



NEWSLETTER

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In this Newsletter, Karen Forrester (our Show Secretary) starts with a report on the 2025 Early Show. Additional photos from the shows are on our Website. We also include a dahlia variety analysis from the show. Neal Hatch takes a trip to see Brendan Curry on his plot, reviews some new dahlia varieties, and takes a brief look at the hotter summers we are experiencing. Teresa Payne has an idea for a new dahlia show in the Bath area.

YEOVIL & DISTRICT CHYSANTHEMUM & DAHLIA SOCIETY EARLY SHOW REPORT



Yeovil & District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society held their open early show the weekend of 20th & 21st September. The show was well supported by exhibitors and members of the public alike. It has been a particularly dry summer but once again the exhibitors produced some fantastic blooms for the judges. Although entries were slightly down from previous years, the quality of all the blooms was 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 **Nancy Margaret, Kenora Challenger & Alf's Mascot**.

Roger was also awarded the NDS silver medal for his 3 bloom exhibit of **Polventon Kristobel** & the NDS bronze medal for his 5 bloom exhibit of **Polventon Kristobel** in the 2 vase challenge.

Darren Hickling from Midsomer Norton was awarded the Walter Burroughes Memorial Shield for his entry of **Marston Karen & Western Lillian** in Class 40.

The Shaston Pompon Cup for 3 vases of pompon, 3 distinct varieties was awarded to Brendan Curry for his entry of **Leslie's Willo, Willo's Violet & Moor Place**.

The single bloom classes were well supported and the judges awarded the best exhibit to Darren Hickling for his entry of **Twilight Boy**.

CHRYSANTHEMUM RESULTS

The Rous Cup was presented to Brian Pople for his entry in the Southwest of England Championship. Brian's entry was made up of **John Wingfield & Yellow John Wingfield**. The judges awarded the **Yellow John Wingfield** the NCS bronze medal. Brian Pople also went on to win The Medium Championship for The Cook Trophy. Brian's entry was made up of **John Wingfield & Yellow John Wingfield**.

Terry Vernoum was awarded The Lionel Park Trophy for the best vase of Incurved. His entry of **Rita Fox** was also awarded the NCS silver medal.

Harry Godden received the Westland Trophy for the best exhibit of sprays. Harry entered vases of **Pat Bahn, Cerise & Florrie Chivers**. Harry was also awarded the NCS Certificate of Merit.

Kevin Swabey won the Novice Class with his entry of **Purple Doreen Hall**.

ON THE PLOT WITH BRENDAN CURRY

Neal Hatch took a trip over to Street after our early show to catch up with Brendan Curry, one of our newer exhibitors. I was treated to a fabulous display. Brendan has only been growing dahlias on a large-scale for two years, but he is already making a splash at local shows. Incredible progress in such a short time – well done Brendan!



DAHLIA VARIETY ANALYSIS AT YEOVIL EARLY SHOW: 'Wot, No Dianes?'

In what was a relatively subdued year with difficult growing conditions taking their toll, it was difficult to draw out any big trends. There were only 80-odd vases on the benches compared with almost 150 two years ago – a drop of 45%. Medium semi-cactus variety **Nancy Margaret** topped the poll this year, backed up by its larger look-a-like **Kenora Challenger** in 10th. What is clear is that in the small decorative classes, local growers are not big users of the **Dianes** – there were none at the show this year. Instead, **Sheval Megan** (3rd) and **Roger's Choice** (5th) are the usual 'go to' choice in this area. **Amy Cave** (4th) made a late-season appearance in the small ball category – eclipsing **BSG** on this occasion. While **Marston Karen** (2nd) was the favoured Min

