



OCTOBER MEETING SNAFU

DSC apologizes to those who were inconvenienced to find our normal meeting room full of people attending a Yom Kippur ceremony. The byzantine process to book and KEEP our meeting room bookings got gnarled up. As a result, our October meeting was cancelled.

7TH HEIRLOOM EXPO, 2ND DAHLIA SHOW

By 5 o'clock PM on Labor Day, the Hall of Flowers in Santa Rosa yawned still so empty, Deborah could drive her Element full of dahlias straight through the cavernous building right up to the pile of tables waiting to be designed into a dahlia competition. Masha and Douglass hoisted Tinnie's magnificent banner atop the information fortress. Baker Creek Irregulars erected 40 tables under the 100' mural painting of dahlias. (Photographers loved the black background.) All night long, security guards escorted contenders in through the secret gate. All in all, we had ten great growers petal-wrestling for \$2,000 prize money. Exhibitors staged 555 dahlias in x1, x3 and x5 classes; another 100-200 blooms got deployed in 10 breath-taking bouquets. Having his new seedling judged Best B—delighted Chris Dix. Curtis took blues with his new Alona Esposito seedling. Iris's Mexico garnered best anemone and Best x5 Disc. Cathy Fletcher nabbed Best Novice Bloom, whilst Quamrun astounded with Best Novice x3 Snojo Storm and Best Novice x5 Chimacum Julia. Kristine Albrecht's Emory Paul edged out Cathy's Pennhill Watermelon by a mere 1/8" for Largest Dahlia in The World. Lou cleaned up sweeps with Best Large, Kenora Jubilee, and Best in Show, Eden Barbarossa. Wow. Check out his custom dahlia carriers. Thank you to all who staged all night and judged all morning.



FORT INFORMATION

Thank you to all the people including Burnetta who sat underneath the stairs to answer questions about dahlias and to encourage the public to vote for People's Choice—handily won by Kristine's vibrant Ketchup and Mustard. Volunteers put out extra chairs amongst the exhibit tables so art students could sketch, draw and paint dahlias. What wonderful youthful energy. With no junk food available, participants enjoyed amazing gourmet kiosk delicacies such as totally vegetarian sushi. Every day was a gastronomic adventure. One of the stalls sold used Farmer John denim overalls--already broken in, softer, and bendy when one squatted instead of cracking. Deborah gave her Dahlia 101 talk to an auditorium full of gardeners; the curious brought her questions the whole next day at the information fortress. With extraordinary generosity of spirit and brawn, Billy T drove up to the Sonoma Fairgrounds on Thursday evening, to help tear down the show. He loaded all 20 of Deborah's cases of vases into her dahlia-mobile. Whew. When Alice noticed a lot of dahlias up for grabs she volunteered to wrap and schlep, too. Now she's DSC's newest member. Major thanks to Jere Gettle of Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds for sponsoring this most beautiful venue right next to the 35' tall pyramid of gourds and squashes. His generals, Lisa O and Lisa C, organized our beautiful tablecloths, Court of Honor and bright big ribbons.





HERITAGE SEEDLINGS



Lou's super fine bb c seedling



Alona Esposito



Chris Dix winning B seedling



Paradise Seedling

PARKS AND REC BASH

Once again Deborah, Lou and Pat supplied magnificent blooms for the annual Parks fund-raising gala. Jenna worked her fingers raw making snazzy dahlia boutonnieres ALL DAY LONG—over 70 little wearable pieces of art. Erik and Shelly represented DSC in elegant style.



MINI MITES: MAXI ENERGY

Erik again took 3 days off work to introduce Marin Country Day third graders to the joys of dahlia growing. Primed by Nick's PowerPoint presentation at school, the students met Erik at the statue to learn the history of Golden Gate Park. Whilst they chowed down on their lunches, Erik talked about dahlia genetics using labradoodles as examples. In groups of three or four the kids helped Deborah, Pat and Jenna deadhead, disbud and their favorite—jump in the compost pit. Jenna rewarded each pupil with a dahlia, a cookie and a trip to the children's park across the way. Teachers took lovely bouquets back to the classroom.



Two of our newest DSC people drew a cartoon version of meeting Deborah at the Dell. Looks like we really had a swinging party going on. Great art: great subject? Thank you for sharing your creativity.





NOVEMBER NOTES

It's been wet; it's been cold; it's been hot hot hot. What's going on with our weather???? First of all, for those of you who experience a frost or have poorly drained soil: you need to dig up your tuber clumps. I recommend you process each clump one at a time as you dig it up: wash it off, divide it; dip it in 10% Clorox for ten minutes; dip exposed edges in Sulphur or cinnamon; label; and store in vermiculite, guinea pig shavings, sand, or saran wrap. Remember that your DSC sells both named and unnamed tubers and we are grateful when you donate both to our April Sale. If you know anything about your surprise tubers—i.e. yellow, sc or red/white fd—mark that on your orphan spuds even if you don't know the name. Check out YouTube for excellent video about these digging and dividing processes. If you are unsure how to divide your crop, apprentice yourself to a master tuber surgeon and get some experience.

It's supposed to be a "dry" winter, so some of you with better drained soil might want to leave your clumps in the ground. When the dahlia has turned brown, put a 5-gallon bucket over the top to keep out extra moisture and bugs. Make sure your labels are intact and legible. Start composting leaves and grass clippings. Consider a cover crop of mustard seed or other nitrogen-fixing seeds. If your dahlias are still blooming, severely cut them back to new growth. Clean up the ground beneath them. I've been seeing teensy nasty slugs luxuriating in fallen petal detritus under my still-blooming beauties. Grrrrrr. Radically cut back on water. Truly wait until your dahlia begs you for water. DO NOT fertilize any more. NO NO NO. As they begin to turn brown, cut them down to the 4th or 5th notch and cover the exposed ends with tinfoil or tie a plastic bag over the whole plant in lieu of a 5 gallon bucket. Try making some late season cuttings. Put your 4x4" cuttings under a light. This is a great way to grow "insurance" plants of your best stock for next season.

Start thinking about what you'll bring to our Holiday party's Present Predation. Items which have been contentiously "frozen" in the past included, narcissi in a basket, croaking ceramic bullfrog, dahlia calendar, loppers, chocolate, and weirdly enough, a blue Warrior's T-shirt. Get creative. Delight us all.

Yours in Dirt,
Deborah

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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

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