



Dahlia Society of California

April 2016



PAM HOWDEN
Form: Waterlily

e-NEWSLETTER

NEXT MEETING: March 12 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Deborah will share methods for making cuttings and tell stories about how Lou P, Pat and she produce the amazing 1000 plants they bring to our Tuber Sale. Plus Tinnee will demonstrate how to make simple/elegant gopher baskets. Please bring any named plants or tubers to share for sale. Do come as early as 7:00 with your green donations. Remember, anything brought INTO our meeting room is for sale. Make any trade arrangements OUTSIDE IN THE PARKING LOT. Who will bring treats for hungry dahlianeers?

LYNGSO SOIL SECRETS



Theresa Lyngso, master gardener, master composter and Lyngso Garden products scion, declared, "I believe in Nature. Give the natural systems in your garden help, and they will help you." Moreover, she repeated several times, "Compost, mulch, and worms are your best friends." Theresa's premise is that the better your soil, not only the better your flowers will be but the less you will be plagued with bad bugs. Lyngso sells their famous "Essential Soil" by the cubic foot, with a fill-it-yourself admonition. Sounds like a great deal.

Every Saturday at their San Carlos Store on Shoreway Road, they have a free guest lecturer. Check out their website: lyngsogarden.com

GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Once again we all took home handfuls of luscious Meyer's lemons from Ron and Joann's tree. MMM... Thank you to Pat for the Scottie-shaped shortbread cookies and to Lola for surprising our palates with chicken tamales. What a scrumptiously moist carrot cake Baker Bill concocted for us. Gino brought us cupcakes and John and Annette donated brownie bites. This wonderful gustatory generosity fuels our cohesive society.

DELL DOINGS

Major recognition goes to Erik and Gino for rehabilitating our green storage box that some junkie attacked with a crowbar. We Dellizens will grow our appreciation all summer long. From her magic garden in Glen Park which knows no winter, Sue has begun importing plants of high standing already. As Deborah digs up a clump, she milk cartons most tubers, and pops one or two back into the ground to delight us soon. Rose meticulously weeds, tossing the green garbage into the continuous compost holes.



TUBER SALE NICETIES

Get on the volunteer list for either Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. Only those on the list will be allowed to help. Deborah dahlia.dietz@gmail.com

On Friday afternoon we need help @3 PM putting up tables and schlepping flats of cuttings into place. Anyone with a truck would be treasured for helping move flats of cuttings from the greenhouse to the auditorium. There is NO SHOPPING on Friday. Contact Devi to help Friday: 415-831-1221

Saturday morning, volunteers should arrive before 8 am. Please bring your extra tubers with names

and those without names to support your DSC. We will be sorting tubers, arranging them, labeling them and putting out photos to whet the public's desire. Please bring your ADS Classification Bible, a black marking pen, a magnifying glass to spot eyes, a yummy dish to share for our post-sale potluck, and your most helpful attitude. Please wear a t-shirt related to dahlias or at least flowers. We need counters, membership table ambassadors, and guides to help our customers get the dahlias they will be most successful with. If we get everything done in a timely fashion, volunteers can shop before we let the public in. Please email Tinnee's gorgeous poster to all your friends and ask them to forward it to all their pals/acquaintances, too. (You can download the picture from the DSC website) [Print up a couple posters and hang them at your library](#), local garden store, work place or ???? Use your imagination to get the word out!

DAHILIA HORSE TRADING ETTIQUETTE

All trades and exchanges must be made privately. Handovers must occur in the parking lot or elsewhere. Anything that comes into the auditorium is FOR SALE. Negotiate an equitable swap. For example, one year I wanted Horsefeathers. I exchanged over a hundred tubers for two Horsefeathers. The deal satisfied both me and the San Jose recipient of a lot of tubers. I have also traded tubers for chocolate, wine, milk cartons and garden help.

AZTEC EXPANDS

Speaking of horse trading, just swapped great stories, expectations and a few tubers with Jamie O'Brien of Aztec Dahlias. He reports that he has over 6,000 dahlias potted up in 1, 2, and 3 gallon pots all color-coded by form. Wow. Look for him on-line, at his acreage (2478 E Washington St, Petaluma) or at a Farmer's Market near you.



