



**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, 10 May @7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln

**PROGRAM:** Guy Chibante discusses soil: ph, microorganisms, trace elements, and generally how to tweak your dirt to peak fecundity. Please bring your extra tubers and plants for sale for your benevolent society. The choice items went fast in April. We'll have t-shirts and calendars again in May. Who will bring treats for everyone?



**SUPER SLIDE SHOW:**

Erik reprised his wonderful history of dahlias, interspersed with riffs on form and function, planting tips, glimpses of competition glory, and DigOuts past. He drew a crowd of more than 50 people! John and Donna were so inspired by Mike and Martha's program in March that they went shopping for milk crates for their own above-ground dahlia growing.

Upon learning that NEW milk crates cost a fortune, John looked elsewhere. His pool chlorine and acid came in perfect plastic containers. When John asked how much they would cost, the pool expert responded, "We don't sell containers. The deposit is \$3. Just don't bring them back." John quipped gleefully, "Since it's a deposit, there's no sales tax."

John and Donna found 3 immediate advantages to their acid containers: easy to plant, no digging out, just tipping, and excellent gopher thwarting. "Do they come in different colors?" piped up Pat. To which John laughed and surprised everyone with the answer, "Yellow, red and blue."

Who knew? Orlando demo'd a cool tool: the oscillating Dremel Multi-tool. Using a bamboo cane, he cut precision slices, making it a super-duper dividing gadget. He promised

to make it available at DigOut 2012. Frank really harkened to Devorah and DJ's program about setting up their own public dahlia gardens. He offered to spearhead an outreach effort to plant and tend more such gardens in other venues, especially in hospital or institutional settings. What a great idea.



## SUPERSALE 2011!

Congratulations to all who helped make our 2011 Plant and Tuber Sale one of our best fund raisers yet. Thanks to all who came in on Friday (including Jaime, Charles and Paula) to set up the many tables and position over 800 cuttings from the Juuls and Paradise—some so developed they already sported flowers! By 8:15 Saturday morning it appeared as though we were going to have to hold a parking lot tuber sale because no one would let us into the Fair Building. Then to the rescue, the Park Police arrived with keys. John Mani had doubts when he watched what looked like chaos as we descended en masse upon the auditorium. Fortunately so many of you have done this before; you knew exactly how to place tubers in boxes, how to label them, how to check for viability and how to space everything out. Lou L. brought over 100 cuttings from his workshop along with photos. Both Devorah and Deborah brought tubers and plants ready to go. The Public swooped down on Mike and Martha's gallon buckets of primo A and AA varieties. Thanks to Charles, Sue and Mike for bringing beautiful tubers for the first time. Soc donated rare Cyril Higgos, Lakeview Illusions, and Camano Rascals amongst others. The photos from Lou L. and the Juuls really helped people visualize what they were buying. To further educate them, DJ devised a beautiful poster spread which graced our membership table, skillfully manned by first-timers Larry and Avis. Did they sell National Show T-shirts, books, and memberships! With such enthusiasm! Also for the first time, DJ had packets of dahlia seeds available: 100 seeds for \$1. What great dahlia lottery tickets! Because DSCer's worked with such experienced dispatch, they had 20 minutes of "shopping" before the doors opened to the public flood. Meanwhile Erik and Martha regaled the crowd snaked down the street and answered their dahlia questions before the deluge. When asked what a San Leandro Society member was doing across the bridge, Veronica answered, "Because the San Francisco tuber sale is known for its quality product." Oh yes! Such quality: Porcelains and Jessicas, Holly Hill Black Widows, Camano Pets, Elsie Cs, Show 'n Tells, Sir Richards, Skip to My Lous, Eden Testarosas, Ruskin Andreas, Valley Porcupines, Midnight Stars and more and more. Such great quality and choices.



THE DSC SALES TEAM



**GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:**

Warren brought a box of lovely-eyed tubers of Citroen Du Cap, Lemon Zing and the winningest Ball Cornel. Devorah's cuttings sold even before she put them on the sale table. Early birds nabbed Deborah's milk cartons as she walked in the door. By popular demand, Baker Bill baked another of his famous Rum Cakes in Rum sauce. MMMMM! Craig and Tinnee shared home-made bread. The chocolate chip cookies came from Leo. Thanks to Ron and Joann for the big chocolate cake and the mini cupcakes. Which thoughtful person brought the healthy clementine's? Thank you all for giving in your own delicious ways!

