



NEXT MEETING: June 13, at 7:30. Program: At the Dell at 6:00 Deborah will lead hands-on disbudding, pinching out and deadheading. Program at 7:30: Suzanne Bontempo will discuss Integrated Pest Management and how to build healthy soil. Followed by Frank's raffle. Bring your friends and neighbors. 7 PM Final Close Out: Perhaps Devi will bring some tubers and Deborah will have a few late milk cartoned treasures. Perhaps you will bring your last donations of plants or tubers for our final, final sale offerings? Who will bring goodies to share?

SALORAMA!!



What a major feeding frenzy at our last meeting. Devi and Pat brought over a hundred cuttings including snazzy Medusa and Inland Dynasty. Deborah's milk cartons included Sassafra, AC Abby, Kassasagi, Juul's Buttercup, and Bloomquist Angela. Colleen's brought gems Tropica and Shea's Rainbow. Soc brought tubers of Snojo Storm. After cruising the potential possibilities, buyers were poised to pounce on the Seven O'clock moment. Wow. Joe raked in funds to pay for our meeting and show room.

JOHN'S SEEDLING CHALLENGE

John Dale took some of Lou P's seeds home last year and grew them into happy seedlings. John brought the seedlings, potting soil and little cups for transplanting. He challenged our members to grow one and bring its bloom to our August Show in the John Dale Seedling Challenge category for a ca\$h prize. What a great idea.

FLETCHER FUN FACTS

Cathy Fletcher was asked to remark on three thoughts provoked by our speaker. "Deborah Dietz once again was called upon to give a 101 presentation of how to grow and care for dahlias. As expected the crowd was enlightened by Deborah's love and knowledge of over 30 years of experience. She first came to the Dahlia Dell in 1993 and quote "She has grown dahlias for 30 years or in other words grown dahlias 1-year 30 different ways." And now has earned the honor of being a Senior Judge. She is impressed that dahlias if cared for properly will Bloom from May to Christmas. What other flower will do that?

Deborah pointed out that in the beginning she was mentored by Bob Bloomfield which she found invaluable. Deborah highly recommends finding a knowledgeable Dahlia partner to shadow. She also suggests dropping in at the Dell most Saturday mornings between 9:30 to 12 to learn firsthand. By helping in the Dell you will learn what to do in your own garden. It's all about passing on the knowledge.

There were new members at the presentation whose eyes were as big as saucers as they listened to Deborah's always exciting, theatrical, and flair for telling the story of how and what dahlias need. Deborah explained how to "make your dahlias happy ballerinas not a limp ones, which she demonstrated physically with her own body."



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Again thank you to all who brought in tubers, cuttings or milk cartons. Without these people taking such great pains to provide such quality stock for us, we would be paying HUGE costs to commercial growers. Please take time to personally thank these people for the hours and hours of “free” labor they put in for us. Thank you again to Ron and JoAnn for the big box of luscious Meyer Lemons they donated AGAIN. Colleen’s 5-pound box of butter cookies went over well AGAIN. Pat’s thumb cookies and Gino’s apple strudel were both appreciated. John brought bottles of Stylet Oil—so thoughtful. We finished the night with Frank raffling off fancy fish poop fertilizer. Soooo fun

FIRST BLOOMS

Corralitos reported first color April 26. By mid May, the Albrecht front yard danced with 300 seedling flowers. Iris touted the wonderful pipevine swallowtail caterpillars munching up a storm in her oasis; don’t worry, they don’t feast on dahlias. In SoCal, John Mani reports “Here is a picture of my first cut dahlia blooms of 2017, cut today, Tues., May 30. I planted my tubers on March 7th. 11 weeks gestation. About average I guess although I have never had blooms, this size, this early. Aren’t dahlias fun? Donna and I really miss the ole gang at SFDS.” Cathy up in Kenwood sent in a picture of her first rogue red doozy. Deborah’s first double bloom, Marcia Pat, opened the week of May 23rd. Erik has a jaunty Pooh already fluttering on the Hillside. Tin’s section has produced two gay pink waterlilies and a Hollyhill Margarita so far. Lou achieved first color with both a pink seedling and a lovely Hapet Perfekt posing for the public. Sue’s Gloriosa is glorious. Oh, it’s starting.....



Erik’s Pooh



Cathy’s rogue



Deborah’s Marcia Pat



Sue’s Gloriosa



Lou’s Hapet Perfekt



Hungry, hungry caterpillars

SUMMER SHOW SCHEDULE

Print me for future reference :)

SAN FRANCISCO: One Hundred Year Anniversary Show.

August 12-13 ☞ ☞ ☞ 9th & Lincoln in Golden Gate Park

Flowers of the Year: Skip to My Lou and any open centered Juul introduction.

Set up: any time after 8PM Friday through 8:30 Sat. morning

SAN LEANDRO:

August 19-20 ☞ ☞ ☞ SL Library

Flowers of the Year: Just Married and NTAC Solar Flare.

Set Up: Midnight Friday into Saturday

MONTEREY:

August 26-27 ☞ ☞ ☞ MAH (Museum of Art and History)

705 Front Street Santa Cruz, CA. 95060 Santa Cruz

Flowers of the Year: Elfin and Lo RedEye

HEIRLOOM EXPO: TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS IN PRIZE MONEY

September 5-6-7 ☞ ☞ ☞ Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa

Set up: 8 PM Labor Day through night until 8AM Tuesday morning.

