



NEXT MEETING: August 9 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: **NOVICE ONLY** mini show. All classes, plus one x3 and x5. **LIMIT:** two entries per class. Ca\$h prizes. Please come early to be all set up by 7:30. Remember to bring a watering pail, a bucket for clean up, scissors or snips, and labels.

GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Baker Bill baked brownies. Pat surprised us with Magic Beans. Billie and Dan brought home-made chocolate chip cookies. Thanks to Maggie for the box of toffee chips. Gino's palmiers and Tony's macaroons went down smoothly. How tasty were Colleen's pecan pralines and Keyline Key cookies?? Thanks to John and Annette for their lemon cream cake slices. How fast did Cathy's Ghirardelli chocolate cookies disappear? Thank all you generous dahlianeers who sustain us month by month!

JUDGING SPECTRUM

By all accounts the Monterey Judging School delighted and educated everyone. Because each section was led by a different senior judge, not only did newbies get better acquainted with our stellar leaders, they learned from different voices with different modes of teaching. Even stone-faced Lou traded quips as banter batted about the room. Kristine's blooms took people's breath away.



YOU THINK YOU HAVE DAHLIA PESTS?

Bob Papp writes, "I know how to keep deer, rabbits, gophers, slugs, snails and skunks out of my dahlia beds. Can anyone tell me how to keep welders out of my beds?" Bob explained that he grows a special exhibition bed of dahlias at the Orange County Fair Grounds around the base of one of their towers. Alas, the welders chose blooming time to repair their "Faulty Towers." Two weeks later he discovered another invasive species. CALVES! And you thought you had nasty critters munching your beauties?



I guess Bob really has been growing dahlias until the cows come home!

DSC DONATION

Many thanks to Mary Erikson-Ishisaki for her generous donation to DSC in memory of Erik Juul. Mary and her huge brindled Great Dane stroll the Dell often. Her late husband and Erik had fishing boats adjacent to each other and were fine fishing pals.

TAKE TWO DAHLIAS AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING

Special to DSC from Linda Derooy Holmes Cook



Listen to the voice of experience — dahlias have the power to heal.

Since October, I have lost four close family members, including my mother and my youngest brother. On top of all that, my close friend and job-share partner succumbed to metastatic melanoma on March 3. It seemed as though every time I turned around, someone I loved was dying.

I was determined that I wouldn't let it get me down — that I would actively involve myself in the processes of grief, death and goodbyes, and as a result, my healing would follow in a timely manner. But truth be told, I just wasn't myself at all; some days, I found it hard to move, even though I had much to do. The fall and winter holidays came and went, but all the celebrations felt muted and dull, as though I was blocked from full contact by some kind of screen.

I wanted to write, but I couldn't put words on paper. I ended up with a file full of would-be columns, all of which stuttered to a quick end after a couple sentences. I wondered if I would ever find that "Joy in Bloom" that had formerly bubbled up and out of me.

In January, I decided to search for it in my crawlspace, where the darkness matched my mood and my tubers slept in stacks of cardboard boxes. I piled the boxes up in my wagon, and dragged them out to my basement work space. I proceeded to dig down through the layers of pine shavings that provided the bedding for my dear babies. Every tuber was carefully examined for sprouting or swelling from the eyes on the crown. Granted, it was early to be doing such an assessment, but I desperately needed confirmation that life goes on — what better way to get achieve that? My heart warmed slightly each time I observed eager growth forcing its way out of these modest little roots — and the thaw began to creep through my bones.

Over the next few months, I spent many hours in this cool, dark space, chipping away at the icy shroud that enclosed me. I sorted, counted, recorded and planned the future of these tuberous treasure chests, envisioning where they would be planted, and what their offspring would look like.

I started some questionable tubers in flats or Ziploc bags filled with good topsoil, in an effort to give them a boost. Some of them were even placed under my grow-lights, and challenged to produce shoots that would be sliced off to produce cuttings. I separated the tubers that I would donate to our dahlia society tuber sales from the ones that will be planted in my gardens, and I re-discovered the "Manna Effect" of this generous flower — the more we plant and cut, the more we have.

I thought of a children's song by Raffi, where he sings "Love is something, when you give it away, you end up having more." Dahlias are exactly like that — dahlias are love.

Last week, I emerged from the dark and dank, and into the warm nurturing sunlight to start planting. I could almost hear the ice cracking away from my heart, replacing my sense of loss with the promise of new life.

The final thaw came last weekend when I participated in a moving and joy-filled celebration of life for my friend. This gathering virtually became a deep well of healing, from which I was able to draw up

buckets filled with consolation, grace and hope — the very things I missed so much with the passing of my dear ones and the very things that compose the joy that my dahlias evince. My loved ones would be happy to know that I'm starting to feel like my old self again.

I'm confident that a dose of humble brown dahlia tubers can be a cure for what ails you. Take one or two, place them gently in a shallow hole, and nurture them with sunshine, water and as much hope as you can muster.

I'll be down at Pybus Public Market from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at our first NCW Tuber Sale. You can fill your prescription there.

(Linda Holmes-Cook blogs regularly at ncwdahliasociety.blogspot.com.)