**DSC PHOTOGS CLICK WITH ADS JUDGES:**

Congratulations to our 3 winners in very stiff competition. This year there were 364 images submitted from 27 photographers but only 36 pix received awards. DJ Ecklebarger took second in the Kids and Critters category with his "Where should I start?" Peg Andriani nabbed a third in Personalities. And the judges encouraged first-time submitter,

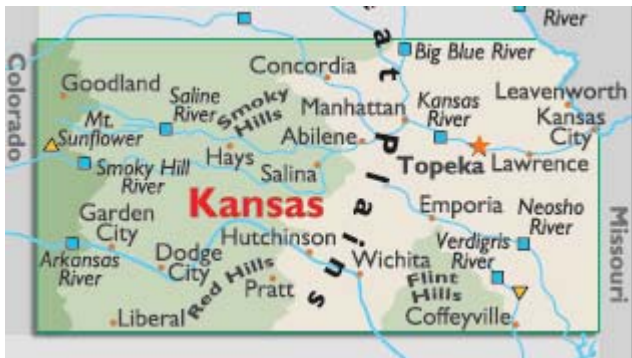


Deborah Dietz, with an Honorable Mention for her Shows and Clubs item. Martin Kral reminds us, "Dahlia Season is a 365-day year-round photo opportunity—it's not just restricted to the blooming period. Take pictures at club events, tuber packs, greenhouse tasks and any of the many occasions where dahlias are the focus."



**LONG DISTANCE DESIRES:**

How far do some people come for our famous tube sale? Tom came all the way from Kansas! He found the cuttings so tempting that he convinced the Motel owners to give him the room with the proper window exposure to grow his darlings until he flew home. Now that's a dedicated dahlianeer!



## DELL DOINGS:

Our glorious season all starts again. Lou's stakes were up before March ended. Deborah and Orlando had the irrigation system in right after the tuber sale when Orlando began designing a drip system for the hillside. Seven outstanding volunteers from Wells Fargo whaled on infrastructure. Melanie and Joe sledged Deborah's stakes, moved paving stones, and dug holes. When I suggested pacing themselves, Joes said of his wife, "The tougher the tasks you give her, the more likely she'll come back to work again." Amazing. Carrie, likewise pounded all Pat's stakes and dug her holes. Barbara lopped the overgrown background bushes back. Sue learned to assemble gopher cages a la Tinnee and then dig holes for them. Maryann came two Saturdays in a row learning first about cage technique and weeding and then how to plant from Jimmy. Debby arrived the third Saturday to help Pat with some final planting and judicious watering. Special thanks to Deborah for emergency watering when Deborah left town. Not only does more work get done with all these volunteers, but it's a lot more fun with the great company and fine attitudes.



I been working on the Dahlias all . . .

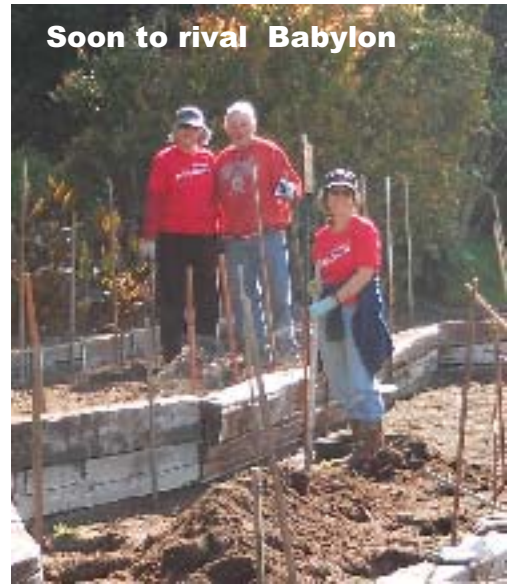


How many holes?!!