Variety	Classification	1st	2nd	3rd	Points
1 Nancy Margaret	Med Sc	2	2	0	10
2 Marston Karen	MinBall	2	1	0	8
3 Sheval Megan	SmDec	2	0	1	7
4 Amy Cave	SmBall	2	0	1	7
5 Roger's Choice	Unc SmDec	1	1	1	6
6 Embrace	SmCac	1	1	1	6
7 Mary's Jomanda	MinBall	2	0	0	6
8 Polventon Krystobel	MinDec	2	0	0	6
9 Westerton Lillian	LarDec	2	0	0	6
10 Kenora Challenger	L Sc	2	0	0	6
11 White Charlie 2/Alf's Mascot	Meddec	1	1	0	5
12 Deb's Kiwi	S Cac	1	1	0	5
13 Hillcrest Candy	Med Sc	1	1	0	5
14 Twilight Boy	Min Dec	1	1	0	5
15 Kenora Valentine	G Dec	0	2	0	4
16 Josudi Hercules	MinCac	1	0	1	4
17 Westerton Harry	Med Dec	1	0	1	4
18 Moor Place	Pom	1	0	0	3
19 Leslie's Willo	Pom	1	0	0	3
20 Willo's Violet	Pom	1	0	0	3

Ball over **Mary's Jomanda** (7th). **Kenora Valentine/Wildfire** was less successful this year – after finishing top last year! **Westerton Lillian** was 9th. **Embrace** (6th) had a strong showing in the small cactus category, with honourable mention for **Deb's Kiwi** (12th). Finally, in the top ten, we have **Polventon Kristobel** (8th), which took top honours – winning both NDS Silver and Bronze medals for Roger Downting.

NEW DAHLIAS GROWN FOR THE 2025 SEASON By Neal Hatch

A busy year for me on the new dahlia variety front – as I made the decision to grow a large number of new (to me) varieties and decrease the numbers grown of my 'banker' varieties for the year.

The stand-out variety for me was **Polventon Phyllis** (Small Semi Cactus) raised by Cyril Watkins. I grew just six show plants, but it made many appearances – most notably at Taunton in the championship vase of 5 (lower right in photo).



It has good form, and seems a robust plant, with good repeat flowering. I also tried six plants of **Seville**, a new miniature decorative introduced by Halls for the 2025 season. It also did well early season, and also appeared in the championship at Taunton (lower left). My exhibition blooms ran out of steam after the August Bank Holiday weekend – but **Polventon Phyllis** still made an appearance at South Wilts at the end of the month.

I only grew two plants of **Clearview Louise** (Large SC), but the four blooms that made it to the shows were lovely. Fingers crossed that it has produced tubers as I would like to grow more of it in 2026. Medium Dec **Ryecroft Huntsman** also looked promising. It looks like it needs covers/shading as it's red colour is prone to fading.

New waterlily varieties **Ashpire Glow** and **Ashpire Marmalade**, both from Jack Gott, struggled in the early summer hot weather, but recovered in the cooler/wetter conditions of September. I will need to grow these again in 2026 to see whether they will work for me. **Sandia Gold**, on the other hand, grew fantastically well for me all year, despite the heat. It would make a cracking garden or cut-flower plant. My only criticism is that the blooms are a little small, and it won't match **Taratahi Ruby** or **Gwyneth** for size.



I tried a few new (to me) miniature cactus/semi-cactus varieties from the Josudi stable. **Josudi Pluto** and **Josudi Mercury** were promising, **Josudi Polaris** less so. But **Josudi Hercules** and **Josudi Andromeda** remain the standout varieties in this category for my growing conditions.

Last year I reported on new 'Fairplace' varieties, and these also took up an ever larger proportion of my dahlia beds this year! I was particularly pleased to get three vases of **Fairplace Lesley**, **Fairplace Amber** and **Fairplace Ruby** together in a three-vase class at Clutton – possibly my favourite/fun exhibit of the season. As well as those varieties I reported on last year, **Fairplace Betty** (left) has joined the exhibition circuit in 2025 – making the trip to Cornwall Dahlia show on the Bank Holiday weekend and securing a first in the collerette class. Another newcomer,

Fairplace Lynne (right), took second place to Cyril Watkins in the seedling class at Cornwall.

