



NEXT MEETING: June 12, @ 7:30 time @ 9th and Lincoln

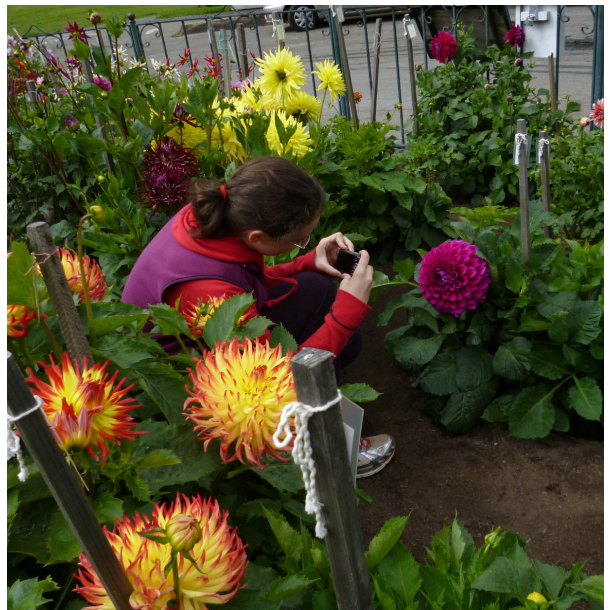
PROGRAM: Green Integrated Pest Management, with award-winning Kristine Albrecht and Irene. Learn the Triple Threat secret to great GREEN dahlias. Hands-on disbudding, pinching out and dead-heading seminar with Deborah in the Dahlia Dell at 6PM. Last chance to donate or buy tubers, cuttings and plants. Please bring what you can and buy what you need. Dahlias make splendid gifts. Who will bring comestibles to share?



PRIZE WINNING PIX: :



Yearly winner, DJ, walked us through the 2010 and 2011 winners from the annual ADS Photography contest. He warned potential contestants that in the New Introduction and Individual Bloom categories, the judges tend to award the “mug shot” straight on pix as opposed to other views. The fewest entries arrived in the Photo Darkroom category where Photoshop or snazzy darkroom tricks are encouraged. We all loved seeing pictures of



Pat, Orlando and Peg in some of the winning People or Society Activities categories. The Grand Winner for both 2010 and 2011 won from the Kids and Critters category: any dahlia photo with a bug, a dog, a cat, an elephant, or a cute kid and a dahlia in it. DJ exhorts us all to carry a camera around with us because opportunities for award-winning photographs happen at the least expected times. With snazzy machines like DJ’s or snap shooters like Deborah’s, the prize-winner is captured in the eye of the shooter, not necessarily in the price of the camera. DJ passed out the 9 categories and the rules. You may enter up to 3 shots per category for no more than 27 entries. Photos must be taken in 2012. They must be sent in digital form to Martin Kraal by December First along with a signed disclosure statement. DJ and Deborah send their entries in on disks popped into the mail. So start taking some photos NOW!



More DJ photos:



THWART PESKY GOPHERS:

Tinee demonstrated how to easily build gopher cages from hardware “cloth.” She cuts the length and heights she wants, snips the bottom like legionnaire’s flaps and holds the edges with zip ties. She cuts additional squares of wire to put under the cage. She digs a hole the size of the cage; inserts first the square piece, then the cage. After filling half the cage with dirt, she inserts the tuber or plant and fills the rest up. She leaves 1-2 inches protruding above ground. In the winter when she digs her cages up, all she has to do is snip the zip ties to liberate the tubers. The cages all smooth out flat, so Tinee can store 20-30 cages in a small space. No more gopher buffet!



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:

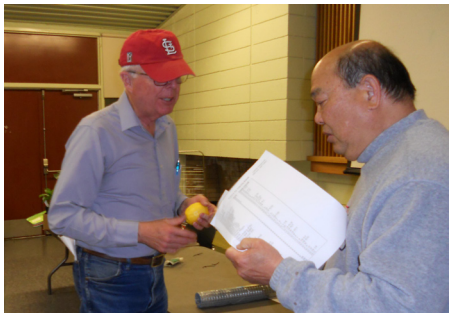
Wow! Did DSCers come through in May! Donna Mani arrived at 6:15 to open the kitchen and start the hot water. Thanks for the lovely hostess cupcakes and the other goodies DSCers brought.

