

STANDARDS
AND
JUDGING
RULES
OF THE
DAHLIA

1998

Created by the: AUSTRALIAN DAHLIA COUNCIL

Reprinted in 2024 by the: DAHLIA SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA INC

RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE \$5.00

Standards and Judging Rules of the DAHLIA

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The judging of dahlias is not and cannot be an exact science and so, as a decision must often rest on the judge's personal knowledge and experience, they must take care that in arriving at their decision they are not swayed by **their personal dislikes or preferences**, whether for cultivars, colours, formation or for any other reason.

It is the duty of all who judge dahlias to acquire a thorough knowledge of all of the various groups, their habits of growth, and the formation of their blooms.

All judges must deal fairly and impartially with any Infringement of the rules, the show regulations, and all schedule and local requirements of the organisation whose competitive classes are being judged.

The judges should look for perfection in each bloom, and when assessing its true merits, the quality ie formation, centre, freshness, colour and stem, should be regarded as factors of paramount importance, and then, all imperfections, defects and blemishes, termed faults should be considered as Items detracting from the merits of the exhibit.

A fault may be minor or serious, In accordance with the circumstances, or the extent, to which it is present in the exhibit and few hard and fast rules can be laid down to deal with each of them It is a serious fault for an exhibition bloom to be badly bruised or malformed or for a double-flowered cultivar to have an open centre, but whereas a damaged, eaten, or malformed floret at the rear of the bloom does little to detract from Its beauty and overall perfection, the same defect on the face of the bloom, one which mars its beauty, would be considered a **very serious** fault.

All faults should therefore be carefully assessed and placed within a true perspective in relation to the exhibit as a whole.

In the case of giant-flowered cultivars the blooms should be as large as possible in diameter and depth, provided the size is not obtained at the expense of quality.

AT ALL TIMES THE QUALITY OF A BLOOM MUST BE THE FIRST AND CHIEF CONSIDERATION, AND MUST OVERRIDE MERE SIZE.

All exhibits must be judged as seen at the time of judging and not as they possibly were, or might become.¹

All blooms for exhibition should be symmetrical, that is, perfectly balanced in all respects, graceful and pleasing in appearance. Face view should be circular, that is, perfectly round like a ring. Pompon and Ball Type should be as close as possible to spherical in shape, that is, circular from all angles.

All blooms, except Pompons, should face forward and upwards on the stem at an angle of 45 degrees.

Pompon should face straight upwards in line with the stem.

Blooms should be staged without artificial support at least 160mm clear of the staging container, between the centre of the bloom and the top of the container.

Dahlias exhibited in competitive classes should be qualified for the classes in which they are shown by formation and size. Classification and colour should not be used.

In fully double types the centre should be closed, with the centre disc and pollen stamens still completely covered by Immature and unopened florets. Centres should be well developed with the amount of unopened florets being enough only to ensure the central disc is still completely covered and is in proportion to the size of the bloom.

¹ Acknowledgment to The National Dahlia Society UK

Allocation of Points

Form	40
Condition	25
Stem	15
Colour	10
Size	05
Staging	<u>05</u>
Total	100

Dahlia Sizes

Giant	260mm and over
Large	210mm and under 260mm
Medium	160mm and under 210mm
Small	120mm and under 160mm
Miniature	under 120mm

Formal, Informal, and Semi Decorative Dahlias, Cactus, Semi Cactus Exhibition Cactus and Fimbriated Dahlias, come in all five sizes.

Ball Dahlias come in Small or Miniature.

Pompon Dahlias are under 50mm.

Waterlily Dahlias are under 160mm.

Collerette Dahlias are under 160mm.

Anemone Dahlias are under 160mm.

Orchid Dahlias are under 160mm.

Stellar Dahlias are under 160mm.

Single Dahlias are under 160mm.

Miscellaneous Dahlias are under 160mm or over 160mm.

Standards of Perfection

Formal Decorative Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. The centre should be closed and should be as high as the surrounding face florets. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without gaps, should be broad, smooth and being neither markedly involute nor revolute, gently recurving towards the stem. The tips of the florets should be preferably rounded. Depth of the bloom should be at least two thirds, but not more than its diameter.