Annual DSC Picnic Potluck

September 9 ☞ ☞ ☞ At the Dell

Set up 9am; party Noon to 4:30.



DEBORAH DOES DAHLIAS...101

Deborah gave a wide ranging talk covering a variety of aspects of growing dahlias based on her many years as a dahlia devotee. As she puts it, "I've grown dahlias for one year 30 diff times – every year has a new twist." Here are some highlights of Deborah's talk

In SF, we have a natural shade cloth. We call it fog.

- If you ever go to a show, SF dahlias have the best color. But if you live somewhere bright, shade cloth can be a real advantage. It can come in 100%, clear down to 5%. You can decide how much light you'd like to close out. Petaluma – 30%?
- Big red dahlias are most susceptible to bleaching under the sun – an umbrella under the sunscreen.

One of the most important things you can do is have a dahlia mentor. What a difference that makes. Deborah is looking for help on Saturday mornings in the Dell. If you'd like to come learn what you're doing and help out, she would love your company.

Dahlias come in a few sizes, based on diameter. Deborah has personally seen an 18" – it practically growled at you – 10k feet up on a mountain in North Carolina. Every year we have a competition for the largest dahlia in the whole show. The biggest we've seen in SF is 14.5".

AA: >10" but only 3-8 blossoms per season. Little mignon singles: you get bunches. Even people who only have a deck or a balcony can still grow.

The little flowers doesn't mean that the plants are small. This just shows you the axiom that the smaller the flower the more blooms you get; the bigger the flower the fewer blooms you get. It takes 22 months for one elephant to make a baby. It takes 30 days for a rabbit to make 10 new rabbits. If you want a lot of flowers that you can keep cutting and cutting and cutting, the smaller the flower, the more you'll get. Poms are great for that, and great in arrangements.

Exhibitionism:

- You can grow them in your garden for joy, or you could also bring them to a dahlia show
- Finding ways to transport dahlias has been challenging dahlia growers for a long time.
- Show: not just about the competition. If you don't have a competition, you never get better dahlias.
- Encourage everybody: our show this year is August 12 & 13. The Heirloom Expo: Sep 5-7 in Santa Rosa.
- Also DSC's 100th Anniversary.

Colleen Byers amazingly typed a transcription almost as fast as Deborah spoke, [so you can read a full transcript of the talk here.](#)

JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING JUNE

This is your last month to plant with hopes of having flowers for our early show Aug. 12-13. Plant, stake, label, water. I still have a few laggards from my loft which will go in by June OR ELSE. I am also potting up some cuttings of rarer varieties in gallon pots, hoping to turn them into pot roots for next season. My rule is to give all dahlias a lovely foliar feeding at their third week and then every three weeks from then on. For sure you want these four things in your cocktail: fertilizer, insecticide, fungicide and soap. I am also adding liquid mycorrhizae and a little kelp extract to mine. Phil adds high octane German dahlia feed from Amazon. His garden is already blooming prolifically. I have spotted some small green caterpillars and bunches of aphids at the Dell. So BE ON THE ALERT.

Water: Our Bay Area weather is so capricious that we can't simply put our dahlias on a timed watering system. Watch your clumps: they will tell you when they need water. Dahlias prefer to be very wet and then very dry. So thoroughly water and then wait for just a slight wilt to your leaves before watering again. Do start disbudding; remove the two side buds leaving just a single bud on a single stem. This will yield longer and stronger stems and bigger blooms. Really.



Hortanova before . . .

Decide how you want to design your dahlia bondage. Bob Papp and Bob Schroederx use hortanova stretched parallel to the ground at both the 18" and 36" levels. Karen and Kevin employ the corral method and loop twine around the edges of entire rows of dahlias tied at intervals to stakes on the OUT-SIDE of the rows. Lou ties each plant to a stake separately.



. . . and after planting



Corralitos Dahlias plants in early March in long white tunnels which protect the delicate dahlias from wind and bugs. These 40' long covered rows attract frisky coyotes who love to dash in and out and romp and stomp. Crazy Coyotes. Not amused: Keven and Karen. For those in HOT areas, it's time to set up for shade cloth. Shade cloth comes in various percentages of light control. You need to experiment as to how much you want limited. Shade cloth also keeps your blooms a bit cleaner than those exposed to all the elements, morning dew and breeze debris. Curtis in Walnut Creek spreads his cover the first of July.

Pinch out: I wait until the first bud is barely discernable and then take off the central bud, the two side buds and the two accompanying leaves forcing all the energy that would have gone into the first bloom back into the roots and plant. Devi pinches out when there are five nodes showing; she pinches back the entire top node. If you are unsure how to do this, come by the Dell at 6 o'clock on our meeting night or any Saturday morning before noon and one of our Dellions will show you how. I've actually deadheaded my first Elviras and one Marcia Pat. Remember to cut back to NEW GROWTH. This stimulates the plant to continue to produce flowers.

Weed! Weed! Weed! Weeds are vectors for other crummy things. The fewer weeds, the fewer other ugly problems in your patch.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

[Click here for past issues of the DSC newsletter](#)

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Like what you see? Visit the DSC for even more dahlia information. And if you are not a DSC member yet be sure to join.

sfdahlias.org

Originally Organized
In 1917
In San Francisco
the Dahlia was adopted as the
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