John Mani brought three flats of 4x4 cuttings of new dahlias including Bed Head, Jammin Jelly, Boogie Nites, Nuit d’ete and Sir Richard; Devorah donated stunning pot roots and cuttings including Harvey Koop, Holly Hill Purely Purple, and several AC darlings; Deborah brought 5 flats of milk cartons with Tropica, Show ‘n Tell, Fern Irene, and Jessica as well as Camano Messengers entrusted to her from Mike and Martha last month. But, Hit and Run surprise of the night, Roger delivered wonderful plants in Chinese take-out containers, featuring Porcelain, Kenora Frills, Prince Valiant, Caproz Jewel of Arlene, Zoe Rey, and others.



The president of the John Stowell Dahlia Society, Jeanette Schnell dropped in with her husband, Scott, and another member and snapped up some varieties that weren’t available down in San Jose. Our successful sale pleased treasurer Joe.





GONE TO POT?

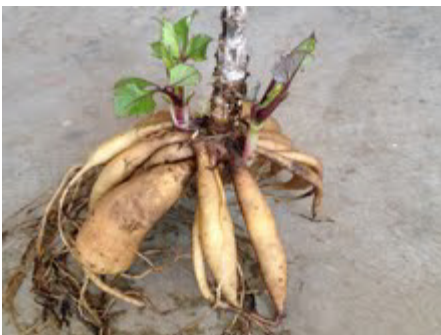
GONE TO POT? What are pot roots and why do you want them? Simply put, pot roots are dahlia clumps that develop in confined situations—from 4" x 4"s to 5 gallon buckets.

Lou P., the Juuls, Roy Stier, and Corralitos Gardens all grow in 4x4's. They cultivate a cutting in the middle of a 4x4 in a medium of potting soil/vermiculite/perlite—in other words, a very loose and light combination. The 4x4's are placed side by side into the ground so the edges are flush with the ground or even slightly below the surface. Thus, in an area 3' x3' you could get 81 pot roots growing. Devorah uses one gallon pots and the Schelps use 2 gallon pots. Devorah grows some from some cuttings and some from small tubers. Into his two gallon pots, Mike puts a tuber straight up in the middle and covers it with dirt. Devorah burries hers; Mike and Martha leave theirs on the surface. All of these—4x4, 1gal, 2 gal—will produce very nice dahlia flowers, especially if fertilized regularly. Some people allow their pot roots to bloom only once, just as proof of label, claiming it makes stronger tubers. Other people let them



bloom all season and still seem to have fine tubers. In the winter, some people pull their pot roots out and stack them up like firewood. They appear to dry out completely; they seem so light that nothing could still live. But come spring, with heat and water they burst forth anew! Mike leaves his big pots out in the elements; because they have excellent drainage, they rarely suffer rotting from over watering during dormancy. Commercial growers like Corralitos utilize pot roots because they produce so many eyes, growing many sprouts from which they can harvest cuttings. Hybridizers like Lou or Accent like pot roots because they can make a large number of their newest introductions and store them in a small space, thereby not only having cutting material but also hedging against tragedy in the field. They take out

4x4 insurance policies on irreplaceable new varieties. When his Pink Paradises rotted in the winter rains, Lou could fall back on his stash of pot roots. Pot roots ship easily because they have their own padding around them unlike a naked tuber. Mike Riorden sent me four of his newest Scott's introductions. I treated his 5x5" cubes the way I would tubers; I put them in my toasty loft, watered a wee bit initially and within 3 weeks—behold—glorious green sprouts emerged. When we visited the late, great Gordy LeRoux of Kenora fame, Tinnee and I were stunned to learn he plants all his seedlings in 4x4's in a long row. They waved 6 feet tall, full of blooms, fit for winning blue ribbons. When new seedlings would bloom that were not up to his standards, he'd simply yank the whole 4x4 out of the ground and toss it out until at the end of the season, he retained only potential prize winners. Unlike the Mythbusters' slogan, do **TRY THIS EXPERIMENT AT HOME!**



WORM WRIGGLING WORMS!