Informal Decorative Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be cone shaped, as high as the surrounding face florets of the bloom. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without gaps, to be broad, slightly twisted or wavy mature florets giving the effect of not being flat. The tips of the florets may be revolute for not more than one quarter the length of the floret and should recurve towards the stem. Depth of the bloom should be at least two thirds, but not more than its diameter.

Semi-Decorative Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be as high as the surrounding face florets of the bloom. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without gaps, should be fully involute for more than one third but less than one half of their length. The tips of the florets should preferably appear to be pointed and should recurve towards the stem. Depth of the bloom should be at least two thirds, but not more than its diameter.

Waterlily Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Side view should be saucer shaped and face view should be circular in outline, and regular in arrangement. The centre should be closed and dome-shaped, breaking gradually to developed outer florets. The layers of florets should be openly spaced, with four to seven rows, to give a delicate and light appearance. Outer florets should be broad and slightly cupped with rounded tips.

Semi Cactus Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be cone-shaped and at least as high as the face florets. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without uneven gaps between rows, breaking gradually with flat, pointed immature florets to outer florets. Outer florets should be broad and flat towards the base, revolute with edges overlapping from the tip for more than one-quarter but not more than half their length, with tips pointed. Florets may be gently incurved or straight. Depth should be at least two thirds, but not more than its diameter. There should be sufficient florets to prevent gaps in formation and outline.

Cactus Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be cone-shaped and at least as high as the face florets. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without uneven gaps between rows, With narrow and partly revolute immature florets to outer florets. Outer florets should be narrower than Semi Cactus but in proportion to the size of the bloom, revolute edges should overlap from the tip for at least half and preferably two thirds of their length with tips pointed. Florets may be gently incurved or straight. Depth should be at least two thirds, but not more than its diameter. There should be sufficient florets to prevent gaps in formation and outline.

Exhibition Cactus Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be cone-shaped and as high as the face florets. Florets should radiate evenly from the centre without uneven gaps between rows to outer florets. Florets should all be very narrow, long and pointed with involute edges overlapping for as near as possible to their whole length giving a long tube effect, rather than a flattened appearance. Towards the tips, the florets should be strongly incurved and may regularly curve one way. Depth should be at least half but not more than two thirds its diameter. There should be sufficient florets to prevent gaps in formation and outline.

Fimbriated Cactus Dahlia

General requirements should match the Cactus, or Semi Cactus Dahlia. Fimbriation or splits should divide into two or more points giving a splayed effect. The fimbriation of splits should be in proportion to the size of the bloom. The fimbriation in miniature blooms should be at least 10mm from the tips. Centre should give a slightly brush effect as florets open, but should still be closed, as high as surrounding face florets and as cone shaped as possible.

Fimbriated Dahlia - other Types

Fimbriated Dahlias should match the Standard for their type. As a guide, the fimbriation in miniature blooms should be at least 10mm from the tips.

Ball Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double, and spherical like a ball. Centre should be as high as the surrounding face florets. Florets should be uniform in formation throughout the bloom, involute for most of their length and fully involute, to the extent of edges touching (forming tubes) for at least half their length. Tips should appear to be rounded or blunt. Florets should be compactly arranged without gaps between the rows. Florets on the back half of the bloom should not flatten completely, still maintaining the tube effect of involute florets. Back florets should reflex fully to the stem.

Pompon Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double, and spherical like a golf ball. Centre should be closed, fully developed and as high as the surrounding face florets. Florets should be uniform in size throughout the bloom. All florets should be involute for the whole of their length, regularly arranged and the tips of the florets should appear to be rounded. Back florets of the bloom should reflex to the stem.

Collerette Dahlia

Bloom side view should be flat. Centre should be open, disc shaped with fresh pollen bearing stamens.

Outer florets should be equal in size and shape, broad, flat and rounded at the tips. Outer florets should radiate regularly and evenly away from the central disc and should overlap to avoid gaps. The outer florets shall be eight.

The inner row of florets should form a collar evenly around the central disc, of wavy florets with multiple divisions and preferably not exceed half the length of the outer florets. The colour of the collar should preferably contrast greatly with outer florets.

Single Dahlia

Bloom side view should be flat. Centre should be open, disc shaped with fresh pollen bearing stamens.

Surrounding the centre should be a single row of flat equally sized and shaped florets that may overlap but should not assume double formation. Tips should be rounded. Florets should radiate evenly and regularly away from the central disc and must number eight.

