





# NEWSLETTER

 yeovil.dahlia.chrysanthemum@gmail.com

 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064819863773>

 <https://www.ydcds.org/>

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**In this Newsletter, Karen Forrester (our Show Secretary) starts with a report on the 2024 Early Shows. Photos from the shows and details of our shows are on our Facebook page and Website. We've also included a dahlia variety analysis for our early show. Manny Roper looks briefly at how blooms are carried to the show. Neal Hatch visits Somerset Dahlias and looks at the challenging growing conditions we faced in 2024.**

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## EARLY SHOW REPORT by Karen Forrester

*Yeovil & District Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society held their open early show the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The show was well supported by exhibitors and members of the public alike. Although the weather had been somewhat unkind to exhibitors, it was good to see a decent entry in both the dahlia and chrysanthemum classes. Although entries were 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 1<sup>st</sup> prize to Roger Downing from Yeovil for his entry of Roger's Choice, Alf's Mascot and Kenora Valentine. Roger was also awarded the NDS silver medal for this exhibit.

Congratulations to Brendan Curry who was exhibiting at the show for the first time. Brendan won The Bond Novice Cup for his entry of Westerton Ella Grace. He also went on to win The Chris Burnett Trophy for his exhibits of Embrace, Roger's Choice & Amy Cave. The Shaston Pompon Cup for 3 vases of pompon was awarded to Graham Edwards from Cullompton for his entry of Moor Place, Gurtla Twilight and Small World. The exhibit of Small World was also awarded the NDS Bronze Medal.

The Travellers (single bloom) classes were well supported and the judges awarded the best exhibit to Neal Hatch for his entry of Kenora Valentine



## CHRYSANTHEMUM RESULTS

The Rous Cup was presented to Terry Vernoum for his entry in the South West of England Championship. Terry's entry was Billy Bell, Primrose Billy Bell & Yellow Billy Bell. The judges awarded this entry the NCS silver medal. Terry Vernoum was also the winner of the Supreme Championship for the Anne & Mike Stephens Trophy. Terry's entry of 3 vases of 3 large blooms was made up of Billy Bell, Primrose Billy Bell & Yellow Billy Bell. The judges awarded this entry the NCS bronze medal. Terry's successful day also saw him awarded the NCS certificate of merit and The Hart Cup for the most points in the chrysanthemum classes.

The Medium Championship for The Cook Trophy was won by Brian Pople. Brian's entry was made up of John Wingfield, Peach John Wingfield & Yellow John Wingfield.

The Lionel Park Trophy was awarded to Mark Hatcher for his vase of incurved chrysanthemums.

Harry Godden received the Westland Trophy for the best exhibit of sprays. Harry entered vases of Florey Chivers, Rose Talbot Parade & South Way Sheba



## YEOVIL EARLY SHOW 2024 DAHLIA VARIETY ANALYSIS

A table of dahlia varieties at our early show scoring at least 1 point. (3 points for a win, 2 for second and 1 for third.)

Variety	Classification	1st	2nd	3rd	Points		1st	2nd	3rd	Points	
1 Kenora Valentine	Unc L/G Dec	5	1	1	18	24 Show 'n Tell		1	0	0	3
2 Roger's Choice	Unc SmDec	2	2	1	11	25 Willo's Violet	Pom	0	1	1	3
3 Blyton Softer Gleam	SB	1	3	0	9	26 Edith Jones	Col	1	0	0	3
4 Embrace	SmCac	2	1	0	8	27 Rosemary Dawn	LarPom	1	0	0	3
5 White Charlie 2/Alf's Mascot	Meddec	1	2	0	7	28 Blyton Stella	MinDec	1	0	0	3
6 Taratahi Ruby	Wat	2	0	1	7	29 Mary's Jomanda	MinBall	0	0	2	2
7 Gurtla Twilight	Pom	2	0	0	6	30 Polventon Krystobel	MinDec	0	1	0	2
8 Winholme Diane	SmDec	2	0	0	6	31 Rosendale Jo-Jo	SmDec	0	1	0	2
9 Clearview Louise	MedDec	2	0	0	6	32 Blyton Red Ace	MinBall	0	1	0	2
10 Marston Karen	MinBall	2	0	0	6	33 Ruskin Andrea	SmSC	0	1	0	2
11 Westerton Ella Grace	MiDec	1	1	1	6	34 Asphire Fancy	Col	0	1	0	2
12 Moor Place	Pom	1	1	0	5	35 Jon's Twilight	Pom	0	1	0	2
13 Josudi Hercules	MinCac	1	1	0	5	36 Boom Boom White		0	1	0	2
14 Sheval Megan	SmDec	1	1	0	5	37 Hillcrest Charlie	MedSC	0	0	2	2
15 Amy Cave	SmBall	1	1	0	5	38 Gwyneth	Wat	0	1	0	2
16 Franze Kafka	LarPom	1	1	0	5	39 Westerton Lillian	LarDec	0	1	0	2
17 Fred Swabey	Unc MinB	1	0	1	4	40 White Val's Candy	MedSC	0	1	0	2
18 Small World	Pom	1	0	1	4	41 Kenora Challenger	LarSC	0	1	0	2
19 Pooh	Col	0	1	1	3	42 Cameo	Wat	0	0	1	1
20 Leslie's Willo	Pom	1	0	0	3	43 Marson Lilac	MinDec	0	0	1	1
21 Trelyn Kiwi	SmCac	1	0	0	3	44 Ryecroft Brenda T	SmDec	0	0	1	1
22 Weston Pirate	MinCac	0	1	1	3	45 Hillcrest Candy	MedSC	0	0	1	1
23 Ryecroft Helen	MedSC	1	0	0	3	46 AC Ben	LarDec	0	0	1	1



