

Dahlia Trial Garden Report, 2018

It's been a highly successful year in the trial garden in Canberra this year. Overall there were 20 entries in the trial from nine growers. The majority of the plants grew well and produced blooms throughout the season, allowing for what we hope is a good assessment process. The plants were reviewed on a number of occasions including by the visiting growers who came to the HSOC Show in March.

The assessment is based on 100 points, as follows:

Bloom Quality	50
Stem	15
Health and vigour	15
Recurrent blooming	10
Tuber Quality	10

Bloom Assessment (Exhibition or Garden)

Exhibition Blooms to be based on the DSA Standards.

Garden Blooms to be based on impact and appeal.

Stem

Is the stem in proportion to the flower?

Is the flower held at the appropriate angle?

Health and Vigour

The plant to be free of stunting and disease. (Insect damaged to be ignored.)

Is the plant sturdy, robust, leggy?

Recurrency

Time between flushes. Early, Mid, Late or All

Tuber Quality

Number of tubers, short or long necks

This criterion will be assessed by the Trial Garden Coordinator at the time of digging.

At the end of the day, however, the points given reflect the assessors' preferences as well as being shown in the variations we can get from multiple assessments on the one day.

The highest scoring variety this year was entry no 9 with 74 points – Granite 502A. This is an exciting fimbriated cactus/exhibition cactus that grew well and produced many show-quality blooms. This variety has been named 'Granite Embers'.

Second on the list was entry no 7 with 72.5 points – an orange miniature decorative (1618) from Devon Dahlias. Consistently with bloom that, at times, rated highly.

Third was entry no 17 with 72 points, Brulon 164 – a purple small decorative that took many an eye over the season.

Fourth was entry no 12 with 71 points, a white miniature cactus that was in constant bloom – Granite 510A – named 'Granite Jimesta'.

Fifth was a mauve single from John Woodfield with 69.5 points (entry no 3).

Sixth was the named variety with 69 points (entry no 20).

A couple of others to note were the small decorative from Deb Collett with 60 points and the Rodney Clarke red semi decorative with 62.5 points.

A particular thank you to those who help so much in the garden, with special mention for Brian and Glenn for their efforts this year when both John and I were less able to contribute than we would have liked.

Send through your exciting seedlings. It's certainly fun to see them and try to assess them. Hopefully this can also be helpful for those thinking of growing something new.

Graeme Davis

Photos of the four highest scoring dahlias are below:

1. Top left
2. Bottom right
3. Top right
4. Bottom left

