



NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 11 May @ 7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln.



PROGRAM - Kevin Larken from Corralitos Dahlias, lectures on ADS Dahlia Research: 1- Fertility/potting mix trial done by Scotts Company; 2- Bloom vase life study done at UCSC; and 3- the comprehensive fertility trial at Penn State and Longwood Gardens. Bring your extra tubers or cuttings for sale on behalf of your benevolent DSC! Who will bring delectable munchies?

A YEAR OF NOSTALGIA:

Deborah's PowerPoint Presentation of a Year of Dahlias featured photos of many DSCers digging, dividing, showing, and winning. The audience appreciated that most of her dahlia mug shots contained names and ADS designations. "Deborah's enthusiasm is like a disease—in a good way," exclaimed Tinnee. The audience—including many people from the tuber sale—asked great questions and answered other people's questions about gopher and other pest control, planting cuttings as opposed to tubers, watering requirements, mildew prophylaxis, and pinching out how-to's.

DAHLIA BAZAAR REDUX:

Lou L. and Devora donated luscious cuttings; Franck and Deborah brought milk cartooned plants; Warren contributed beautiful Cornel tubers, and John sold a clivia. Marilyn donated a couple dozen of her hand thrown and glazed containers which were quickly nabbed up. How did the Dingwalls stagger in under such a heavy load of lemons AND lemon bars? Were we glad Francine is back—back with delicious lumpia. Yummy thank you's to the Cornishes for their sweet currants and twigs (?) and to DJ and Peg for their scrumptious lemon loaf. Baker Bill outdid himself with his heady Bacardi rum cake.



TUBER SALE OR FLOWER SHOW?

DSCers performed like a finely tuned corps of engineers! Jaime and John arrived early on Friday and stayed late on Saturday setting up and tearing down tables. How many trips did Gerda and Lou make to and from the greenhouse with flats of magnificent cuttings of Birds Nest, So Happy, Franz Kafka, Ruskin Andrea, Prometheus and Juul's Amber to name a few highly sought after varieties? Deborah unloaded two Elements full of plants in milk cartons. Lou delivered his seminar cuttings looking so greenly lush from his Secret Sauce treatments (the cuttings, not Lou). Displaying photos really escalated the sale of pictured varieties. The Schelp's gallon pots of Show 'n Tell were snapped up immediately. Martha and Greg labeled assorted cartons while Devi mixed her cuttings and tubers into the fray. Despite being in the throes of moving across the country, Catherine donated her tuber clumps! Although he could not attend, Soc nevertheless sent 4 flats of wonderful tubers including Jax, Cyril Higgs and Inland Dynasty. Down from Santa Rosa, Jaime brought beauties from Aztec Dahlias. Despite all these people's generosity, there were very few tubers. Please resolve for next year that you will bring your labeled tubers to help your Dahlia Society of California out. Please! Martha informed the line of anxious buyers about the differences between tubers and plants. Webmaster Mike greeted each customer at the door, offering each a "shopping cart," (the cardboard flats Lou P. brought from Safeway).



As they left Mike invited them to our slide show. Cathy signed up many more members while Joanna and Thelma schmoozed.



[Click here for more Tuber Sale photos](#)

TUBER SALE (cont.):



Lee, Sue and Peg counted up tubers and plants for cashiers Deborah, Paula and Elsie to accept cash or checks. When Deborah commented to Charlie as he paid for a dozen cuttings, that she'd lost Chilson's Pride this year, imagine how stunned she was when Charlie returned an hour later with a bag full of CP tubers he'd just dug up! What generosity! Tinnie specialized in helping Chinese gardeners-- in Chinese! Diana photographed the whole extravaganza. "This is the best Potluck yet!" exclaimed Gerda. Indeed, her dark chili led the parade of mouthsmackers. Who made that bowled salad with arugula? Wonderful! The Shelp's

salad in their characteristic long platter proved as yummy as it was beautiful. Pat whipped up spicy lasagna and indulged us with Florentines. Eggplant and Chicken tajine from Deborah cooked all morning making the kitchen smell tantalizing. Talk about homemade: Peg made her own tortellini sauce from tomatoes she'd grown herself. And talk about groan: DJ's 7 layer Decadence cookies! Most traveled dessert, Marilyn's butter snaps were hand-carried all the way from Hawaii. (Thelma couldn't stop eating them.) Special thanks to Lou for cases of water and sodas.



GIZMO GUY:

Innovation is HE! Bob Papp, President of South Coast Dahlia Society, shared with us some of his latest hot concepts in dahliafying. While he has been blessed with a couple acres of Veteran's Administration field, he has likewise been cursed with the VA's healthy herd of gobbling gophers. To thwart these vile varmints, Bob added extra holes in the sides of 3-5 gallon black buckets, sunk them in the ground and planted his dahlias in them. More than a hundred pots held off the ravaging hoards; only one got broached. "Not bad odds," remarked Bob. Moreover, his pots can be easily removed and piled up for clump processing. To reduce the space and weight of show containers, Bob jiggered a simple vase from plastic fast drink containers. "I can carry all the vases I need in one box—with one hand!" Brilliant. Faced with the tough dilemma of staging 5 monstrous AA blooms, Bob drilled a Styrofoam lid with holes fitted with water tubes which stick into $\frac{1}{4}$ " mesh in the bottom. He can stage 3 or 5 Big Dahlias at any attitude. For demonstration purposes, Bob wanted to show people at his many lectures how tubers, cuttings and seeds grow. He cut liter soda bottles in half and inverted the neck down into the base. With transparent plastic containers, his crowds can watch the development of his tubers, cuttings and seeds easily. Great educational tool! Lastly, Bob morphed a picture frame with a velvet background by putting a hole in it and adding a water vile. Voila! Instant dahlia "art." Try some of Bob's innovations or bring your own to share with your fellow DSCers.