Bob Papp writes this exhortation in his Southern California monthly newsletter: “In real estate, the word is location, location, location. In gardening it is soil, soil, soil. Now is the time to be growing your soil. After my last year’s experiment with Organic Growing, I think that is the way to go. Do you see any worms? If not, that is where you should start. I’m not going into the info for you on worms. Just Google “red wigglers”. There are a ton of different varieties. You will find red wigglers are the way to go. Those of you that know me, know I go to extremes on my ideas. I now have 10 worm containers at my house. My wife, Susan, has the head shake going early this year. I’m building large worm beds at the VA Metro and the Botanic Garden. Now where are the worms? It is not what you know but who you know. I asked around. I always start with Dr. Dick Kohlschreiber. He said, “worms”? Step



#2 is buying red wigglers. They go for about \$20 to \$40 a pound. There are about 1000 per lb. For your average container, you need about one lb. Step #3. There is a term “hat in hand”. So I went to my Boss at Metro, Lisa. She is the best hat in hand letter writer I know. So, this weekend we are picking up 3000 red wigglers. I think we need around 10,000 to start. It will take around three months before we can start harvesting the castings. That is the politically correct term for worm poop. For those of you that might want to start your own container, I suggest that you go to the website, Smartgardening.com and look under Vermicomposting and for those of us who are visually stimulated, YouTube has many sites. I know, Decafe! Prezz!”

GOING FOR GUINNESS GOLD:

ADS recently finalized a set of criteria to officially record and preserve the records of a new competitive class for dahlia shows around the world. The brainchild of Ken Masurat of the John Stowell Dahlia Society in San Jose, California, the new competition is called Largest Dahlia in the World. Many shows have a Largest Dahlia class where size and quality are factored into the results. The rules and judging criteria for the Largest Dahlia in the World are much simpler – all that matters is that the bloom be upright and held on its own stem in a container and that its diameter be measured by a team of at least two Sr. Judges, and that this all take place at a sanctioned show, with a named variety. This competition is open to any dahlia society in the world. Just like pumpkin fanciers have the Largest Pumpkins and Tomato breeders vie for biggest love apple, we can now start keeping official records for THE BIGGEST DAHLIA IN THE WORLD. Too fun. Usually people think Emory Paul yields the largest diameter butwho knows which variety will take the very first year’s title of THE BIGGEST DAHLIA IN THE WORLD? Go for it! Official rules and reporting forms are posted on www.dahlia.org the official site of the American Dahlia Society and will be published in the June ADS Bulletin.



JUST DO IT JUNE:

Last few days to finish planting for this season. If your plants are at least 3 weeks old, do begin prophylactic spraying with a cocktail of your favorite water soluble fertilizer, insecticide and systemic fungicide. If you spray way before you see problems, the green solutions will work admirably (Serenade fungicide, Worry free Pesticidal Oil, Captain Jack's Dead Bug) but if you slack off, you might have to escalate to deadlier things (Malethion and Hoist). More and more green gardeners swear by compost tea sprayed on as a foliar feed. They report astoundingly beautiful leaves and remarkable disease resistance. Establish a watering procedure: drip or soaker hose is best. Misterters and/or shade cloth in really hot areas help a lot. To pinch or not to pinch out? Guru of Guru, Lou P, does not pinch out. I recommend pinching when you see your first bud. This is hard when you are dying to see that first flower, but steal yourself and just do it. Pinch below the leaf pair below the first central bud and its two sister buds. Thus, the energy that would have gone into building that first dahlia flower goes instead into building better roots, stronger stems, and a really nice set of second-level flowers. Then try DJ's experiment: put the pinched off remnants in a really light soil mixture with lots of vermiculite/perlite or peat moss. Keep them spritzed but not wet. These could turn into fine pot roots for next year. Just try it! If you are lucky enough to have a spent bloom already, make sure to cut it below the two leaves that accompany it. Properly deadheaded, your dahlias should produce blooms through November. Do bring any left over tubers/cuttings/plants to our meeting for our last dahlia sale of the year.

Yours in Dirt,

Deborah

Dahlia Society of California, Inc., San Francisco, CA -- Copyrighted

Editor: Deborah Dietz
Page layout: Mike Willmarth
Photo credits: Dietz, DJ

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

Wishing you had access to the past 12
months of dahlia doings? [Click here for
past newsletters](#)



Erik with some last minute finds



Deborah with pot roots