Anemone Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Side view should be dome shaped, made up of elongated tubular florets, compacted tightly, so the central disc does not show. Outer florets should preferably form one row of evenly sized flat, broad florets with rounded tips, regularly arranged around the centre florets.

Orchid Dahlia

Bloom side view should be flat. Centre should be open, disc shaped with fresh pollen bearing stamens.

Surrounding the centre there should be a single row of eight involute florets that preferably show a different colour or shade on the Involute reverse side. Florets should be involute for their whole length and fully involute with edges overlapping for at least half their length.

Stellar Dahlia

Bloom should be fully double. Centre should be cone shaped, closed and as high as the surrounding face florets, breaking gradually with immature florets to fully developed outer florets. Outer florets should be narrow and involute, and preferably be a contrasting colour or shade on the reverse side. Depth should be at least half but no more than two thirds of its diameter.

Peony Dahlia

Bloom should be almost flat. Centre should be open, disc shaped with fresh pollen bearing stamens. Surrounding the centre there should be two to four rows of ray florets. Florets adjacent to the disc flower maybe smaller, twisted or curled.

Miscellaneous Dahlia

There are other types of dahlia which have no officially recognised standards for judging. Some show schedules have items for these types of dahlia and it is up to the judges to use their knowledge and experience in judging these types.

Dahlia Stem Requirements

The stem should be straight, situated centrally to the bloom, rigid and round. Thickness should be in proportion to the bloom it carries. The length of the stem should be at least 160mm clear of the container. The stem should carry the bloom facing upward at a 45 degree angle, except Pompon that should face straight upwards in line with the stem. Artificial support is prohibited except staging materials, eg oasis or paper, which should not protrude above the neck of the container.

Condition Requirements

Blooms should be perfectly fresh and mature. They should be of firm substance and fine in texture. They should also be clean and free from blemish.

Colour Requirements

The colour of a bloom should be clear, bright and attractive. Blend and Bi-coloured dahlias should be evenly marked.

Seedlings and Sports

1. Seedlings are plants grown from seed.
2. Sports are Mutations or sudden variations from a parent plant.
3. A seedling or sport is an unnamed cultivar.
4. A seedling or sport cultivar is to be undisseminated.
5. The showing period for an unnamed cultivar is three years from the first entry for public showing.
6. Once a cultivar wins a Major award (ie. Blue Ribbon or Size Type Championship) it must be named and cannot be entered again as an unnamed cultivar.

FAULTS

- 1 As a general principle anything that detracts from the perfection of a bloom, or an exhibit, is a "fault" and the seriousness or otherwise of the fault depends upon the degree of imperfection.

In judging an exhibit the following faults must be evaluated accordingly.

- 2 It is a **Very Serious fault** if a bloom:
 - (a) is malformed
 - (b) faces downward
 - (c) has been badly damaged
 - (d) has limp drooping florets
 - (e) has petaloids (pin petals) or false petals
 - (f) has had an excessive number of florets removed
 - (g) has an open centre (double centre cultivars only)
 - (h) has a centre that is hard and green, large and undeveloped or badly distorted
 - (i) seriously departs from the standard formation of the group of dahlia for which the class calls
 - (J) presence of pests
- 3 Faults of a **Lesser Degree**, in accordance with the amount by which the fault detracts from the perfection of a bloom, are as follows:
 - (a) oval, sunken or isolated centres
 - (b) irregular or oval outline of a bloom
 - (c) uneven, irregular or unbalanced formation
 - (d) florets lacking freshness that are bleached, discoloured, faded, eaten, bruised, malformed or otherwise blemished
 - (e) where florets have been removed
 - (f) stems that are bent, weak, short jointed, thick and out of proportion
 - (g) uneven or inconsistent colouring
 - (h) uneven tipping of bi-coloured blooms
 - (i) shallow blooms, ie. those lacking depth or fullness according to the standards
 - (j) blooms that are either immature or past their best

4 **Angle of blooms.**

- (a) bloom of Pompon dahlias should face upwards on a straight stem and any variation of this must be regarded as a fault.
- (b) when several blooms are shown together in a container, it is a fault for them to face in different angles.

