



PAM HOWDEN
Form: Waterlily



Altera Perplex



Devon Mystique

NEXT MEETING: May 12, 2009 at 7:30 PM at 9th Ave and Lincoln Ave.

PROGRAM: National ADS dahlia photo winners, Franck, DJ and maybe Peg will impart some of their award earning secrets. Bring your cameras if you have questions. Be prepared to have your eyes knocked out with great pix! Please bring in your extra tubers, cuttings and plants to share with your fellow dirt pals. Who will bring treats?



DIRT UNDER HIS NAILS: Bringing 10 + years of experience with DSC, DJ declared that the best way to learn about dahlias is to get your hands dirty. After apprenticing in Golden Gate Park, DJ developed his own gardens at Beresford Park in San Mateo. "The key to good dahlias is good soil, loamy with good drainage." To establish Fibonacci ratios, DJ uses a 30" stick to insure planting spaces from stake to stake. He plants with his "Tres Amigos," bone meal, fertilizer and Bayer's systemics all mixed up to avoid hot spots on his tubers. DJ plants with tuber eyes up. Deborah mentioned a controversy: planting with the eye down, thereby perhaps inducing greater root development? Maybe

someone will do a half/half experiment? Curtis reported that he plants all his tubers in one area and his cuttings in a separate area, not all mixed together because they require differing watering amounts until mature. DJ favors Bug-Geta Plus which stymies snails, slugs AND voracious earwigs. Other people mentioned Super Sluggo, a greener alternative which also slays the Bad Three. To demonstrate the extremes of dahlia size, DJ employed a clever visual aid: a paper plate to delineate the AA size with a quarter size hole in the center to suggest Mignon Singles. When the clocks "fall behind" DJ cuts his dahlias back. To germinate his seedlings, DJ deploys them on a Styrofoam pad, covered by a wet cloth in a mini domed greenhouse maintained at 80 degrees by a heat mat. His ruthless seedling ethos destroyed 97 of his hundred seedling plants last year. Curtis deemed this typical.





DJ deploys his mighty power point



DJ exhorts xxx and Don to do more



Raconteur DJ

GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS: Thanks to white Tree Dahlias germinating happily in Deborah brought in special dahlias in milk DSCers really pounced on Devora and Franck's cuttings. Thanks to Marilyn for sharing a tall 4"x4" containers. She wants to see them of dahlias in May. Our speaker donated a huge lemons. Thank you all for your great ideas and How wonderful to see Chris and Curtis from San especially with their hands full of bags of tubers promised to our growers and showers. Please and Mai, Gene, David, Maggie and Jim, new here to hear DJ's wisdom. Did you catch the "horticultural cupcakes" Peg made?? Yummy Devora and goodies from Pat and Joann. Florentines disappeared too fast.



Dick who brought in TWO huge boxes of double shredded newspaper. Soc donated lovely tubers. lovely stack of returned full basket of generosity! Leandro, and cuttings welcome Don dahlianeers crazy cake from Tinnee's





Check Marcia's necklace

Marilyn stocks up

Erik buys bunches of Tree Dahlias

Chris and Deborah negotiate swaps



Dick and Frank palaver

Dick's tree dahlias mulched in shreds

Franck and Barbara



SATURDAY IN THE PARK: By 7:30 Deborah had already laid out the stakes, debouched 6 flats of dahlias, and thanked Vince for bringing a bucket of balanced fertilizer to put in all the holes he dug. Devora patiently interred each treasure and John, hydro-engineer par excellence, made sure that Ted's irrigation system (slightly refurbished by Orlando) reached each thirsty green denizen. Thank you for all your help making the Dell such a beautiful place.