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE? Really try to bring at least a few blooms for the competition. You'll be surprised what a different experience our Floribunda becomes when you have a little skin in the game. Read the show schedule in advance; pre-print your entry cards. ([Click here for show schedule and entry cards](#)) Next, call or email Deborah if you will clerk or judge in SF or the Heirloom Expo in Santa Rosa or both: 415-816-2118 dahlia.dietz@gmail.com We would also like someone at our membership table in SF ALL the time.

We especially need a couple people to oversee the table from 10-12:30 whilst others judge or clerk. Let Deborah know for which hours you would sit at our membership table on Saturday and Sunday. Please let Tinnee know if you can help setting up tables on Friday afternoon or tear them down on Sunday after 5PM. We need a staunch, organized person to volunteer to set up lunch on Sat. and help clean up afterwards.

HEIRLOOM EXPO OPPORTUNITIES

Jere Gettle, owner of Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds, has generously upped the prize money to make the Heirloom Expo Dahlia Show the highest payout of any show in California. Yowza! Set up is Labor Day evening after 6:30 PM; all entries must be in place and things cleaned up by 8:30 am on Tuesday, Sept. 6. Please inform Deborah if you are entering dahlias and approximately how many and if you will clerk/judge. We also need volunteers for our dahlia information table. Get on the schedule to answer questions and preside over the People's Choice for a 3-hour stint and Deborah will get you a free pass to the whole show! Check out theheirloomexpo.com website for all the fascinating speakers during the three days.

SHOW PACKING LIST

Want to be ready to be your showiest? Below are all the things you need in your Swiss Army dahlia toolkit. ([Click here for a single page copy suitable for printing.](#))

Scissors or snips	Optional:
5-gallon bucket with your name on it	Your xl spread sheet with cultivar name, ADS # etc.
Watering pail	Pre-printed and even pre-filled out entry cards
Lots of Towels for spills and clean up	Stylet oil to clean leaves
Containers with solidly attached pin frogs	Extra fat stems for supporting too gracile stems
ADS Classification Book	Gloves
Pens/pencils	Trolley for transporting exhibits
	Flor-life additive for vase water

DAHLIA DELL DOINGS





Upcoming Dahlia events



Dahlia Society of California, August 20th & 21st

County Fair Building/Golden Gate Park, 9th & Lincoln Avenues, San Francisco

Flowers of the Year: AC Abby and Lulu Island Mom

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society, August 27th & 28th

Santa Cruz Art Museum, 705 Front Street 95060

Flowers of the Year: AC Abby, Lulu Island Mom



Heirloom Expo, September 6th - 8th

Sonoma Fair Grounds, Santa Rosa

John Stowell Dahlia Society, date to be determined

Dahlia Society of California Picnic at the Dell, September 10th, potluck

Monterey Bay Dahlia Society Dine Around, September 24th

4-5 private gardens + potluck



: (This list was designed to be fridge ready, so :
: please print, post on your fridge, and join our :
: local dahlia societies for their annual shows. :



DAHLIA EYE CANDY



Dandie



Hapet Bonfire



Karma Choc



Dazzling Magic



HH Contessa



Okapi Sunset



Happet Mona Lisa



Melody Dora



Boogie Woogie



Westerton Henry



Gurtla Twilight



Bea Paradise

ALL ABOUT AUGUST

Assiduously deadhead and disbud. Remember to snip **BELOW** the leaf pair clear down to **NEW GROWTH**. Prompt and continuous deadheading could yield you dahlia blooms in December. Really. **DO IT**. When you dead head, tear apart several of your blooms, especially if they evidence any damage. Find out the source; is it caterpillars? Earwigs? Aphids? Diabrodica? Know your enemy and take appropriate steps. Keep the bottoms of your plants de-leafed. Tie up dahlias threatening to topple over. This time of year I use a superbloom fertilizer, low first number, super high second number and medium third number such as 5-55-30. I shake it in my cocktail instead of a balanced fertilizer.

A snowstorm of mildew developed during these last foggy days. **GRRRR**. We are fighting back by stripping **ALL** the powdery leaves and spraying with Serenade and Stylet Oil. This is trench warfare: you'll have to battle one leaf at a time, one plant at a time. Bring some blooms to some shows. It's so much more fun to participate than to just watch from the sidelines. Start a wish-list from the shows of what you **NEED** for next year. It's like deciding what to have tomorrow night when you're still stuffing it in at the feast, but.... just saying: you want that list when you start getting the itch during the mud months. Rogue: get rid of anything that's not performing up to the highest standards. Little runty, crummy plants go straight to the trash, not the compost pile. I noticed Lou has already jettisoned a couple bushes. If you don't have an "insurance" dahlia to pop into that space, you can always try planting a couple lower cuttings from favorite thriving dahlia bushes and keeping them damp until they root. You might just surprise yourself.



Take a bunch of pix. Post them on the [Dahlia Society of California's Facebook page](#), on the NorCal-dahliagrowers website, or just send them to me with appropriate explanation for our newsletter. Invite people to your garden. Walk them around our Dell. Share this glorious time of abundant bloom with friends, neighbors and co-workers. Invite everyone on your email list to our show.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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[Click here for past issues of the
DSC newsletter](#)

Like what you see? Visit the DSC for even more dahlia information. And if you are not a DSC member yet be sure to join.

sfdahlias.org