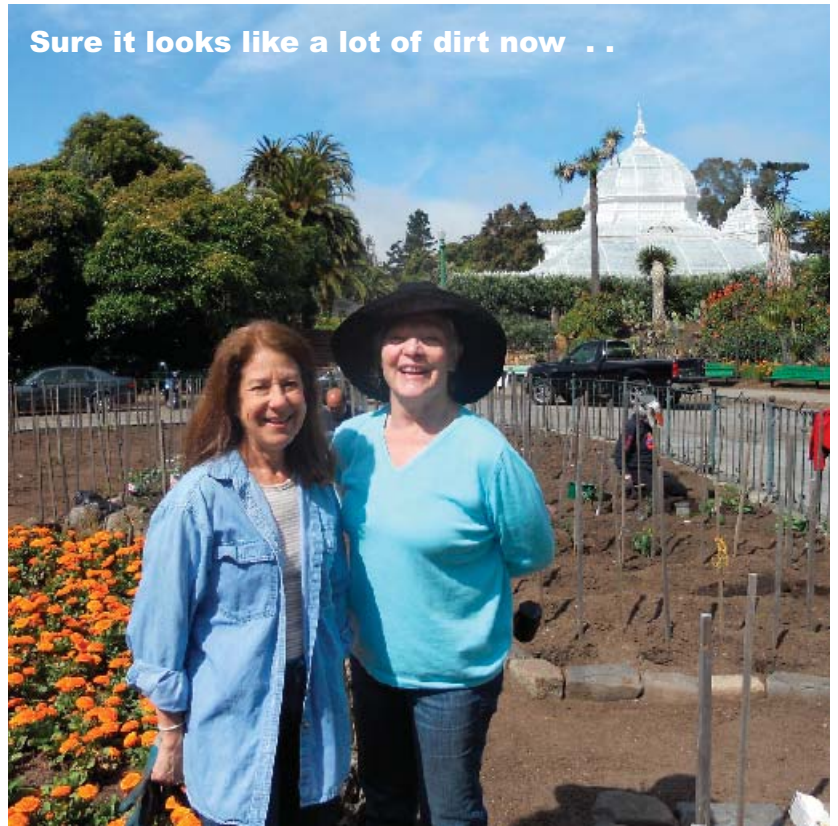


A tisket, a tasket, a little gopher basket

**MORE DELL DOINGS**



**DON'T THESE PEOPLE EVER GET TIRED?**



## SUMPTUOUS POTLUCKING:



Not only do DSCers know how to work; they also know how to cook! Francine and Ray delivered 2 huge boxes of lumpia even when they couldn't stay for lunch—wow! Bill brought a monster casserole and the Juuls whipped up both chili and accompanying cornbread to compliment Mary's chili. Peg's chicken noodle casserole disappeared in a petal pluck as did Deborah's sweet potato fusion. Our English visitors, Jackie and Andy, quite fancied Joann's deviled eggs. Along to wash down the Dingwall's quiche and Joe's chips, Frank donated wine and John beer. Do we DCSers live right? Thanks to everyone who had the auditorium cleaned up almost before we sat down to sup.

## MAY MINISTRATIONS:

Continue planting and guarding your young green plants with snail, slug and earwig nostrums. I like Corey's although a greener (and costlier) method is Super Sluggo. I just talked to someone whose dog ate some Corey's and \$1,000 later, the vet said the poor dog would live through the experience. I have never had a problem with any of my cats, but most of the commercial products are POISEN. When my dahlias have been established at least 3 weeks, I spray them with Bayers 3 in 1: systemic fertilizer, fungicide and insecticide. This gives them a bit of an inoculation against the early tribulations young dahlias face. Again, water according to need: tubers need very little water at first but cuttings need some water every day or so. Paula puts large pots over the spots where her tubers are. This prevents too much rain absorption and acts as mini greenhouses warming up the soil to encourage late sprouts. Experts disagree on when the best time to "pinch out" or "top" your dahlias is. I prefer waiting until the beginning of the formation of the first bud. I remove the central bud along with the two buds on either side and the two leaves associated with this crown. Other growers wait until their young plants are 18-20 inches tall and then top even if there is no bud forming yet. Either choice redirects energy into making a healthier plant, firmer stalks, bushier rather than taller bushes and much better second layer flowers. Bob Papp from down south sticks these tips in the bottom half of the plastic



Bob Papp from down south sticks these tips in the bottom half of the plastic



## MAY MINISTRATIONS (cont.)

shells baked chickens come in and pops the top on. What a nifty terrarium for nascent cuttings. These will make terrific pot roots for next year. Make sure you've labeled your dahlias. As I was replanting my brother Jon's dahlias from last year, I could still read the venetian blind strips with penciled names even though some of these had been buried in



vermiculite for months. Plain pencil works well. Black Sharpies can fade and even disappear in harsh sunlight. Lou Paradise computer prints his on waterproof label paper and adheres them to chips cut out of Clorox bottles. For back up, make a map of 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*

Dahlia Society of California, Inc., San Francisco, CA -- Copyrighted



Editor: Deborah Dietz  
Page layout: Mike Willmarth  
Photo credits: Eckelbarger, Dietz

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