GUIDE SHEET FOR POINT JUDGING OF DAHLIAS

List of faults and allocation of points to be used when assessing the quality of a bloom. All blooms should be assessed above or below 85 points which is the average quality of blooms exhibited. Blooms should be separately assessed in comparison with the ideal standard. Other blooms staged should be ignored during assessment but assessments of all blooms of corresponding size and type should be reviewed after completion for reasonable results.

GUIDE SHEET

FAULTS TO BE PENALISED FORM	PENALTY 40
Variation from approved standard type. Blade florets in cactus type. Fluted or involute florets in decorative types. (Formal and Informal types)	8
Lack of distinction. Lack of variety of types. Petaloids (in petals), hairlike petals, serrations.	8
Open or about to open centres in fully double blooms. Stale pollen in open centre blooms. Excessive removal of florets.	10
Poor centre in proportion to size of bloom. Oval, sunken, depressed, brush, hard green, isolated from outer florets, distorted, unattractive green bracts.	6
Build rough appearance, unbalanced, gaps or uneven floret spacing, excessive depth, sparse or overcrowded florets. Width of florets poor in proportion to bloom size, shallow, immature.	8
CONDITION	25
Harsh substance, stale, withered, limp, drooping.	10
Coarse texture, lack of distinction.	5
Cleanliness, eaten, bruised, dirty, marked, missing florets, damaged bloom or foliage.	10
STEM	15
Strength, weak or soft.	5
Build crooked, bent, misshapen, untidy, too thick.	5
Bloom held at wrong angle ie, facing downward or straight upward (except Pompon which should face straight upward in line with stem.)	5
COLOUR	10
Lack of distinction, dull, unattractive, uneven marking or blends.	5
Faded, bleached, or discoloured.	5
SIZE	5
Blooms varying in size in Class	5
STAGING	5
Unbalanced exhibit. Obtruse or loose plugging. Too high or too low. Not facing viewers. Unnamed.	5
TOTAL	100

Judging Multi-Vase Exhibits

This section is offered as a guide only, as each locality may have its own rules for classes which may fall into the following categories.

Multi-Vases exhibits may be classified into three distinct types.

1. Championships (State or Show)
2. Displays
3. Collections

Championships

Championships usually consist of a multi-vase exhibit including both single and multi-bloom vases.

Blooms in a Championship should be judged to the same standards as all other specimen dahlia bloom classes.

1. An overall view of each entry should be made before any vases are moved, a note should be taken as to the staging, and arrangement of each entry, and this should be used In case of equal points at the end of judging entries.
2. A vase should be selected, from one of the entries, judged and given a pointing out of a certain number of points,
ie. 10 pts up to 100 pts
3. A note is made of the points awarded to this vase, and all other vases in the entry are judged against this vase.
4. All the points awarded to vases in this entry are added together and that is the result for that entry.
5. All the other entries are judged in the same way against this vase, and all the totals checked and the winner obviously has the highest points.

An alternative to this method is that first a vase containing a single bloom is chosen as the base vase, and all other single vases are judged against this vase, and then a vase containing multi blooms is chosen and used as the base vase against which all the other multi-bloom vases are judged. The result is calculated as before.

Displays

Display usually contains several vases. These can be either of the same type or of different types, Single or multi-bloom, usually consists of a variety of colours, either blending or contrasting.

Elegance of arrangement and colour harmony	30 pts
Quality and freshness	40 pts
Variety	20 pts
Finish	<u>10 pts</u>
	100 pts

Collections

Collections as the name suggests are usually a collection of different Types and Varieties of dahlia blooms, with emphasis on the different types.

Varieties and Types	40 pts
Quality and freshness	40 pts
Arrangement and staging	10 pts
Stems	<u>10 pts</u>
	100 pts

Bunch Work

Another schedule Item that is sometimes called for is for a Bunch of Blooms, in Victoria this normally means a vase or vases containing more than six blooms.