PART THREE OF KEVIN WOODSON'S AMAZING MEXICAN DAHLIA ODESSY

I am also happy to report I was not the only artist in attendance. While painting and photography are becoming a global sensation, I met and talked with Mexican artists who are producing traditional ribbon, paper and bead, Dahlia-inspired art, and engaging their local communities with it. As Dahlia ribbon-broaches and hat-flowers become popular, our great flower will enter fully into the world of fashion.

Dahlias also play an important role in communities' engaging people in preserving and protecting our pollinators. When planting neighborhood pollinator gardens, pollinator advocates have taken to scattering Dahlias among the milkweed and other seed annuals. The addition of Dahlias has turned semi-weedy gardens into bright, colorful, summertime favorites in neighborhoods, and with the pollinators.



Health - As you would imagine, Maestro Jose and his colleagues are not just cooking up new Dahlia recipes to impress their next dinner party. They are creating and clinically testing delicious dishes that help with obesity, diabetes, cholesterol reduction, and more.

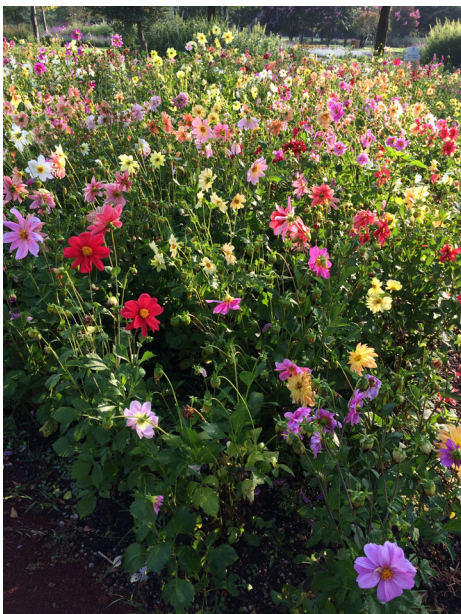
If you're interested in the next super food, it may be growing in your own garden – or the gardens of Dahlia farmers in Mexico. A range of presenters brought clinical charts and test results from Dahlia trials proving a much greater health value of than we are currently taking advantage of today.

Beyond the Congress: Outside of Xochitla, Dahlia fever was sweeping Mexico with full intensity, with competitions and presentations all month.

Day of the Dahlia – August 4 One of the events I had the pleasure of attending was a Dahlia competition in Mexico City.

In San Francisco, and throughout much of the Dahlia world, we exhibit cut flowers from our gardens, displayed in quaint vases and spread out on tables in convention centers and flower halls. When I went to the Mexican Dahlia Society's annual competition, I was surprised to see that it was not the individual blooms that were judged, but entire collections of blooming Dahlias, potted, and arranged to emphasize unique blooms or to represent natural concepts.

Competing on this scale, growers install their creations in a series of little booths, along the walls of Exposition Permanente de Floracultura in Coyoacan. Most famous for Frida Kahlo, Coyoacan is Mexico City's traditional neighborhood of artists – and the Dahlia competitors were not to be out-done in their artistry! The winning Dahlia artist used a collection of decorative blooms in a variety of colors surrounded by geographical features, complete with a built-in waterfall sprinkling actual water from ceiling to floor.



Growing Dahlias In the face of such cultural and nutritional focus on the Dahlia, farmers and gardeners are responding. We visited a Dahlia farm in one of the most famous flower parks in the world, Xochimilco.

In the southern part of Mexico City, Xochimilco represents all that remains of the complex system of canals the Aztecs used to facilitate farming and trade in the preCortezian era. It has seen resurgence as a tourist site, and is known worldwide for the boats, or barges, filled with flowers, that convey lovers, friends, and

families around the dreamy streams, complete with dinner, Mariachi bands, and river-side mini zoos.

Dahlia cultivation, however, takes place at a different point in the canal system. Dahlias are grown along the more wild canals that have not yet been reclaimed by tourism. It's these spots that are ideal for agriculture because dredging the canals yields some of the most fertile soil imaginable, and there's a constant supply of water.