TUBERS, CUTTINGS AND CUT UPS: It's in tough tuber times when great co-operation makes the difference between success and ordeal. Thanks to so many who heeded the appeal for more tubers for our annual Tuber Sale: Catherine, Frank, Warren, Sarah, Pat, Deborah, Tinnee, the Schelps and Soc. What luscious cuttings from Lou Paradise and the Juuls—some already in bud or even flowering! Paula and Deborah proffered plants in milk cartons, which were snapped up due to the great accompanying pix from Franck. Along with Catherine's canes, DJ brought tree dahlias complete with photos to entice buyers. Inspiring the awaiting crowd, Martha lectured on the differences between caring for tubers as opposed to cuttings. Who could resist Thelma and Joann at the membership table? Franck's splendid posters announcing our

Floribunda August Show included all 18 forms and 15 colors! Joe reported better-than-expected sales although not reaching our past records due to so much tuber rot, fewer cuttings, and the flagging economy. DSCers celebrated a great kick off to the new season with a yummy potluck lunch. Winning the prize for most artistic food presentation, Martha's salsa beans tantalized from a long ceramic container. Deborah's spinach quiche easily slid down accompanying all Lou P's sodas and waters. Thanks to everyone for really jumping in with whatever it took.



CcCatherine checks the ADS "Bible"



Tinnee and Franck confer



Blooming Cuttings? !



Kathy coyly sells Craig's labels



Elsie reviews the DSC troops



Pat, Mike, Martha, Marilyn await orders



Jim, Jamie, Pat, John & Patty receive stations



JoAnn and Thelma at membership table



Dick and Jim consider cuttings



Elsie rakes it in



Devi, Pat and Cathy sort and label tubers



Mike, Thelma & Peg buffet with Ron



Mike and Cathy show Frank's Posters

CROSS POLLINATION: Deborah and Orlando took a few hours to exchange ideas and tubers with the President of the South Coast Dahlia Society, Bob Papp. Deborah exchanged local introductions like Grandma Juul, Juul's Amethyst, and Prometheus for Shiloh Noelle, introduced by Pat Cunningham. We admired Bob's double lancinated red poppies and his magnificent roses which he keeps segregated on their own side of the house from his copious dahlias which cover the front yard where others would have lawn.



Double Laciniated Poppies



Collecting *ceropegia stabiliformes*, cactus & plumeria



DANGER MEN GARDENING



Opulent Roses

MARVELOUS MAY: Continue planting through May. Cuttings which I purchased at our Tuber Sale and transplanted to larger pots are ready for Big Time Dirt now. Make sure you do NOT plant until you have anti-slug/snail/earwig protection; big plants can disappear overnight. Why do I have to learn over again every year that I should always err on the dilute side of fertilizing? Black leaves and crumpled plants testify (again!) that in my zeal to bountifully feed my wee bushes, that overdoing the fertilizer percentage in water is disastrous. After 3-4 weeks in ground, dahlias benefit from dousing with Bayer's 3 in 1, a soil drench which includes fertilizer, systemic insecticide, and systemic fungicide. Bayer's takes care of lots of bugs that grow in the soil. Prophylaxis fends off problems before they start. Gopher problems? Here are 4

solutions: keep a hungry cat around. Cats love catching and eating gophers and have the patience to wait for the critical kill. Plant your dahlias in cages or line your planting area with metal mesh. Use either cinch or Macabee lethal traps. After making sure all the mole or gopher exits are plugged, insert several chunks of dry ice, which is solid carbon dioxide. Close the final hole and suffocate those marauders. A fourth Final Solution is strychnine, sold as rodent poison and placed in the runs away from pets and birds. Lastly and most spectacularly, there are several “science experiment” explosive techniques.....efficacious but? Make sure all your plants are labeled. I found that a good #2 pencil on venation blind type strip lasts the season. Paula and Lou recommend Avery water proof labels printed from your computer weather the rain, spray, sun, and jangling. Watering now is critical: not too much, not too little. Do NOT water tubers which haven’t sprouted; they will ROT with too much moisture. DO water your cuttings EVERY DAY for the first 3 weeks until their infantile roots mature. During our record-breaking heat wave I watered every 3 days. Remember that dahlias like to be very wet and then very dry. Watch your bushes and they will “tell” you when they need water. Do put aside up to 30% extra plants for insurance against pest depredation, virus, rot, or other forms of loss so you will have growing replacements to pop into that newly empty spot. When the first bud appears, pinch it out down to the next set of leaves. This pushes all the energy back into the plant and makes a better formed bush. Yes, it’s hard to eliminate the very first potential bloom when you haven’t seen dahlias for a long time, but it produces a much healthier and more robust plant—truly! Try to root the pinched out portion. I keep a whole section of 4”x4” pot roots for the next season—another form of insurance.

Yours in Dirt,

DEBORAH

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