



NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, 8 November @7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln

PROGRAM: Lou reprises his inimitable lesson on digging and dividing and storing tubers. Bring your friends! Who will bring tasty delights to share?



LAST GASP MINI SHOW:

Imagine a mini show in October with seven outstanding AA's showing up, Devi's splendidly humongous Bryn Terfel winning the category along with her Hollyhill Quintessence nabbing A, and her AC Cougar succeeding in B and her sassy Jessica triumphing in BB. Frank's Mary's



Jomanda, Pale Tiger, and Elvira, nailed Best Ball, Col, and Peony respectively. Deborah wrangled a bunch of blooms to win with Sir Richard, Yellow Baby, Woodland's Merinda, Midnight Star, Lorna Dawn, Clearview Magic and The Phantom. Her x5 sweet orange Kim's trounced her dazzling x5 Jessicas. Just in time to celebrate Deborah's birthday, Judges Erik and Tinnee declared her Porcelain Best in Show. Once again, Nicholas swept the Junior Division with terrific Jessicas, a Pooh and a Pam Howden. Nicholas, we love seeing young people like you participating!



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GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:

DSC welcomes new members, Marina, Lawrence and Annie. Frank implores members to share ideas for 2012's programs. What would you like to learn about? Who would you like to hear wisdom from? We are so appreciative of his efforts to engage dynamic speakers on a wide range of topics. Thanks to DJ for announcing the ADS Photo Contest. Check on line for the 9 categories. You may enter up to 3 photos per category. All entries may be submitted via email. Yummy thanks to Devorah for the mini cinnamon rolls and to Gino for the lunch pies. Kudos to Baker Bill for the delicious apple pie.

DIGOUT 2012:

Mark your calendars: January 7-8. Join us for congenial, filthy fun. Learn about digging, dividing, bleaching and labeling dahlias. Apprentice yourself to masters; mentor the next generation. Rain or shine, but pray for shine!

THUMBS UP? THUMBS DOWN?

Frank led our group in a discussion about which commercial growers we've had success with and which ones we had less success with. DJ passed out a list from the ADS of dahlia sources. All agreed that Corralitos, Accent and Aztec are at the top of our lists. Clearview and Dahlias by Les & Viv were both touted by DJ and Deborah. Devorah wins with Wynne's Dahlias. Others were pleased with JS Dahlias and Verrone's Dahlias. Everyone agreed that one should check ones order immediately as it comes in and alert the commercial grower if there are any concerns. Replacements can be sent up to a certain period of time. Some growers request the "inadequate" tuber be returned. So keep the communication lines open and clear. Several people have already put in their orders for the 2012 season. Remember: the hot stuff goes very, very fast! Treat yourself to something new and wonderful. Cruise The Big List on line soon.



DAHLIA SAFARI!



Recently Orlando and I cruised up Old Adobe Road to meet Jamie and Rosa O'Brien at their 2-acre Aztec Dahlia Spread in Petaluma. Wow! Jamie says that Nick Sr.s, Show 'n Tells, Jessicas, and Clair Obscures sell right off the table. Jamie sells at 8 local Farmers' Markets as well as for weddings and special occasions; despite this depredation, the Aztec fields were full of great blooms and many, many buds.



FEAST FOR EYES AND BELLY: MONTEREY DINE AROUND!

Wow! Five gardens and 4 food stops in a land where parking and fresh vegetable are plentiful. Christine Albrecht, amateur sweepstakes winner at our national show, grows 100% organically. She displayed her green secrets: Serenade, a fungicide; Worry Free Pesticidal Oil; Captain Jack's Dead Bug Spinosad; Dr. Earth's Life All Purpose Fertilizer and John and Bob's Soil Optimizer. WoW! Nick Sr.s 7 feet tall; a hedge of Mexico anemones; and many new surprises like Hillcrest Jonathon. Asking what that lovely addition in the corner was, Christine responded, "A composting toilet." Luxury style indeed.



