

# Characteristics of the Dahlia: Desirable and Undesirable

When evaluating a cultivar, the judge must balance the good with the bad. Few dahlias, if any, possess all positive characteristics. Although the ADS scorecard emphasizes the faults that a cultivar may possess, the judge must also weigh the strengths of the cultivar and then weigh the strengths and weaknesses, determining what overall value to assign to the cultivar.

<b>COLOR (22 points)</b>	
<i>DESIRABLE</i>	<i>UNDESIRABLE</i>
<b>Overall</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear</li> <li>• Bright</li> <li>• Pure</li> <li>• Sparkling</li> <li>• Lustrous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dull/Gray</li> <li>• Impure</li> <li>• Blotchy/Coarse</li> <li>• Streaked</li> <li>• Veined</li> </ul>
<b>Blends</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth transition between colors</li> <li>• Harmonious or contrasting colors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven</li> <li>• Clashing colors</li> </ul>
<b>Bicolors and Variegated</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even distribution of 2nd color</li> <li>• Good contrast</li> <li>• Sharp/distinct separation</li> <li>• Adequate amount 2nd color</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven</li> <li>• Poor contrast</li> <li>• Bleeds</li> <li>• Inadequate 2nd color</li> </ul>
<b>Multiple Blooms</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniform Color</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracts</li> <li>• Contrasting obvious petaloids</li> <li>• Wolf petals</li> </ul>
<b>Other Underirable Faults</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBE Bruising</li> <li>• SBE Insect Injury</li> <li>• SBE Mildew</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conspicuous bracts</li> <li>• Fading, bruising</li> <li>• Spotting</li> </ul>

<b>SUBSTANCE (15 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Springiness and toughness of the flower parts</li> <li>• Firm, crisp, thick, stiff</li> <li>• Uniform back and face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ray florets soft, lack springiness, droopy</li> <li>• Not turgid</li> <li>• Ray florets missing, shriveled, thin, brown, dirty, misshapen</li> <li>• Overly mature, lack of substance affects symmetry and color</li> </ul>

<b>FOLIAGE (10 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean</li> <li>• Luxuriant color</li> <li>• Good proportion, artistic formation</li> <li>• Uniform size &amp; form</li> <li>• Alternate &amp; opposite</li> <li>• Turgid</li> <li>• Adequate amount</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dirty, unappealing</li> <li>• Pale, blotchy</li> <li>• Out-of-proportion, poor texture</li> <li>• Too small, too large</li> <li>• Wilted</li> <li>• Sparse</li> <li>• Coarse, bubbly</li> <li>• Folded, crinkled</li> </ul>

<b>STEM (10 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong, erect, graceful, round</li> <li>• Straight</li> <li>• Good proportion: length &amp; diameter</li> <li>• Even, smooth, circular in cross section</li> <li>• One color (minor if not)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak, willowy, rubbery, wiry</li> <li>• Irregular, crooked</li> <li>• Too long or too short</li> <li>• Too thin or too large</li> <li>• Misplaced spur leaf (minor)</li> </ul>

<b>FORM (28 points)</b>	
<i>DESIRABLE</i>	<i>UNDESIRABLE</i>
<b>Summetry/Centers</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round</li> <li>• Good proportion</li> <li>• Adequate height</li> <li>• Full</li> <li>• Tight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oval</li> <li>• Poor proportion</li> <li>• Too high, too low</li> <li>• Misshapen/bull nose</li> <li>• Multiple centers</li> <li>• Dished</li> <li>• Elongated / Oblong</li> <li>• Open (blown center)</li> <li>• Weak</li> <li>• Hard/green</li> </ul>
<b>Contour</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good build</li> <li>• Full petallage</li> <li>• Ideal ray floret arrangement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asymmetrical</li> <li>• Lop-sided</li> <li>• Flicker floret</li> <li>• Gaps present</li> <li>• Rough/staghorn</li> <li>• Lacks ray florets</li> </ul>
<b>Fully Developed (SBE)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At peak of maturity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over mature</li> <li>• Immature</li> </ul>
<b>True to Form</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets ideal standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed form or does not meet ideal standard</li> </ul>

<b>BLOOM POSITION (5 Points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 degrees</li> <li>• Note: Top facing OK for Poms, MB, BA, and WL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Down facing</li> <li>• Side facing</li> <li>• Top facing on some forms, (minor for AA size)</li> </ul>

<b>JUDGING GUIDELINES</b>					
Characteristic	100%	90%	85%	80%	75%
Color	22	19.8	18.7	17.6	16.5
Form	28	25.2	23.8	22.4	21.0
Substance	15	13.5	12.75	12.0	11.25
Stem	10	9.0	8.5	8.0	7.5
Foliage	10	9.0	8.5	8.0	7.5
Bloom Position	5	4.5	4.25	4.0	3.75
Uniformity Florifoursness	5	4.5	4.25	4.0	3.75
Distinction	5	4.5	4.25	4.0	3.75