

EXHIBITING AND JUDGING DAHLIAS

Preparation:

1. Pick dahlias while it is cool and stand the cut stems in hot water (100-160 degrees F) in a cool, shaded location for several hours.
2. Never cut dahlia blooms in full sun (best time is early morning/late afternoon)
3. Cut stems above a node.
4. Rule of Thumb: Length of stem should be 1 to 1 ½ times the diameter of the bloom. Maximum length of the stem should be 36”.
5. Cut stem should have at least one set of leaves. Two sets of leaves are better.

Judging:

1. Center should be in the center of the bloom.
2. The fuzzy center of the dahlia should not be visible at the time of exhibition, this would mean the dahlia is past its peak.
3. Bloom should be set on stem at a 45 degree angle (except for ‘Ball’ and ‘Pompon’ which should be top facing)
4. Should be disbudded correctly (no side shoots)
5. Stem should be in proportion to the bloom with at least one set of leaves, and two sets of leaves are considered better. Stem should also be strong and firm.
6. Form of leaf pattern should be the same on both sides of the stalk.
7. Staged effectively. Use wedging material as appropriate.
8. Bloom should be unique or attention holding in color, form, substance and size.
9. Bloom condition should be clean without the slightest trace of wilting, fading, burning, insect damage, spots or deposits.
10. A green center is a fault – this indicates immaturity of the bloom.
11. Cultivar Name is written in single quotation marks Dahlia ‘Bashful’, etc.