A NEW SHOW FOR BATH & DISTRICT? By Teresa Payne

It's always a shame when a long standing society folds and there are no more shows in that area. In recent years Bristol, Stroud and this year North Somerset have closed, but why does this happen when Dahlias in particular are more popular than ever and there are people new to Chrysanthemum growing looking for shows to take part in?

Having volunteered with the NDS at both Wisley and Malvern I've talked to lots of people new to growing Dahlias. How do we encourage new growers to enter local village shows and from there take the next step to taking part in specialist shows?

With that in mind I'm taking the bold (some might say foolish) step of starting a new NDS affiliated Dahlia show for Bath & District for 2026.

Starting small the first show will be a single vase show to encourage people new to staging/showing. This may include a members championship class for 3 types of blooms judged under NDS rules.

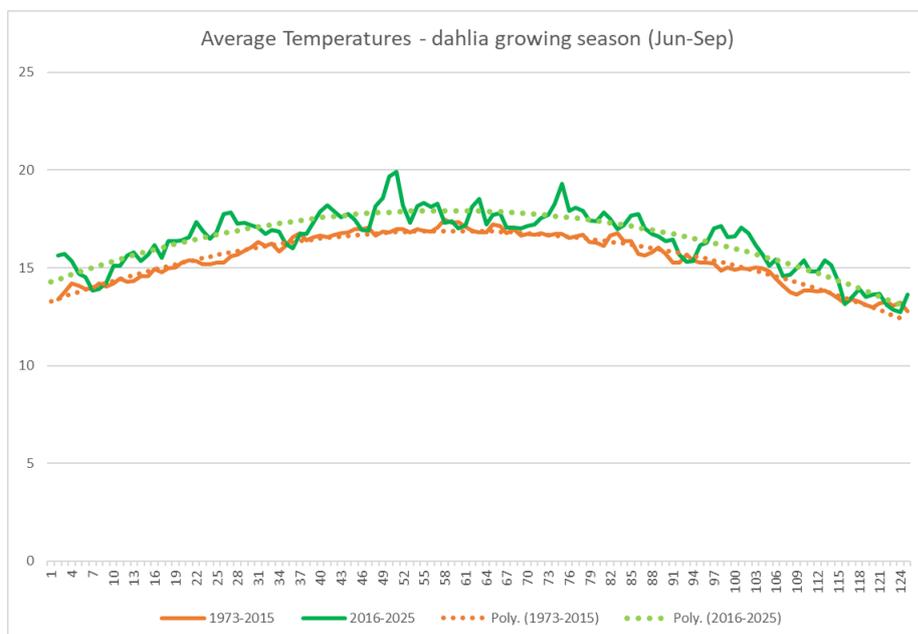
To raise funds, starting up from scratch, membership will be £5 for the first year and I propose hosting 1 or more dahlia talks with a reduced ticket price for members.

Anyone interested in getting involved in the planning stages or in sponsoring a trophy or class please contact me by email: bathdahlia@yahoo.com

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS? By Neal Hatch

2025 was, as we all know, an unusually hot and dry summer – turning into a rather wet and windy autumn (possibly the most damaging end to the season of any of the past 50 years)! We should never draw conclusions based on a single year of weather. But it is fairly clear that weather patterns have changed over the five decades I have been growing flowers and veg.

This chart shows average daily temperature (Yeovilton) over the main part of the dahlia and chrysanthemum growing season – broadly taken to be the beginning of June to the end of September (a period of roughly 120



days). The green line is the average daily temperature through the season over the past 10 years – ie from 2016 to 2025. As it is a 10-year average it doesn't just look at what happened in any single year. As we might expect, average temperatures rise through June and July, before easing in August and September. We can compare this green line with the average of the previous 40+ years (1973-2015), shown in orange. We can see that average temperatures are, on average, 1-2 degrees higher across the growing season than they were. This has generally brought plants into flower two to three weeks earlier (all else being equal). These trends seem likely to continue – so we should expect even hotter conditions and even more variable summers.