Arrangement	35 pts
Uniformity	20 pts
Quality and condition	25 pts
Colour blending	<u>20 pts</u>
	100 pts

GLOSSARY

Abbreviations:	Cult.	Cultivar
	C.V.A.	Colour Variation Allowed (ie different cultivars, same type)
	DIST.	Distinct
	E.	Exhibition quality cultivar
	F.	Floriferous - suitable for florists, cut-flower
	G.	Garden cultivar, of outstanding merit due to floriferousness, and/or colour and/or cut flower keeping qualities but whose bloom does not meet exhibition form requirements.
	N.A.S.	Not According to Schedule
	N.A.	No Award. Exhibit is of insufficient merit.
	N.N.A.	Not Necessarily Distinct
	S.S.	Staged Singly. One bloom to a vase.

Attractive Bedding

Dahlias	Appealing, pleasant, Dwarf border singles, Dwarf Redskin semi double with reddish foliage and Hi-Dolly semi-doubles.
Axil	Upper angle between leaf and stem it springs from, or between branch and trunk.
Balance	The relative placement of plant materials in such a way that a sense of visual stability is established.
Basket	A container with or without fixed handle, woven from twigs, rushes, or other flexible material (may be metal or plastic).
Bearded	A bloom having more or longer ray florets below an imaginary line, drawn horizontally through the centre of the bloom, than above the line.
Bicoloured	Having two distinct and sharply separated colours on the face of the ray florets.
Bleeding	Applies to the intermingling of the two colours in bicolour dahlias. Bleeding is a fault in bicolour dahlias.
Blend	Two or more colours which merge.
Bloom	The flower head, including florets, bracts, and calyx.

Blown	The stage where a double flower has developed to the point of exposing its central disc and ray florets. It is then said to be "daisy-eyed" It is strictly no longer a fully double bloom and is of no use for exhibition.
Bract	A small scale like leaf which accompanies each flower.
Breaking gradually	Opening with undeveloped florets of varying or increasing size until fully developed florets are reached.
Bruised	Mechanical damage to the flower parts, stem or foliage.
Brush centre	A mass of florets of the same length making up the centre .The tips of these centre florets look like a brush.
Bud	An unopened bloom still enclosed within the Involucre and not showing colour.
Calyx	The outer set of perianth segments which are green.
Central Rays	The short immature ray florets comprising the central portion of the fully double flowers when at their prime stage.
Circular	Round, like a ring.
Class	A group of entries conforming to the specifications required by a competitive schedule in a dahlia show.
Classification	Allocate to a group of the same Size and type of dahlia for reference purposes.
Closed centre	A group of undeveloped florets completely covering the centre of the bloom closing it from view.
Clock-faced	Bloom held flat against its stem so that when the stem is vertical the bloom faces directly forwards.
Coarse	A bloom where the florets are over-large and out of proportion to the diameter of the bloom. Florets unevenly arranged.
Collection	More than one size and/or type of dahlia grouped in a class or garden.
Colour	The criterion for judging refers not to the shade or tone of colour, but to the quality of colour and trueness to type particular cultivar.
Colour Harmony	A pleasing interaction or appropriate combination of colours.

Cone-shaped	Round at the base and coming to a point at the top Note florets with pointed tips, unopened form is a cone-shaped centre.
Condition	An exhibit is in good condition when it is in the most perfect stage of development, is fresh and free from damage.
Confusion	Confusing appearance of irregular patterns, caused by florets growing in varied directions, irregular, Inconsistent formation.
Crown Bud	Flower bud which occurs at the end of the main stem. It is flanked by two Wing buds .Also known as terminal bud.
Cultivar	A cultivated variety.
Cupped	Hollowed - see Involute.
Daisy-eyed	See blown.
Depth	Distance between the face of a bloom and the outermost point of the back florets.
Development	The state of maturity of the flower.
Disbranch	Pruning to remove unwanted branches of a plant to open it up or limit growth or shape the plant.
Disbud	A practice of timely rubbing off or breaking out the Side buds of a dahlia to spur production of a superior terminal bloom for exhibition purposes. The broken stem should be clean and healed over leaving no stub.
Disc centre	Flat, round shaped centre.
Display	An exhibit in which attractiveness of arrangement and general effort is of prime importance.
Disqualify	To remove an entry from a competitive class for a specific reason such as: not according to schedule virus or disease, or other named schedule rule Infraction requiring disqualification.
Dome-shaped	Semi circular, half circular. Note florets with rounded ends usually have closed dome-shaped centres.
Double	A bloom with multiple rows of ray florets, the disc florets are Immature and completely covered by the central rays when the bloom is at its prime.
Dwarf	Dahlia varieties that do not normally grow taller than 600mm (24 in) in height.

