



Staging Dahlia Blooms and Entering 'The Show' - Novices

Everybody is Welcome to enter their dahlia flowers in the show! NEDS members and non-members and the only requirements are that the exhibitor has grown the dahlia plant themselves and that the show rules, as described in the show brochure are followed.

After you unloaded your flowers and moved your car to the parking lot, return to **sign the show book** and **request the paper show tags plus paper clips** that will accompany every one of your blooms on the show tables. **NEDS will provide show vases and wet floral foam.** Vases come in sizes small, medium and large. Select a vase size that is roughly in proportion to your flower. (AA, A flowers in large vases, Pompons or Orchids in small vases, etc.)

Fill your vases with floral foam and water or pick up one of the pre-filled vases and mount your flowers in the foam. All foliage should remain above the foam and water. Make sure the stem isn't wobbly. Recut your flower stems before inserting them into the foam to help them stay fresh.

Fill out one show tag for each bloom.

(See our previous email on how to find the dahlia classification code for each variety.)

Section: write in the form of your flower (Ball, Pompon, AA, A, B, BB, BA, Orchid, Peony, etc.)

For example: 'April Dawn' is a B, ID (B for the size and ID for informal decorative form)

Class: ADS classification number of your variety (E.g. April Dawn: 2110)

Variety: the name of your variety. E.g. 'April Dawn'

Leave boxes '1,2,3, TRL' empty – that's where the judges will enter their scores.

Name: Don't forget to add your name and address!

Using a paperclip as a hanger, attach the show tag to each vase. **Double check** to make sure each tag is with the correct flower.

Carry your vases with flowers and tags to the **tables in the showroom.**

Tables are organized by flower size, form and classification number.

For example: medium sized dahlias such as B and BB are typically in the middle of the room.

Their classification numbers start with 2XXX and 3XXX. E.g.: 'Café au Lait' is a B size, ID (informal decorative), # 2104.

Challenge flowers, Novices and Seedlings are in extra sections.

Please ask for help if you can't find your section.

Entering The Floral Design Section at a Dahlia Show

The artistic design section offers you a great opportunity to not only showcase your dahlias but also your creativity! We encourage all NEDS members to give it a try. There are 6 different classes. You can find the class descriptions in our show brochure on page 10. You may enter one design each in as many classes as you wish. The times to enter floral design are the same as for show blooms. Except for the clear glass bowls, please add a sticker with your name to the underside of your container and be prepared to pick up your floral design on Sunday between 3PM-5PM or arrange with someone else to take your container home. We can also hold your container and bring it to our next NEDS meeting if you tell us in advance.

Brief primer on floral arrangements

Arrangement: refers to a decorative design of cut flowers, foliage and other floral material, arranged in a container, typically using a support such as floral foam, a flower frog, chicken wire or similar.

Bouquet: is an attractively arranged bunch of flowers in a vase or container. Bouquets usually don't include floral foam or other supports. If clear vases are used, stems should be hidden in some manner (Hint: use a big leaf to line the inside of the container).

Pot-et-fleur: an artistic combination of dahlias with 2 or more potted plants in one container. The flowers are held in floral water vials that are inserted into the growing medium of the potted plants.

Parallel design: is a symmetrical arrangement where all flower elements are placed *parallel* to each other. Typically contains 3 vertical groupings of flowers next to each other with visible space between each grouping.

There are only a few general rules:

- The design should be attractive and creative, and dahlias must predominate. All flowers and plant material should be fresh and in water.
- Dried flowers are not permitted.
- Flowers and foliage don't have to be grown by the designer. You may buy or borrow flowers!
- The 'mechanics' such as floral foam, chicken wire, floral water tubes or soil should not be visible to the viewer. Unless mechanics are part of the design, flowers and foliage are arranged to hide them.
- Dahlia flowers should be in good condition but don't have to be perfect and don't need to include leaves.
- Adhere to the instructions for each class. If size requirements are given, they apply to the entire design including the plant material (and not just the container). For example, in class 2, the pot-et-fleur design should not be larger than 16" inches wide and deep including any foliage or flowers that may stick out.

The easiest classes to enter this year are class 1 and 6.

Class 1 is one waterlily dahlia floating in a glass bowl. No other flowers are required. Usually, the best-looking water lily bloom wins, but a clean and pleasing presentation makes a difference.

Class 6 is a bouquet of any size or shape. The requirement that “stems should not be visible” means that the inside of the clear glass container should be lined with a leaf or foliage to hide the stems. Directly wrapping the stems of the bouquet with leaves is an alternative.