

in the  
garden

# Where dahlias bloom



Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

ABOVE: Lisa Cerveny, David Russell and their corgi, Yoda, in their Gearhart home garden.  
BELOW: Dahlias in full bloom.



## Q&A

with  
**Lisa Cerveny**

**Q: When you purchased your Gearhart home some 18 years ago, you discovered a certain treasure in its gardens. What was that?**

A: When we first saw the property, we fell in love with the garden. It was early September and there were hundreds of dahlias in bloom. When we returned back to Seattle we couldn't remember much about the house, but the garden was front and center.

The previous owner had sold dahlias on the street. We carried on the tradition and through many years of sharing the blooms with the community we met wonderful people in passing, and made many life long friendship. That was a great gift.

**Q: How have you maintained your dahlia collection?**

A: The number of dahlias in the garden when we purchased the home was overwhelming. We narrowed them down from approximately 150 to 90. We also organized them into one large area in the back yard for ease of care. Michael Riley of Green Mountain Landscaping designed grass paths that divide the beds to create an inviting way to experience the variety of blooms.

**Q: What are the particular challenges of growing dahlias so close to the ocean?**

A: We're fortunate that we're very close to the front, yet we're in a unique location that's relatively protected from the wind. The biggest issue with the dahlias are the warm winters that encourage large slug and snail populations. They eat them like cabbage.

**Q: What is a good tip for cutting dahlias for bouquets to make them last?**

A: Cut them early in the morning before the sun is high and put them in tepid water. If you wait for a nice sunny afternoon to cut, they're likely to fizzle.

**Q: What is your favorite dahlia?**

A: They're all unique and fun. David calls them the "floozies of the flower world." If I had to choose one (for this year) I'd choose Dragonberry. Its magenta, orange and yellow tones are delicious.

**Q: Does your dog Yoda help in the garden?**

A: Yoda is the chief supervisor. He's particularly interested when we're planting in the spring with bone meal.

**Q: What's the most recent gardening book you've read that you would recommend?**

A: "Back in the Garden with Dulcy," by Dulcy Mahar. She maintains a wonderful sense of humor about gardening and I like her brutal approach to getting rid of plants that don't work.

*Lisa Cerveny and her husband, David Russell, have a garden filled with dahlias at their home in Gearhart.*

## THE SHIP REPORT

# On the water, a little prep goes a long way

By JOANNE RIDEOUT  
Special to The Daily Astorian

It's boating season right now and the warm weather has us all wanting to be outside, and many of us, out on the water in boats.

We're thinking about fun when we're going out to enjoy the day on the river or ocean, but the truth is it doesn't always turn out that way. So this column is about what to do if something goes wrong, and how to get help as fast as possible.

In this region, with its huge U.S. Coast Guard presence, help for mariners in trouble is usually just a VHF radio call away. But there are a few key things you can do to help your rescuers help you, in the fastest possible way.

First of all, start thinking about what to do if things go wrong before they actually do. This doesn't mean dwelling on disaster, it means having a back-up plan so you're ready if, say, the boat starts to sink, or catches fire, or someone on board has a medical emergency that you can't handle. These things

happen all the time to boaters. They keep the Coast Guard busy around the clock, especially in the summer.

Here's what the Coast Guard suggests you do to make rescue efficient and fast:

- **Get those lifejackets on.** You already have yours on, don't you? Well, if you don't, get yourself and everyone else on board suited up. If you all end up in the water this will buy you valuable time.

- **Have a VHF radio and know how to use it.** Yes, a VHF radio and not a cellphone, although you can have one of those too. They're inexpensive and hands down the fastest and best way to get the Coast Guard focused on helping you quickly.

- **Turn your VHF radio to Channel 16.** This is the distress channel. The Coast Guard monitors it constantly. They'll hear you and respond very quickly if you press the button on the radio and call for help on Channel 16.

- **Press the button on the VHF radio and say, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday."** I know it sounds silly, and perhaps con-

duces up images of small children dancing around a maypole, but actually it's the universal international distress signal. Anyone anywhere in the world who hears you say this will know you are in trouble and are calling for help. By the way, it's the English phonetic pronunciation of the French word for "help me." So, quite appropriate, actually.

- **Tell them the name of your boat, its registration number, and where you are.** Just yelling "help" into the radio in French or any other language isn't really enough to get the fastest response if you are, for example, sinking. The Coast Guard can track your VHF radio signal but that takes some time. Better you tell them yourself who you are and where you are. If you have a GPS on board (you should) you can use it to find your latitude and longitude. Tell the Coast Guard this. They can find you pronto with that information.

- **What if you're not sure where you are?** Then tell them where you were — what port you left from and how long you

have been traveling, and in what direction. "Two hours west on the river out of Astoria." That will help.

- **Clear the decks.** If a Coast Guard rescue helicopter comes to help you, clear the decks of anything that could blow around and hit someone. The downdraft from a helicopter tops 100 mph. At those speeds, small objects become dangerous projectiles.

- **Get ready to be rescued.** If you're on a sailboat, take down the sails. Expect the helicopter to approach your boat off the stern on the port (left) side, because the pilot has the best visibility that way. If you can steer the boat, orient it so that the wind is 45 degrees off the port bow. They'll be wanting to lower a basket on a cable and hoist you up.

- **Keep listening to your VHF radio and be ready to follow directions.** Whatever the Coast Guard folks in that helicopter or rescue boat tell you to do, do it. Even if it's scary. They know what they're doing and have a lot more experience at this than you do. Be aware that



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

**KMUN General Manager Joanne Rideout is the voice of The Ship Report.**

if your boat presents a danger to the helicopter (like a sailboat with its mast flailing about in rough seas), you maybe asked to jump into the water and swim away from the boat. Plenty of lives have been saved this way, even in severe weather. So trust them and just go for it.

So now you know the basics about calling for help if you get in trouble on the water. By the way, plenty of boaters go their whole lives and never, ever, need to be rescued. I hope that's you. And now that you know more about what to do in an emergency, you don't have to obsess about it. A little preparation goes

a long way. You're pondering it, making sure you're ready, thinking it through. All done. Now get out there and enjoy the summer.

*Joanne Rideout is general manager of Coast Community Radio (KMUN-FM) in Astoria. She's also the creator and producer of The Ship Report, a radio show and podcast about All Things Maritime. You can hear The Ship Report on Coast Community Radio at 8:48 a.m. weekdays at 91.9FM, streaming at [www.coastradio.org](http://www.coastradio.org). Podcast available on The Ship Report website at [www.shipreport.net](http://www.shipreport.net).*

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