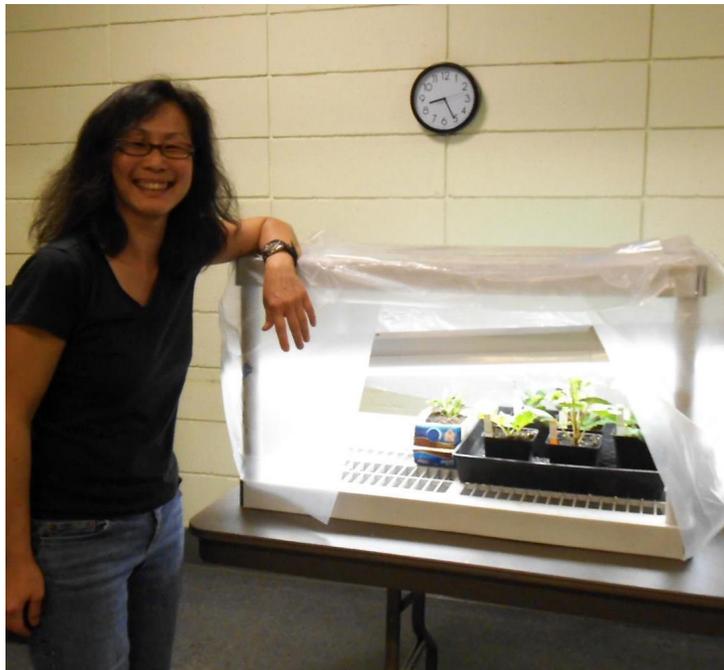




NEXT MEETING: May 13 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Dahlias 101. Great pix, better commentary. Bring your friends, neighbors, and interested dahlia growers. Free to the public. Devorah and Deborah and who else will bring more dahlias for sale? Please bring your tubers which sprouted too late for our tuber sale. Who will bring yummies to delight us

RECONCEIVING GREENHOUSES:

Tinnee asked us, "What is a greenhouse?" After showing us pictures of magnificent greenhouses



around the world including our own Conservatory of Flowers in Golden Gate Park, she answered her own question. "A green house is a controlled environment with a consistency of heat and humidity." In contrast to the famous edifices, Tinnee held up a Ziploc baggie with two cuttings in it. "This, too, is a green house." She suggested that chicken carriers with their black bottoms and clear melon lids make great greenhouses. Tupperware is a perfect greenhouse for germinating seeds. Then before our eyes she built an urban greenhouse. While a single shelf with shop lights and plastic enclosure works in the smallest apartment or darkest garage, Tinnee built a four-story shelf structure. She stressed that one should easily raise or lower the lights depending on the maturity of the plants inside. She noted an opening flap for easy access. On metal shelving she uses magnets to hold the plastic in place. Devorah has

two such "greenhouses" in her garage. Deborah has three in her greenhouse in the back yard. And Soc and Pat have theirs in their garages. These are simple to construct and easily broken down again. Try one!



GOOD BUGS, BAD BUGS:

So many critters love wee green dahlia shoots. Earwigs, snails and slugs are just the tip of the feasting pyramid. Diabrodica resemble green lady bugs, but instead of being beneficial, they eat all the white tips and yellow dahlias. DJ suggested that since they lay their eggs in the soil, you spade over the dirt before planting. Deborah suggested hanging strips of flycatchers or painting Dixie cups with tanglefoot and posting atop your stakes. They land on these but can't take off again. Devorah holds a lady bug releasing ceremony at Cabrillo Gardens periodically with the school children. They mow through aphid infestations. Kevin suggests that if you spot the aphids early, they will encrust just one or two buds. Simply cut off the encamped and toss. People are already concerned about mildew, a perennial concern in our foggy Bay Area. A potent systemic prophylactic, Hoist, can be bought at Romeo's in Half Moon Bay. Four packets cost @\$100. So Deborah recommended interested parties form a buying consortium and split their Hoist four ways. One packet lasts a whole season. Deborah's tip: spray with a cocktail of Hoist, green insecticide, and fertilizer when your plants have been in the ground for 3 weeks. Devorah reports that the only product to address already extant mildew is Stylet Oil, which can be purchased on line. Deborah passed around a plastic card from Flora Grubbs which displayed pictures of good bugs on one side and bad ones on the other side; she keeps it in her gardening bag for easy id-ing as she's disbudding and deadheading. Cost: @\$7.



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:

Thanks to John D. for bringing two roses in plastic bags. Delicious thanks to Baker Bill for his home-made carrot cake and to Lola for her whipped cream cherry cake. The scones and chocolate muffins owe their presence to John Ko. Ron and Joann brought not only a box of their lemons, but also a tray of lemon squares. Thanks to Leo for his chocolate chip cookies and to Debbie for her assorted nuts. I could have eaten alllllll Maggie's home-baked chocolate chip cookies with half an opportunity. Major thanks to Devorah and Pat for bringing such gorgeous cuttings! Deborah and Soc's milk cartooned beauties were sold into good gardens. Thanks for the Schelps lovely Pink Jupiter and HG Chad E tubers. All this generosity is what keeps our society viable! Please convey your appreciation in person to Baker Bill, Ron and Joann for tidying up the kitchen after we ravaged through the evening.