Entry	An exhibit in a class at a show.
Even	Equal, level, smooth, uniform in quality, proportionately or equally balanced.
Fimbriated	Deep lacerations. Shallowly split tips of florets known as serrations are a fault in a bloom A bloom having florets which are split or forked into two or more points.
Flicked Floret	A floret that is twisted and spoils the outline of a bloom.
Florets	Small Individual flowers which make up a dahlia bloom. Ray florets are Incorrectly called petals.
Fluted	Grooved - see Involute.
Foliage	The leaves and stems supporting them.
Form	The shape of the blooms. Certain characteristics of the form of dahlia determine their type.
Formal	A bloom with neat, precise floret formation.
Fully Double	Multiple rows of florets and a closed centre of undeveloped florets.
Garden Cultivar	Cultivars With attractive attributes but lacking sufficient of the ideal standards to successfully compete with cultivars of the same classification.
Gappy	A bloom with gaps In Its formation caused by uneven floret placement.
Green centre	Blooms where the ray florets making up the centre are still under-developed and give the bloom a hard or green centre.
High centre	A centre as high as the surrounding face florets.
Hybrid	A plant derived from the Interbreeding of two or more species.
Ideal	Perfect The highest conception of standard for imitation.
Incurved	Florets that towards the tip gradually curve forward toward the face of the bloom.
Informal	Blooms where the florets are somewhat twisted and he less regularly than in a formal bloom.
Involucre	The structure made up of green bracts which encloses the developing flower bud.

Involute	Margins of the ray florets roll forward along their longitudinal axis. When fully Involute, the margins touch or overlap so only the reverse of the floret is visible.
Isolated Kind	A centre which is quite distinct from the rest of the bloom. Group of plants, flowers or vegetables, eg. chrysanthemums, dahlias, roses, peaches pears, plums, onions or parsnips.
Lateral	The side shoot of a plant.
Marginal Rays	Fully developed ray florets which establish and determine the maximum diameter of a flower, as distinguished from the Immature central rays.
Neat	Tidy, well shapened, proportionately balanced, opposite to coarse.
Neck	Junction between the bloom and stem. Some cultivars are said to be weak necked because the bloom flops around the stem at this point.
Node	Slightly enlarged portion of the stem where leaves and buds arise and where branches originate.
Petal	The common name for a conspicuously coloured part of a floret.
Petaloids	Additional floral parts on ray florets having the form and appearance of smaller petals. Most noticeable in Collerette dahlias.
Pompon	Bunch of threads round in shape attached to a cap. Note Pompone is not a correct spelling.
Plucked	A bloom from which damaged or old florets have been removed.
Pole Sitter	A bloom which Sits directly on top of the stem.
Quilled	Tubular, round like a pipe. The centre florets of Anemone Type dahlias are tubular - see revolute.
Ray Floret	One of the broad, conspicuously coloured florets, the structure of which suggests a single petal of an ordinary flower.
Recurve	To turn back toward the stem.

Reflex	Recurve on itself. Outer florets which toward the tip gradually curve backward toward the stem of the bloom.
Regularly	Even, uniform or consistent patterns.
Revolute	Margins of the ray florets roll backward along their longitudinal axis. When fully revolute, the margins touch or overlap.
Rigid	Not easily bent.
Saucer shaped	Round with the whole edge raised slightly.
Seedling	A plant produced from seed.
Semi	Half one thing and half another.
Serrated	Shallowly split tips of florets. A fault in a bloom.
Shallow Bloom	A dahlia in which there are limited number of rows of ray flowers and in consequence appears rather plate-like.
Size	A measurement which allows blooms to be grouped in comparable classes for exhibition.
Slightly Incurved	Slightly Incurved Not much curvature toward the centre of a bloom.
Species	A group of closely related plants eg <i>Dahlia coccinea</i> and <i>Dahlia variabilis</i> .
Spherical	Round from all points of view, like a ball shape.
Sport	A mutation or sudden variation or change in colour, form, size or other characteristics of a plant or plant part, Such change is perpetuated by vegetative propagation only. Such changes do not come true from seed.
Stalk	For the purpose of exhibition a stalk is that part of the stalk below the last pair of true leaves.
Standard	A description of the perfect bloom or state of bloom generally accepted as being worthy of imitation. The objective toward which dahlias are grown for exhibition purposes.
Stem	For the purposes of exhibition a stem is that part of the stalk below the bloom and above the last pair of true leaves. A bract often occurs on the stem.
Stiff	Hard to bend, not easily bent - see rigid.
Straight	Straight florets have no visible curvature throughout their Length.