After a half-hour hike through the flower farms along the canal, you might expect that there would be a high science to growing Dahlias. However, when we reached the Dahlia fields, it was surprising to see that the flowers grown in one of the principle flower farms were all random seed flowers. For the most part, Mexico rarely uses tubers to start its gardens. Given the limited stock of pedigree tubers, there's a far greater dependence on the multitude of seeds, and the hardy plants they produce. In fact, at a slight distance, the color, randomness, and vibrancy of the flowers and the ecosystem surrounding them in a seed garden is, at an instant, as stunning as a deliberate garden of arranged cultivars. In fact, I was told several times that, until Mexico increased awareness and appreciation for Dahlias on a wide scale, it wouldn't make sense to start a large project relying on tubers. Remembering that most of the fancy breeds of Dahlias we know today were not developed until after the Dahlias were removed from Mexico, it's not surprising that Mexicans continue to propagate the flower as their ancestors did – with seeds. In fact, more often than not, an acre of Dahlias will grow side-by-side with an acre of corn, beans, or other traditional food crops.

While seeding is an excellent way to start a Dahlia garden fast, there are drawbacks. Many of the varieties we've come to love here in the United States are just not available in Mexico. I asked our host what flowers didn't exist in Mexico, and sadly learned that they lack:

- Pompoms
- Anemones
- Orchids
- Collarettes
- And there are few Cactus forms.

Beyond the 20th Anniversary After the fanfare dies down, what's next in Mexico? I'm happy to say that Ana Laura Teyssier has teamed up with chefs, organic gardeners, and Mexico's public parks to cultivate the tastiest organic Dahlias and cook up delicious Dahlia meals for anyone who can make it to Mexico. Ana Laura and the Casa Dalia collective expect to open a Mexico City Dahlia restaurant in the coming years!

As Mexico continues to take country-wide national pride about their flowers, Maestra Lupita and her colleagues are taking the message world-wide. New York was treated to the beaming radiance of Maestra Lupita and all the stories and flowers she has to share at the American Dahlia Society's annual convention. And in a couple of years, when you travel to Mexico, you might have the opportunity to visit the very first international Dahlia Museum in Mexico City. Plans for this exciting museum are in the works, and depending on funding and receiving a location, we may soon have a real home base for our flowers. The Asociación Mexicana de la Dalia is looking for ways to connect internationally, and to share the latest discoveries in Mexico with the world.

Speaking of sharing, the Mexican Dahlia Society is also looking for tubers! We will be arranging to send down some of the California Society's special root stock, getting through the customs ordeals by working with a seed-and-bulb import company in Mexico. If you're up for a real gardening relationship across the border, get in touch with these remarkable women and men, and everyone will benefit in the exchange.

Personally, I will continue to work with Mexico, and look forward to future exhibits there. I'm especially excited to continue working with my watercolor collection of wild species Dahlia paintings from

Mexico. I'll be publishing an article about the Species Dahlias later in the 2016 here in the American Dahlia Society Newsletter, and exhibiting the paintings in summer 2016 in Oakland at the Joyce Gordon Gallery. I'd like to thank Deborah Dietz, Harry Risetto, and everyone in our domestic Dahlia circle who has supported me in reaching out to Mexico, and supported the continued relationship of our two Dahlia Societies!



This month's eye-candy

Cathy drove down from Kenwood with "practice" tuber clumps to learn how to wield Deborah's electric Dremmel. Sarah fingered Cathy through the first couple clumps while Rose labeled milk cartons and filled them with dirt. Over delicious chowder, Deborah walked Sarah, Cathy, and Janet through the ADS Classification Book and its many wonders.



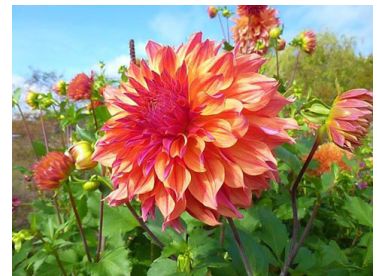
This month's eye-candy



RaeAnn's Sparkler



North Lake Heritage



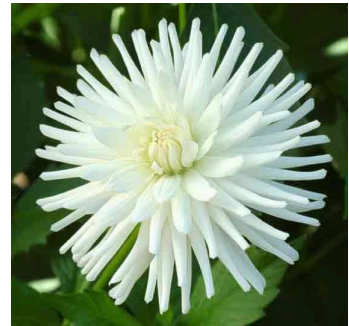
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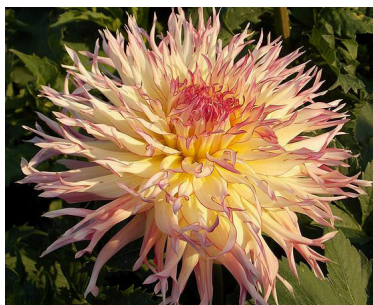
Hilcrest Suffusion



