

## Harold Miller

### 2011 Inductee

### Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame

Harold Miller was involved with dahlias from the mid-Fifties until his death. The following is a brief synopsis of his involvement:

- He was a prolific seedling grower, introducing scores of varieties, including some of the first of the small peony varieties, SUKI (named for a granddaughter) and RED RUBY. Some of his "Puget" introductions were very successful on the exhibition table, including Puget Sparkle and Puget Red Tide, a velvety dark red small informal decorative.
- Harold was a founding member of the Puget Sound Dahlia Association. He wrote the constitution and bylaws and served for years as the culture chairman.
- Harold was also a founding member of the Federation, writing the constitution and bylaws.
- Harold was the first judging instructor authorized by the ADS to teach to Federation members (that was back when we asked permission for such things.)
- Harold wrote the first version of *Dahlias: A Monthly Guide* (his idea for a title). The original idea was to put together some copies of the culture bulletins from our monthly newsletters; Harold had a better idea and the Monthly Guide emerged.
- Harold also was the editor of the first editions of *Dahlias of Today* (also his idea for a title). The title emerged at a PSDA board meeting at the home of Bill & Lois Batts; it seems to have aged well.
- Harold served for years as the ADS Bench Evaluation Chair, coercing Roger Walker to assist and eventually take over the position. Harold understood the importance of keeping the chairmanship on the West coast where the majority of top seedlings were being produced.
- Harold was a skilled judge and was respected worldwide. In fact, he was even asked to judge in New Zealand when he attended shows down there. On a couple of occasions, he was *the* judge (e.g., the only one). But as he said, "It goes pretty fast when there is no one to argue with."
- As a long-time fan of open-centered varieties, Harold understood that those unusual dahlia types were much more interesting to the general public than a perfectly round small formal decorative. For years he sponsored a booth at the PSDA show that explained all the different types – and had examples of each. Another example of Harold the educator.

As can be seen, Harold was involved in all phases of dahlia culture. He was also involved with dahlia organizations from local, regional (Federation), and national (ADS).

But most of all, Harold was a teacher. He taught judging classes, he taught culture at meetings, he held workshops at his farm (which was purchased by David & Betty Burton), and he kept no secrets. If he knew of techniques that would improve dahlia culture, he would teach it to one and all – not caring that it may decrease his chances on the exhibition table. One of his legacies is the Burton's, who purchased Harold's home; dahlias and culture techniques were part of the deal.