Strongly incurved	Vigorous, large proportion, decided upward curve in florets. Outer florets of an Exhibition Cactus type toward the tip quickly curve forward toward the centre of the bloom.
Substance	Fully turgid florets in sufficient number to give a bloom adequate bulk.
Sunken	Centre of a bloom below the general outline leaving a saucer-like depression.
Symmetrical	Perfectly balanced in all respects, graceful and pleasing in appearance.
Symmetry	The equal balance of weight (actual or visual) around the centre of a bloom.
Texture	The almost invisible gram or ribs of a floret structure, Fine gram as of skin, painting, etc. It includes the sparkle, sheen and brilliance of a plant and its blooms.
Tuber	The swollen root portion of a dahlia plant.
Undisseminated	A dahlia will be considered disseminated when it is offered for sale by the originator and/or introducer through catalogue, advertisement, and/or any other means. A dahlia will also be considered disseminated when the originator distributes roots or cuttings of an undisseminated cultivar to growers without the stipulation of growing for seedling bench competition and they are entered named, in show competition.
Variety	A group name for a different species of dahlia, eg- Dahlia variabilis, Dahlia superflua or Dahlia juarezii.
Wavy	Raising and lowering of the surface of florets along their length.

LIST OF COLOUR GROUPS

Based upon the Royal Horticultural Society of England's colour chart:

Yellow to Orange	Yellow, Yellow Orange, Orange, Orange White, Greyed Yellow (light brown tones), greyed orange (dark brown tones), grey brown and brown.
Pink to Red	Greyed orange (Pink tones), orange red, greyed red (dark pink tones) and red.
Dark Red to Purple	Red purple (dark red tones), purple, greyed purple (dark purple red tones).
Lavender to Violet	Violet blue (lavender tones), purple violet, Violet.
White	White, yellow white (cream tones).
Bicolours	Two, clearly defined and sharply changing colours on the face of the florets forming a regular pattern.
Blends of Colours	Two or more colours which merge gradually or intermingle but are distinguishable from a distance of two metres.
Variegated Colours	A ground colour striped, spotted or splashed with a distinctly different colour.

LIST OF SOCIETIES

In recognition of the work done in 1998 to publish this Judging Guide, the contact details in the original publication have been reproduced below.

For contact details at the time of this reprint in 2024 and in the future please refer to the Dahlia Society of Australia website.

<https://www.dahliaaustralia.org.au/>

Listed below are the names and addresses of the contact person for the societies affiliated with the ADC at the time of publishing.

Dahlia Society of NSW & ACT Inc.

Mr. A.G. Strachan, PO Box 330, Goulburn N.S.W. 2580

Queensland Dahlia Society Inc.

Mr. N.K. Prior, 31 Shordley Street, West Chermside Qld. 4032

The Dahlia Society of South Australia Inc.

Mr. V. Charlton, 121 Hillier Road Reynella S.A. 5161

The Hobart Horticultural Society Inc. - Dahlia Section

Mr. W. Simmons, 11 Barclay Crescent, Rosetta, Tas. 7010

The Launceston Horticultural Society Inc. - Dahlia Section

Mr. Don Room, P.O. Box 2043 Launceston, Tas. 7250

The National Dahlia Society of Tasmania Inc.

Mr. G. Harding, 49 Watkinson Street, Devonport Tas. 7310

The National Dahlia Society of Victoria Inc.

Mr. R. Gresham, 20 Murchison Road, Avenel Vic. 3664

Western Australian Gladiolus, Dahlia & Hippeastrum Society Inc.

Mrs. J. Tondut, 42 Kathleen Street, Nth. Cottesloe, W.A. 6011

The Australian Dahlia Council.

**Distributor: Mr. R.C. Wilkes, 8 Cooma Avenue, Goulburn NSW
2580**