DUELING DREMMELS:

Mike of Half Moon Bay Dahlias invited Deborah down to his beachfront abode for a dividing marathon. Together they whittled huge clumps into prized tubers for our sale. Looking like huge hanks of anemic carrots, the 8 mountains of HG Chad E (a sc pr) looked like mini forests; they had already greened out so extravagantly. To process these hundreds of gems, Mina and Tony ministrated at the Maus Haus: milk cartoning, sulfuring exposed slashes, potting into strawberry plastic trays, gooping cuttings into 4x4's, grooming and labeling tubers. A major shout out to Sue for organizing all these plants into flats by size.



STANLEY JOHNSON MEDAL:

Each year the dahlia which earns the most blue and higher awards receives the highly coveted Stanley Johnson Medal. This is THE BIG ONE, the one all hybridizers prize the most because it means it has been the most successful for the most people all over the United States. This year, Roland Verrone of Yelm, Washington donned his medal with profound pleasure for his Verrone's Morning Star. Last year this was classified as an open novelty; this year it defines the category Orchette. Roland has been a generous friend to DSC growers over the years and we exult with his triumph!



OUR DINNER WITH KEITH:

The illustrious Dr. Keith Hammet of New Zealand dined with Deborah and Tinnee after checking things out with Annie of Annie's Annuals, Kevin and Karen of Corralitos Dahlias and Renee of Renee's Seeds formerly Shepard's Seeds. Keith received the highest award bestowed from Britain on a non-Englander for lifetime horticultural achievement for his work on sweet peas, clivias and dahlias. He spurred the mania here in the US for dark foliage and deep red to black centers on dahlias. Many of Tinnee's winning seedlings come from Hammet seed parents.



DELL DOINGS:

By the end of March, Sue and Valeria were assembling and sinking 60 gopher cages. By early April, Tinnee weeded and determined which clumps had successfully overwintered and which spots required new dahlias. By mid-April, Lou had his section topped with light compost soil, rototilled, and his stakes meticulously gridded out according to his trusty tape measure. Sue thoughtfully weeded Pat's plot. Deborah exulted in more than 80 clumps returning as



sophomore stars. Deborah thinned several, potting up the extra tubers and taking several cuttings. She's hoping for first blooms before the end of May. Wow!

Huge thanks to those who contributed dahlias: the Schelps, Soc, Deborah, Devorah, Lola, Sue, the Wardens, Dane, Roger,

TUBER SALE MONTAGE

You may have noticed Barry Hart taking pictures throughout the day at this year's Tuber Sale. Using Barry's photos and observations we have created a 2 1/2 minute video chronicling our annual fundraiser / awareness building / membership generating event. [Check it out here.](#)

MUCH ADO ABOUT MAY:

Finish planting your remaining dahlias. Each person seems to have his/her favorite "secret sauce" that they put in the holes before planting. I like to use a couple tablespoons of Bayers 3 in 1 granules and a 1/4 cup balanced fertilizer from Romeo's like 14-14-14. Other people add a bit of bone meal although from what I've read recently, present day bone meal has just about nothing in it and one should spend the money on something else. Kristine and Iris from Monterey always pop in a bit of mycorrhizomes. Devorah likes to use worm castings from her own worm bins. No matter what your secret sauce is, do remember to put your stake in **BEFORE** you bury your tuber, otherwise you run the possibility of impaling your wee root. Immediately label. Bill made some excellent labels from junked venetian blinds. I write on mine in pencil, which does not fade away like Sharpies under the onslaught of sun, rain, and foliar feeding. Vigilantly dose with slug repellent.

On April third, I “topped” my first bush. Upon seeing the first bud on a dahlia, I pinch it, it’s two sister buds beside it and the two leaves to either side. You will note that already between the leaves and the stem on what remains, tiny green sprouts are emerging. These will form the next two stems with buds on them. These second growths you can “disbud:” remove the two sister buds leaving just the central bud. The extra energy will contribute to a larger bloom, stronger stem, and more vitality in your bush.



pre-pinching

I am usually at the Dahlia Dell on Saturday mornings if you want to come by to help, ask questions, or just see what’s going on. Weeding hands are especially welcome. Even if you label your dahlias, Mike S reminds us that a master map is invaluable. The labels can get blown away but your trusty master map will come to the rescue. I like to build an xl sheet with cultivar name, ADS classification number, spot in the garden, size, form, color, and source (where did this plant come from).



pinched like a watch in the Artful Dodger’s pocket

Yours in Dirt,
Deborah

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