winner this year.

The Shaston Pompon Cup for 3 vases of pompon, 3 distinct varieties, was awarded to Brendan Curry for his entry.

Keith Pursey won the Bond Novice Cup his entry, and his Loraine Pursey won the Beginners Class Award for her entry.

CHRYSANTHEMUM RESULTS

The Rous Cup was presented to Terry Vernoum for his entry in the Southwest of England Championship. Terry's entry was made up of *Billy Bell* and *Rita Fox*.

The judges awarded the NCS bronze medal to Brian Pople. The NCS Silver Medal was presented to Terry Vernoum.

The NCS Certificate of Merit was presented to Harry Godden.

Terry was also awarded The Lionel Park Trophy for his entry in the 1 vase, 5 Bloom incurved Chrysanthemum entry of *Primrose Billy Bell* and *Billy Bell* and also the Cook Trophy with his entries *Rita Fox* and *Helen Louise*. Terry was also awarded The Hart Cup & Voucher for most points in Chrysanthemum classes.



Harry Godden received the Westland Trophy for the best exhibit of sprays. Harry entered vases of *Tonto*, *Talbot Parade* and *Pat Bahn*.

YEOVIL & DISTRICT CHRYSANTHEMUM & DAHLIA SOCIETY LATE SHOW REPORT

By Gareth Richards

We would like to thank everyone who exhibited at our show this year. An impressive and colourful display and the standards, as usual, were top notch.

The Hamblett Trophy for Best Vase in Show went to Harry Godden for his vase of *Peach Fairweather*.

The Joyce Trophy for Best Vase of Singles in show went to Chris Bond for *Lydia Manyan.*

This year's Supreme Championship winner (The Lush Cup) was Steve Wilcox for his entry of *White Fairweather, Fairweather* and *Doreen Statham*.

The Dening Cup was awarded to Harry Godden for his exhibit of 6 blooms of *Phoenix* and *Yellow Lundy*.

The Diment Rose Bowl was awarded to Harry Godden for his 3 vases of *White Fairweather, Cream Fairweather* and *Fairweather.*

The Brigham Cup was awarded to Harry Godden for his winning cultivars *Pauline White*, *Mancetta Symbol*.

The Arthur Bicknell was also awarded to Harry Godden for his 2 vases of 3 blooms of *Primrose Fairweather* and *Pauline White*.

The Batten Cup was awarded to Harry Godden for his 3 vases of *Woolmans Glory*.

The O A Wiles Builders Cup was awarded to Chris Bond for *Lydia Manyan, Primrose Lydia Manyan* and *Brierton Sunset*.

The Vincent Cup was awarded to Roger and Jackie Frith for their sprays *Romark*, *Robeam* and *Rocene*.

The Show Committee Cup & Voucher winner this year (for most points) was awarded to Harry Godden

The NCS Certificate of Merit was awarded to Harry Godden for his 3 blooms of *Michael Potts.*

The NCS Bronze Medal was awarded to Steve Wilcox for his 5-bloom vase of *White Fairweather.*

The NCS Silver Medal was awarded to Harry Godden for his 3-bloom vase of *Peach Fairweather* in Class 1.





NEW DAHLIA VARIETIES

By Neal Hatch



A much quieter dahlia year for me in 2026 than 2025, so I haven't tried many new (to me) varieties. The hot and dry conditions played havoc with a lot of my plans. So most of the new dahlia varieties I tried in 2026 failed to make it to shows.

The new small semi-cactus *Xanthic Zoe* did, however, look very promising, despite the terribly dry conditions. A vase made it to Cornwall Dahlia Society 3-day show at Heligan, where it was paired with *Eastwood Jayne* in a two-vase class for small cactus/semi-cactus. If I can overwinter the small tubers, I will be using *Xanthic Zoe* next season, alongside my banker – *Polventon Phyllis*.

Last year I ordered two tubers of *Evelyn Taylor* to try as a small semi-cactus. One of these tubers proved to be *Josudi Mercury* (min Semi Cac). I am a big fan of the Josudi stable, particularly *Hercules* and *Andromeda*. So this year, I grew half a dozen Mercury, and it didn't disappoint. Shown here in a mixed bowl with it's stable mates.



I grew the pom, *Mayas Rhonda*, a few years ago, which I really liked. It didn't produce tubers, so I lost it over winter. This year, I bought a fresh batch. Sadly, they also failed to form tuber, so I won't be growing it again.

I also tried the new min dec introduction from Halls - *Malaga* – having had success with *Seville* last year. It struggled in the heat, so it is difficult to know what to make of it. But I wasn't particularly keen on the form of the one or two blooms that were produced.

Last year I had a slightly blue-tinged 'sport' of *Taratahi Ruby*. I secured a few cuttings this year, but I don't think I made it to a show with those cuttings, so the jury is still out on whether it is distinctly different.

OASIS RENEWAL & PHOAM

By Neal Hatch

For those of you looking to move away from traditional green floral foam (containing single-use plastic), there has been further progress this year. I have made extensive use of Oasis Renewal in 2026. Although not cleared for RHS Shows yet, I think it has better environmental credentials than traditional foams, and is undergoing further testing. I can report that it behaves very similarly to traditional foams in the vase. We also have Phoam Labs products, in both a 'dry' and now 'wet' form. I have used it for sweet peas in 2026, but not yet used it for dahlias.

Assessment of Alternative Staging Materials

Based on four factors
Marks allocated from 1-10, where 10 is thought to be 'Excellent', 1 is 'Poor'
Overall assessment formed weighting the four individual scores
Information available as of Nov 2026

	Ease of Handling	Ease of Staging	Good for Environment	Low cost	Overall Assessment	Rank
Sand	3	1	9	9	4.6	**11**
Reeds/Stems/Moss	5	5	6	10	6.2	**5**
Newspaper	6	3	8	6	5.2	**8**
Floral Foam (Oasis)	**8**	**10**	**1**	**5**	**6.4**	**2**
Bio Oasis	8	9	2	5	6.4	**2**
Staging Ring*	**10**	**5**	**9**	**7**	**7.0**	**1**
Chicken wire*	5	2	6	9	4.8	**10**
Fibre Floral	**3**	**7**	**8**	**4**	**5.7**	**7**
Agrawool	2	6	8	4	5.2	**8**
Oasis Renewal	**8**	**8.5**	**5**	**1**	**6.2**	**5**
Phoam Labs (Dry)	**7**	**8**	**8**	**1**	**6.4**	**2**

* reusable
Note: not all types of materials are allowed at some flower shows.
For example, traditional floral foam ('Oasis') is not allowed at RHS shows/venues.

These new products are worth considering, as they are rather closer to traditional foams than Agrawool/Floral Fibre. This table is updated from the one I prepared in the spring for the National Sweet Pea Society 2026 AGM. The weights used in the assessment are my own – your assessment may be very different!

TUBER SALE

Our Dahlia Tuber Sale is held in conjunction with our late show. This year we had fewer tubers than last year – partly due to the difficult growing conditions. They proved popular! Most were sold by the end of the Saturday session. Our thanks to all those who supplied or bought – the funds raised keep the club running!