Alpen Snowlodge



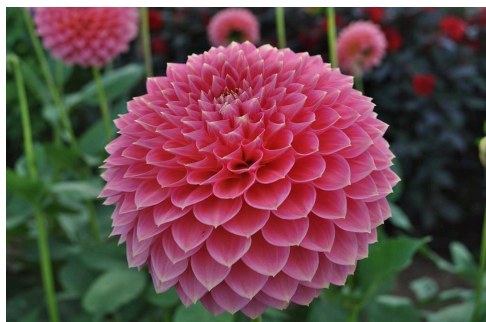
Christine Mandy



Jennie



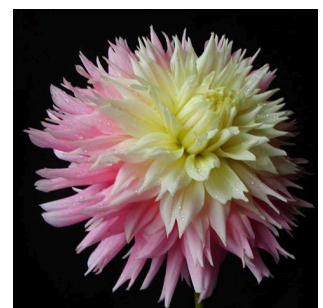
Sandia Tiger



Rossendale Stephanie



Nenekazi



Just Married

AT LAST APRIL!

Time to plant finally. So there are three different ways you might have gotten dahlias so, of course, there are three different ways to plant these jewels. What is true for all three methods is the hole prep and stake: Add a little bone meal, worm casting, microrhysae, fertilizer or whatever your favorite “secret sauce” is. Mix up. Put the stake in immediately. Add the label IMMEDIATELY. Have snail/slug/earwig deterrent on hand.

One: Tubers. If you bought tubers you can plop them directly into your garden or start them in a milk cartons inside your house. For direct planting, dig a hole @ 6” deep. Lay tuber horizontally with eye up. Cover with 3-4” of dirt—not all the way even with the surface of the ground. You might even pop a 5 gallon pot over the top of it to help it warm up faster. As the plant grows, fill in the hole. **DO NOT WATER** until you see green. A tuber has no roots to begin with and cannot absorb water; it will just rot. There’s a great write up with how-to pix about milk cartoning in the March/April 2013 DSC newsletter. Check it out.

Secondly: Milk cartons. Dig your hole a little deeper so that at least the first visible joint on the stem will be below the surface of your garden. Rip one end of the milk carton and extract the entire contents as one thick root brick. This is the ultimate plug and play dahlia growing. **WATER IMMEDIATELY.** If the stem is tall and wobbly, you might cut a half gallon milk carton’s two ends off and put the cylinder like a sleeve around the plant to protect it from wind for a couple weeks. ([For more information check out MILK CARTON MAGIC on page 5 of the March/April 2013 newsletter.](#))

Thirdly: Cuttings. If you’ve bought a cutting in a 4x4” pot, remember there is **NO TUBER** in that little container—just very small roots. In order to get tubers from a cutting for the next season, be sure to plant at least the first **TWO** nodes under the surface of your garden. You may have to dig a deeper hole and not quite fill it up until your cutting grows up a bit. Again, if the stem is tall and wavy, use a cylinder around it for protection. Because your cutting has such a fragile system of hair-thin roots, you need to water it at least once a day--twice if it’s really hot—for at least the first two weeks when more roots are established.

All these methods need to get sprinkled with anti-snail/slug/earwig bait. Otherwise your happy green dahlias become salad bar overnight for hungry marauders. I use Sluggo Plus which is safe enough that if your dog, cat or baby happened to nosh on it they would not gag all the way to the vet or pediatrician. Bring your tubers to our sale. Buy a bunch of other cool dahlias. Make a scrumptious dish to share at our potluck. Invite people to our sale. Email posters. Celebrate this glorious spring planting time.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

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Originally Organized
In 1917
In San Francisco

the Dahlia was adopted as the
Official Flower of San Francisco
on October 4, 1926
by its Board of Supervisors

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more dahlia information. And if you are
not a DSC member yet be sure to join.

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