## A TRICKY SEASON by Neal Hatch

2024 Season Summary	
	% of plants
Slug damage	7%
Heat/dry/stock breakdown	11%
Wind damage (first half August)	3%
Wind damage (second half August)	18%
Wind damage (September)	2%
Cut for shows (first half August)	11%
Cut for shows (second half August)	25%
Cut for shows (September)	16%
Too late/didn't produce a show vase	9%
	100%

*This season was a 'difficult' one for many growers!*

We started the year with dark conditions, incessant rain and swarms of slugs and snails. Despite instigating 'slug patrols' by torchlight almost every night, I still had significant damage. I went into July with 7% of my dahlias lost to the slimy critters! Some plants were replaced, but they were too late to add blooms for the show season.

Although it was by no means a hot season compared with others I seemed to suffer from a lot of damaged stock early in the season – with some of my pompon plants (in particular) having open centres. Over 10% of my show stock is not in good

shape and I will have to make some difficult decisions on what to keep/destroy this autumn. It is hard to know how much of this is environmental damage (heat or dry conditions), stock problems, or my poor watering/management (I spent too much time on my sweet peas!).

I managed to get a good cut for my own show at Cary and for Taunton. Others will know that I have a particularly windy site and, sure enough, after Taunton we were treated to day after day of very windy/blustery conditions; 19 days of August had wind gusts over 20mph, 3 over 30mph and 1 over 40mph! (22 out of 31 days over 20mph). Despite use of various windbreaks around the plots and the use of iron fence pins rather than bamboo, the exposed plants started to suffer. Almost a quarter of my plants (23%) were seriously damaged by the end of the season – with severely bent stems, bashed blooms, or plants completely felled! Several of my covers were damaged/destroyed too.

Due either to my poor timing, or the vagaries of the weather, a few varieties didn't produce enough show blooms this year. For example, despite growing 15 plants, **Westerton Pearl** never produced enough blooms at one time to make a matched set for a vase. It has done this to me before so I know it is weather-related. Finally, an early frost finished off a few plants – at least in terms of producing show-worthy blooms. In total 9% of plants failed to deliver in time for shows.

Those of you keeping count will know that only half my plants (52%) made it to the show bench this year – a pretty poor year. Note to self ..... must do better next year!



### VISIT TO SOMERSET DAHLIAS

*Neal Hatch made a quick visit in early September to see Natalie Tudhope at her new dahlia flower farm – based here in Somerset. Somerset Dahlias has joined a growing band of flower farms/producers in the South West.*

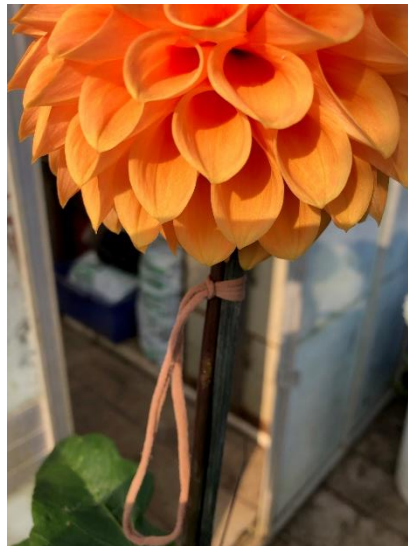
Natalie is growing around 1500 dahlias this year in Somerset. You may have come across some of her flowers at florists – or at Teals Farm Shop. Do check out her website and see the wonderful range of flowers she grows.

<https://somersestdahlias.co.uk/>

## NEW 'HOW TO' LEAFLETS BEING PRODUCED by Manny Roper

We are currently putting together two new leaflets on 'How to transport your flowers' and 'How to stage your flowers'. These are aimed at those new to the hobby and will, hopefully, be available at our November Tuber Sale. As a quick taster, we look at carrying your blooms to the show.

If you want to see the 'Rolls Royce' method of transporting blooms then look no further than our very own Roger Downting! Roger has had lots of experience carrying blooms to shows and has perfected a brilliant technique – but you do see other growers using slight variations or different approaches. You have to find out what works for you! Roger uses very large buckets (25 litre plaster's buckets or similar containers) drilled with holes around the top. The numerous holes allow for flexibility in where blooms are placed – which maximises the amount you can carry in a small space. These containers are tall enough to support the long straight stems necessary for showing – but do check the height of your car load space! At the bottom of the bucket, Roger uses chicken wire to stop the blooms slipping around. The bloom stems are attached to split canes with soft material, such as pipe cleaners or nylon tights (as shown here with blooms of *Roger's Choice* – a small decorative). The split canes (with blooms attached) are secured to the bucket using cable ties (or similar). Roger usually carries three blooms for a vase, plus a spare in case of emergency! Each of these large buckets can hold enough blooms for two vases of smaller-sized blooms. For small blooms, extra blooms can also be carefully packed into the centre of the bucket using more split canes across the diameter of the bucket. Our leaflet will cover these issues in a little more detail.



This link takes you to the relevant web page where our previous leaflets (**Taking Cuttings** and **How to Store Your Tubers**) can be downloaded.

<https://www.ydcds.org/newslettersandleaflets>

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**In our next Newsletter (No 5) we will contain the November Late Chrysanthemum Show Report and Neal will report on new dahlia varieties he has tried for the 2024 season.**

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### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Early Show:	20-21 <sup>st</sup> September	2025
Late Show:	15-16 <sup>th</sup> November	2025