



NEXT MEETING: July 14 @ 7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln

Program: Show time is here! Frank will discuss the pros and cons of entering your blooms, plus nuts and bolts housekeeping hints. He will have checklist handouts.

Lou Paradise will reprise his terrific presentation on staging blooms, including demystifying multiple dahlia setups.

WHAT COLOR'S YOUR DAHLIA?

Dr. Virginia Walbot, Stanford biologist, researches how and why our favorite flower manifests such a panoply of hues. After many years and many research papers on the pigmentation of Indian corn, Dr. Walbot reasoned that maize and dahlias developed in roughly the same geographical areas: Mexico and Central America. Within the dahlia's cells, color results from a chemical chain involving the synthesis of anthocyanin in the cytoplasm. The first reaction results in yellow predication; the second through 8 steps result in pink which can become beige or bronze depending on more or less glucose available. The addition of 3 hydroxyl groups—OH—yields orange; 4 OH gives red; 5 makes purple; and a whopping and very very unlikely 6 could result in the fabled BLUE dahlia. Dr. Walbot described pigments as vibrational energy resulting from light activating minute metal ions. In addition to the pure genetics of color, the type of soil, the trace elements, the PH, and the amount of light and angles of the light configure dahlia colors differently. For example, Jessica's bright red tips on her yellow incurved petals are regulated by the light for only the first 1—2 days of exposure. So at our shows this summer, check out how differently the exact same genetic varieties reflect their different garden environments.



Dr. Walbot estimated that at the growing tip of a dahlia there are around 200 meristem cells. When it branches off, the apex of the new tip has only about 20 cells which over time regenerate to the original compliment of 200 again. This helps us understand how variegateds often have a wolf petal on one lateral, then several single colored petals at the next lower level and on the third level may all have reverted to a mono-chromatic bloom. Dr. Walbot left us with our minds spinning and her arms full of dahlias from Lola, Devorah and Deborah.



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Baker Bill arrived early to not only open the kitchen but to assemble two sets of shelves and other assorted growing gear he gave away. John Dale donated a bag of popcorn. Lola served HOT ham and cheese sliders; and Tony pleased our palates with Just Desserts lemon bites. Gino brought a chocolate cake whilst Pat repeatedly pleased us with Lacey Florentines. MMMM. Thank you to all who so generously give of your time, your kitchens, and your energies to our Dahlia Society of California.

EARLY BLUE RIBBONS



Congratulations to DJ and Peg for taking Best Dahlia in the San Mateo County Fair. Fabulous bloom for so early in the season. If there were ribbons given for best garden right now, Marilyn and Phil would win for their Richmond haven. Their garden is bursting with hundreds of spectacular blooms already, including Carman Bunky, Pam Howden, Ala Mode, Elsie Hosten, and Amulet. Dr. Walbot would note the remarkable brightness of the red and yellow in the Warden's Lady Darlene. Phil attributes his early success to the robust cuttings from Corralitos and to all the soil amendments he's added over the years. Meanwhile in the Dell, over 40 plants were blooming by mid-June and buds galore, promising a glorious summer. Check out Deborah's regal Camano Concord and cute BJ's Rival. Lou's new mini-ball produces like popcorn.

Pat has already harvested a huge Summer Beauty and a KA's Cloud.



WHITE CANARY

Miners used to take canaries down the shaft with them to monitor the invisible carbon dioxide levels. When the canary got woozy, the miners fled the pit to save their lives. So Mike Shelp noted that a few dahlias like Sterling Silver and Woodland's Merinda seem to be particularly susceptible to powdery mildew. Why not grow one of these "canaries" to act as an early warning system to increase ones spraying regimen before the whole garden gets covered with the dreaded white ashy crud?

IT'S SHOWTIME!

What	When	Where	
San Leandro	August 1&2	San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo Ave.	
San Francisco	August 15&16	SF County Fair Building, 9th & Lincoln	
Monterey	August 29&30	Museum of Art and History, downtown Santa Cruz	
Dahlia Society picnic	September 12	Golden Gte Park	

MINI SHOW=MAXI FUN

Monterey Dahlia Society throws its annual mini show/competition/staging practice Sat. July 12, at the Corralitos Gardens from noon to 4PM. Bring blooms for competition or just bring something to bar-beque AND another dish to share. Take this wonderful opportunity to see what Kevin and Karen have accomplished in their hilltop business. Check out the seedlings and the new cultivars to order next year. Jan might give another flower arranging seminar. The Corralitos charcuterie about a mile from CG Gardens features sausages from ostriches, alligators, bunny, llamas, buffaloes, elk, and deer, making it a great place to pick up your bar-b-qable delectables.

IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Who should attend a judging seminar? Obviously anyone who hopes to show and help with our show, anyone who hopes to clerk at our show, and anyone who wants to grow better dahlias in his/her own floral kingdom. Come learn about how we are honing the dahlia aesthetic. What Platonic ideal are we striving for? Saturday, July 25, in the Hall of Flowers at 9th and Lincoln in Golden Gate Park at 9am -4 pm. Parking is limited so please try to carpool or take public transportation. Extra bonus: very close to GG Dahlia Dell.



Please inform Tinnee Lee of your attendance:
Tinneelee@gmail.com

VALERIA BELTS IT OUT OF THE PARK

How to make a Levis tool belt as dictated to subservient Deborah. Start with a ratty pair of otherwise throw-away jeans. Turn them inside out. Start cutting below the button hole underneath the sewing on the belt. Follow the contour of the front pocket without breaching the seam. Continue cutting towards the rear following the contours all the pockets. Reinforce the seams of both the front pockets especially the bottoms thereby joining them so the pockets don't flap separately from the jeans overlay. Artistic option: add patches or other material to reinforce pockets. Valeria uses this tool belt for work professionally gardening in very snazzy private residences. She puts her pruners in a back pocket; keys and money and cell in front pockets. The other back pocket often totes her gloves.



JUST ABOUT JULY

I am experimenting with microrhysomes this summer. One tea-spoon goes into each hole when I (and Billy and Tricia) plant. These invisible threads supposedly help the dahlias gather nutrients from farther afield and help shore up their immune systems. The variety I'm using, Plant Success Granular Microrhizae, contains several different strains of beneficial fungi. We'll see.

Deadheading, disbudding and cleaning off the lower leaves are the order of the month. As your dahlia grows in height, begin removing the lowest leaves. This helps with air circulation, diminishes opportunistic bugs access, and decreases possibilities of water lingering on these leaves and fostering mildew.

Do continue your cocktail of insecticide/fungicide/ dishwashing SOAP and fertilizer. I like to switch to a superbloom--low-super high-medium—as soon as my dahlias start budding. I encourage growers no matter how many dahlias they grow, to keep a spritzer bottle handy filled with this cocktail; spritz your lovelies early and often. Remember to err on the dilute side. A heartsick grower came to the park with black leaves for a consult. Diagnosis? Fertilizer at too strong an amount; dilution with repetitive applications is always safer. The easiest way to get rid of aphids is to notice them early, snap off the bud and throw it away. Lou carries a squirt bottle with soap, which can smother the little suckers.



As your dahlias yield their first blooms, check their appearance with the ADS Classification Book to ascertain they are what you have labeled them.

Check for crinkly, disfigured leaves. When in doubt—throw it out. I have noticed a lot of thrip this year. It looks like the paths of drunken insects wandering around inside your leaves. You cannot reverse this process in the infected leaves, but you can kill the thrips with a decent insecticide like Captain Jack's Dead Bug or nastier products like Malathion. The new leaves will grow pristinely. Then snip off the ugly ones.

I was asked recently how to keep a couple dahlias watered when someone went out of town for a week without an automatic drip system. I suggested filling a 2-liter plastic soda bottle with water and turning it upside down in the dirt. It takes quite a while for it to empty, slowly soaking the immediate area. I'd certainly check how it works in your particular situation before I relied exclusively upon it, but it's an option. The rule of thumb—even in the drought—is that dahlias like to be very wet and then dry. Especially with our quixotic weather in San Francisco, it's hard to put dahlias on a watering schedule. Dahlias will tell you when they need water; they crump a bit, wilt a bit, and sag just a little bit. During the June Gloom, my section of the Dell went ten days between waterings. On the other hand, Mike, our webmaster par excellence, had several triple digit days and had to water almost every day. Under these circumstances, shade cloth and misters for 5 seconds every 2 hours in the day time can really lower the temperature and raise the humidity. John Menzies from Australia recently published an article on pulse watering. He drips a little water for five minutes a couple times a day, usually in the early morning and early evening and once during the night to diminish the amount of evaporation.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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Originally Organized
In 1917
In San Francisco

the Dahlia was adopted as the
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on October 4, 1926
by its Board of Supervisors

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