



PAM HOWDEN
Form: Waterlily

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 14 June @7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln



PROGRAM: Kevin Larkin, co-owner of Corralitos Dahlias, will illuminate us on growing conditions and more integrated pest management. Last opportunity to bring/buy cuttings/tubers/dahlia plants. Deborah leads a hands-on seminar to practice disbudding and pinching out centers at the Dahlia Dell at 6:15 before our meeting. With which delectables will you delight your fellow DCSer's?

GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:

Major thanks to our new member, Mitzu, who brought in tubers to share. Deborah donated more plants and Devorah arrived with luscious green cuttings as well as beautiful tubers.



Who brought the milk cartooned Pam Howdens? Very nice. Baker Bill in addition to a delicious lemon cake, shared big white buckets. Grapes arrived thanks to Pat and the Dingwalls brought home-made brownies. MMMMM. Julia delighted us with strawberries and pound cake. MMMMM again! We so appreciate your thoughtfulness and skill! Welcome to Ruthie, Irene and Shuatan, our newest DCSers.

TALKIN' 'BOUT BIG DAHLIAS:



Mike Schelp will lecture and sell 3 gallon plants of his big dahlias at the famous Third Street Corridor nursery on June 26TH @ 11 AM. Flora Grubb Garden and nursery is located at 1634 Jerrold Ave. 94124; 648-2670. Susie Nadler of The Cutting Garden will demonstrate how to make hand-tied bouquets. Besides pitching Mike's talk, Flora Grubb's heavily subscribed newsletter will tout our National Show in August. Just the people who would want to attend but might not hear about our Big Show any other way. Flora Grubb Gardens has graciously invited DSC to host a table, discuss our society, and sign up new members. Who wants

to help introduce people to our Dahlia Society of California and encourage membership? Call Deborah 415 826 6214 or Mike Schelp 650 302 4140.



THE LATEST DIRT ON DIRT:

Guy Chibante, our Light Brown Apple Moth Sherriff, comes to dirt almost genetically. His father was president of the San Leandro Society for many years and his brother owns Mountain Valley Dahlias in the Shasta Area, Mountainvalleydahlias.com. Guy's biggest admonition: know what kind of soil you have BEFORE you begin altering it. For example, if you want to check the ph of your dirt, wait 20 minutes after watering so the moisture interacts with the soil before testing. Mike Schelp had his "soil tested this year and got back the same formatted report that Guy showed. The testing was done by Peaceful Valley Farm



Supply. Turns out that my soil was very alkaline and needed some acidification – solved with sulfur pellets—along with nitrogen. Tests run \$30 to \$50 depending on the degree of testing. You take the sample and mail it in. They even provide the bag. You should have results within two weeks. 5% and 10% discounts are available if multiple tests are done. Here is the web site; <http://www.groworganic.com/fertilizers/soil-test/soil-testing.html> Guy passed out a Soil Quality Card whereby you can evaluate your own dirt before sprucing it up. He also gave us a Soil Texture by Feel Flow chart to determine whether your dirt tends to loam, clay or sand. Guy pointed out that when you add water to sand and clay you get bricks; when you add hay to the same sand and clay mixture, you get adobe. Adding lime or sulphur will raise or lower the ph. Bloodmeal adds readily available nitrogen and is practically neutral ph. Most commercially purchased compost clocks in right around 7. Guy surprised everyone when he asked, "What is the ph of City water?" We were astounded to learn that it varies and can get as high as 9! Moreover, ideally one would allow the heavily chlorinated water to sit over night until the chlorine off gases. Ultimately one

wants a good balance of NPK. The nitrogen aids in synthesis of amino acids and chlorophyll. Phosphorus helps with photosynthesis. Potassium promotes sugar and starch formation such as tubers. But who knew about the 3 secondary nutrients: Calcium, Magnesium and Sulfur. Calcium promotes stronger cell walls (think stems). Magnesium is essential for seed germination. Sulphur keeps leaves nice and green, being an essential ingredient in amino acids. One of the biggest problems with soil is compaction. The spaces between the particles gets too small and even water (let alone roots) has a hard time seeping downwards. The solution for some people is adding little gravel; of course for others, sifting out the pesky rocks proves the solution. Guy advocates a "living" compost pile: brown matter like stems, green matter like leaves or grass clippings, veggie stuff from the kitchen and some dirt. Keeping your heap a little damp insures that all sorts of microscopic critters create a haven. Worms excrete worm castings. A well maintained compost hill will NOT smell. Guy further recommends making compost tea which makes plants heartier and reduces the need for costly sprays. Guy passed around examples of different dirt: too compact almost like sludge, too much mulch, and healthy sifted compost—the real black gold.