[Click here for more Gizmo Guy photos](#)

GET YER RED HOT DAHLIAS RIGHT HERE!:

Hawkers for both Corralitos and Dan's Dahlias delighted the crowd at the San Mateo Landscape and Garden Show with their oh-so colorful photos of wonderful dahlias. Dan and his merry band of John and Dick Porter sold tubers bearing Franck's magnificent pix; Kevin and his jolly cadres sold his customized rooted cuttings with Tinnee's alluring pix. After 7 years only a few posed such questions as "Aren't there tiny weeny tubers in the oasis?" and "How many years before these will flower?" Despite being a smaller show, L&G changed the rules whereby Wednesday's ticket served for entrance all week long! So many people returned to buy buy buy several days in a row. Smart marketing. This year Kevin featured both his Harmony Series, dahlias which only grow 30" tall, very floriferously as well as his Munchkins, bitsy border dahlias only 12" in height which included favorites like Henry (Adams Family Bride pink on dark foliage) and Elise (bright yellow peony style with dark centers and BLACK foliage). Tinnee, Carol and Johanna operated as garden elves, plucking chosen cuttings from deep racks full, tucking them carefully in plastic "clam shells," and sticking labels on them. Deborah, Paula, and Jean kept the cash register k-chinking. Chris Dix, Dennis Stone and DJ educated the public and enticed them into growing dahlias. Orlando, Guy and John Morton executed their timeliest tear-down yet: Kevin was on the road within 1 ½ hours of the closing bell. Well done!



[Click here for more Landscape and Garden Show photos](#)

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS:

Saturday morning at the Dell, a DSCer brought by four cuttings whose leaves looked like a wee drunk had careened around inside the leaves. Diagnosis: Leaf Miner. At this stage of fully visible evidence, it's time for Big Guns: malethion. Mix this insecticide with a little liquid fertilizer and a dilute fungicide and spray once a week for 3 weeks in a row. As the healthy plant grows out, remove the infected leaves and stems and discard in garbage—not in the compost. In another garden more drastic measures were called for. The sophomore dahlia—having overwintered in the soil—sent up multiple stems. The leaves showed clear signs of both ear wigs, slugs and mildew. First we dug up the tuber mass, some of which had jellified due to all the rain and less well drained soil. We dug the hole down 2 ½ feet and filled it within a foot of the top with compost. I then divided the clump, maintaining the strongest sprout and tuber to replant; I potted the other 3 strong tubers, and started the 4 healthy shoots in cutting medium. I sprayed everything with magic elixir: malethion, Miracle Grow, and Spinosad. Then I tossed in a couple handfuls of worm castings into the hole in the garden combined with some Bayer's 2 in One (fertilizer and systemic insecticide) and planted the strongest tuber right back where it came from. I liberally doused it with Cory's Snail and Slug powder to keep the biting critters



COURT OF HONOR:

In City Hall on Thursday, April 15, The San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission recognized DCSers for “their extraordinary service and talent in maintaining and enhancing the Dahlia Dell located in Golden Gate Park.” President Tinnee Lee received the official citation right after the Golden Gate Yacht Club received recognition for bringing the America’s Cup to San Francisco. August company in April.



MERRY MAY MINISTRATIONS:

Finish planting by the end of May. I often put a milk carton sleeve over my tender dahlias when I first plant them to give them a bit of protection from the sun and the wind. After 5 weeks in the dirt, if your tubers haven't sent up sprouts carefully !finger! down to investigate why not. Perhaps your “potato” has gotten too much water and turned to mush? Perhaps a nefarious gopher has gobbled it up? Perhaps it was eyeless and could NEVER develop. Or, best scenario, perhaps it was just too cool, and is just now developing a sprout. In this case, pop a 3-5 gallon pot over the top of the dirt as a mini greenhouse to warm up the area and encourage it to rise faster. Make sure all your plants are labeled NOW before you forget. Avery makes waterproof labels for your computer printer. I plant with a capful of Bayer’s Rose Fertilizer in every hole to give my nacent dahlias a little extra systemic help. Get snail, slug and earwig bait out: Corry’s or Sluggo Plus. After 3 weeks, douse your dahlias with Bayers 3 in One, containing systemic fertilizer, bugicide and fungicide. Re-apply every month and thwart mildew before it ever appears! If your dahlia sends up multiple shoots, experiment with cuttings from all but the strongest. Ideally, you only want one shoot per plant. Grow your extra cuttings in 4x4” containers to form pot roots for next year. (Pot roots are exactly that: dahlia tubers grown in pots not in the “free” earth. 4x4” potroots make as many eyes as their flusher sisters but in a smaller space. It’s a great way to make “insurance.”) Speaking of insurance, I usually keep @ 1/3 the number of dahlias I grow extra in milk cartons or 1 gallon pots as “insurance” against marauders, devastating weather, virus disease, or other untoward calamities that might befall the garden. This way I have something growing already to replace the tragic victim. By the end of May the first buds start appearing. Steel yourself to pinch out that first bud; this will send more energy into your young plant and obviate a crotch-bound bloom. When the next set of buds appear, pinch out the 2 side buds leaving only the central one. Water appropriately! Dahlias like to be very wet and then very dry. They will tell you when they want water with a little droop in their leaves. Do NOT OVER WATER. Once again, label your dahlias and vow that next year you will bring some of your extra tubers to our Plant and Tuber sale to help your benevolent society put on the National Dahlia Show in 2011.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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