DUES DUE:

ADS has increased dues to \$24 per individual and \$27 for a family. These dues entitle you to 4 Bulletins a year, a copy of the ADS Classification Book, and the password into the Members-Only sections of the ADS website. DSC dues remain at the extraordinary bargain price of \$10. For this low price you get 12 months of terrific programs/meetings, participation in our annual Floribunda Competition-Exhibition, Annual Dahlia Dell picnic, the conviviality of our annual Dig-Out, and possible volunteering at our famed Tuber and Plant Sale. You also receive an on-line e-newsletter full of facts, fun pictures, gardening tips, who's who, and sightings of the Bloomerati. Such a Deal! Bring your checks or cash to Joe Norton at our November or December Meeting or send them to his address: 46 Seward St, SF, CA 94114.

NATIONAL PRIDE:

Because the Lucchesi and Marsten gardens still bloomed sumptuously from being on the National Show circuit, we all re-admired them. Sharon and George's garden featured many new "Clifford" varieties along with exotic birds and tiny winy quail. Randy and Lena built terraces to display their excellent collection which featured a fine Square Circled and the famous "black" orchid, Verrone's Obsidian.





BAR B Q & DESSERT!

Kevin and Karen's Black Angus ranch (and dahlia operation) reminded me of French films and paintings. Dining at long tables under the oak trees to the smell of charred meat, the sounds of lowing cows and the conviviality of lemonade and wine in the dusty afternoon channeled Maille flicks. Strolling shoulder high in seedling promises blurred colors into a pointillist's dream. Betty and Jim provided not only the deck overlooking pastoral hills, but also baked two lemon meringue pies. MMMMM.



NOVEMBER: NASTY OR NICE?

With proper care, some dahlias can be cosseted to bloom through the December holidays. However, now is the time you need to decide what your propagation plans are. Option 1: If you plan to leave everything in the ground, make sure you have VERY well drained soil—otherwise a bit of rain could rot your entire tuber crop. Disaster! When your stems turn brown, cut down to 4-5 notches (like bamboo joints) and cover the ends with aluminum foil or Saran wrap—like dahlia stem condoms. This prevents more water from going down the hollow stalks and causing crown rot. Then place your biggest pot over the top. The soil will still get moisture, but not as much. Option 2: If you plan to dig clumps out for early cutting-bench possibilities you want them to go dormant faster than nature would otherwise do. Count back 4-6 weeks from when you'd like to pull your roots and lop everything down to 4-5 nodes and cover ends with foil. This will force your dahlias into dormancy, thereby toughening up the skin on the tubers. Lift whole clumps and place on heating bed for germination. Option 3: If you plan to dig up your tubers to store for next season, decide when you will begin the disinterring process and count back at least 4-6 weeks for lopping, to force your plants into dormancy. Remember to dig and process one clump at a time so as not to lose track of which one you're working on. Eyes are only visible within 20 hours of unearthing. Knowing where the eyes are really makes dividing better. Option 4: A combination of the last 3. You may leave some in the ground; I've found that particularly my A's and AA's do much better their second year. Valuable specimens which started as cuttings might be a bit delicate to lift; leave them in another year with adequate weather protection. Lift and divide good dahlias that you want to share with the DSC Tuber Sale. Now is also the last opportunity to make cuttings from the shoots on your waning dahlias. Cut at stem; dip in rooting hormone; pop in very loose rooting soil (1/3 dirt, 1/3 coarse sand, 1/3 coarse vermiculite or perlite), place in a warm, lighted spot or greenhouse, spritz often rather than water. If done right, you may be able to take cuttings from your cuttings before spring planting! Save some seed heads. I cut mine after most of the petals have fallen and place in a cup of water. Every couple of days I snip 1/4" off the stem until the seeds have matured. After a couple of weeks I let them dry out. Some people like to label what mother plant the seed head came from. Playing the dahlia genetic lottery is one of the most fun aspects of growing dahlias.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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