ROOT PARK ROCKS!

It almost felt like an official meeting: DCS-ers constituted half the customers at San Leandro's Tuber Sale. Such a beautiful morning matched the terrific assortment of treasures: AC Rooster, AC Golden Nichols, Crazy 4 Jessie, Badger Twinkle, Hana Hito-suji, Yellow Baby, Jax, Amy K, both Louis and Vassio Meggos, Ms Kennedy, and Parkland Rave, to mention a few of the attractions. And soooo many beautiful tubers! Those East Bay growers must have LAND! Boxes of beautiful tubers! Here's hoping their sale was a whopping success.



BERESFORD LIVES!

DJ is all planted and his public wants to know when there will be flowers. Devorah has 3 of her 7 sections of 20 planted at Cabrillo Gardens. Pat, Shelly and Deborah dug, fertilized and tucked new dahlias into their happy homes just before the rains came. Meanwhile in Golden Gate Park's Dahlia Dell, Vince, Suz, Mariann and Avis, while still planting pinched out and disbudded. Lou, always the over achiever, sported first double blooms. Tinne and Frank gloat that their traps have foiled the ghastly gophers banquet plans.



The San Francisco Tuber Sale

First, there was the quick, but efficient sorting of the tubers and cuttings... I'm sure that Guy was thinking something like "Boy, I'm sure glad I'm not responsible for LBAM inspection on all these!"



Kathy and Debbie placing tubers

The books came out as the sorting continued... and the opening bell got closer and closer...



Lou and Kathy



Marcia



Timnee

We had all types of dahlias, even tree dahlias, nicely sorted by the time that our doors would open.
Outside the crowd waited patiently for the sale.



Some of the plants were already blooming:



Elsie does a great job as our cashier



After the plants were sorted, we got a chance to shop for ourselves!



Frank and Tinnee seem very happy with what they found!

Larry was there,
too... selling
our National
Convention
shirts!



Finally, the doors opened, the crowd rushed in and rapidly surrounded the tables looking for the perfect dahlia...



“Wow... What a crowd!”

Even Deborah was impressed with how fast the room filled up.

The tuber table was quickly ravaged!



The crowd was orderly and Elsie wasn't overwhelmed!



As a photographer, I really had fun catching out volunteers talking with the public... I didn't know that all of our members were Italian... at least they had Italian in their blood... they all seemed to talk with their hands! As you might suspect, Lou was the most energetic!



Joann gets the award for "Best and most colorful dahlia outfit".



The cuttings went fast, too!



Ron shows the size of a B dahlia

As the pace of the sale slowed, I noticed that our members were able to give longer explanation about the dahlias...

Devorah explains...
"All you have to do is nip off the top... right here!"



Avis even managed to sign up a few new members for the club!



The explanations continued for the stragglers...



Take one of these sheets, it explains everything!

Deborah had time to amuse buyers with her collection of dahlia jokes...



The search for “eyes” still continued to the very end!



Sue and John tie for the “Most persistent” award.

Mike Willmarth, our webmaster extraordinaire, manned the door during the entire event!

As the pace of the sale slowed... people still had questions, but there was also time to take a break and chat with friends.



So the sale finally ended... ADS booklets went back into pockets, tables were picked up and Deborah had time to show Marcia a few steps of the "bugaloo". Then, of course, we ate!



Outside, California politics went on as usual... there was a protest against charging fees to visit the arboretum in Golden Gate Park.



All in all, a great sale! A good time, a chance to talk about dahlias... and, another great fundraiser!

Photos and layout by Barry Hart

JOLLY JUGGLING JUNE:

Last chance to plant dahlias and still hope they'll bloom by Showtime. Keep up on snail/slug/earwig baiting/trapping. Some people enjoy slinking out at night with a flashlight and smashing slimy night munchers. Do whatever it takes. Pinch out, top, or stop your dahlias when they get 12-20" tall. All these terms describe the same act: take off the top part—central bud with one, two or even three side buds, and leaf pair-- to concentrate the energy into the roots and stalk development and not into a first bloom. Steal yourself and DO IT. You will be so much happier later with a bushier plant, bigger stems and healthier flowers. Besides, the first bloom is usually hopelessly crotch-bound on a stumpy stem. Stop by the Dell on a Saturday morning or at 6:15 PM before our meeting for some hands-on practice of pinching out. Do you still have tubers which have not sprouted? Try the Erik G trick: place a damp (not wet) towel over the lot and place in a warm spot. Reapply the damp towel every couple days. Now is the time I revisit my milk cartons which have NOT sprouted. I gently probe to see if there is nascent life; if after 5 weeks in the germinating loft there's no bitsy nub, I throw them out. If you are using a greenhouse, even a "cheesy bookcase in the middle of the living room" as Vince describes his, be careful about the temperatures. Increase the humidity as the heat rises or you'll fry your babies. Orlando has "flown me two spinnakers;" he arched two plastic domes on the front and back decks as hardening off areas for dahlias emerging from the greenhouse. These take the brunt of direct sun off the delicate new leaves but still expose them to the cooler temperatures and some breezes. After a week under the tents, off they go to the Dahlia Dell to brave the elements and the world's scrutiny. Avis reports early mildew. Stop this NOW. Remove the badly affected leaves and apply commercial fungicides. I use Hoist, just a mere teaspoon in 5 gallons does wonders. Taking care of mildew BEFORE it strikes saves much time and agony. Here's one last tip for the month. If you've planted a dahlia that needs a little steadying, slip a half-gallon milk carton sleeve over the entire plant and bury the bottom 1-1/2" deep in the soil. This will act as both a wind and sun barrier as well as lend strength to early gracile stems. your plot; write in pencil—it's hard to anticipate what you might have to change. Weed Weed Weed! Please bring any excess tubers or cuttings or plants to our meeting on Tuesday, whilst, of course, retaining 10-30% stock for your own casualty insurance. Offer to plant a couple dahlias for friends; create new addicts and spread beauty.



Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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Originally Organized
In 1917
In San Francisco

Dahlia was adopted as the
Official Flower of San Francisco
On October 4, 1926
By its Board of Supervisor

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Wishing you had access to the past 12 months of
dahlia doings? [Click here for past newsletters](#)

Soil Quality Card

Date: _____

Soil moisture

- Good for planting
- Too dry for planting
- Too wet for planting

Indicator	Preferred										Observations	Rating the Indicator		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		1	5	10
1. Does the soil have good structure and till? 1											Cloddy, powdery, massive, or flaky	Some visible crumb structure	Frable, crumbly	
2. Is the soil free of compacted layers? 1											Wire flag bends readily; obvious hardpan; turned roots	Some restrictions to penetrating flag and root growth	Easy penetration of wire flag beyond tillage layer	
3. Is the soil worked easily? 1											Many passes and horsepower needed	Medium amount of power and passes needed	Tills easily	
4. Is the soil full of living organisms? 1											Little or no observable soil life	Some (moving) soil critters	Soil is full of a variety of soil organisms	
5. Are earthworms abundant in the soil? 1											No earthworms	Few earthworms, earthworm holes, or casts	Many earthworms, earthworm holes, and casts	
6. Is plant residue present and decomposing? 1											No residue or not decomposing for long periods	Some plant residue slowly decomposing	Residue in all stages of decomposition; earthy, sweet smell	
7. Do crops/weeds appear healthy and vigorous? 1											Stunted growth, discoloration, uneven stand	Some uneven, stunted growth; slight discoloration	Healthy, vigorously and uniformly growing plants	
8. Do plant roots grow well? 1											Poor root growth and structure; brown or mushy roots	Some fine roots; mostly healthy	Vigorous, healthy root system with desirable root color	
9. Does water infiltrate quickly? 1											Water on surface for long periods after light rain	Water drains slowly; some ponding	No ponding after heavy rain or irrigation	
10. Is water available for plant growth? 1											Droughty soil; requires frequent irrigation	Moderate degree of water availability	The right amount of water available at the right time	
Other														

Soil Texture By Feel Flow Chart

