



NEXT MEETING: April 8 @7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Please bring special tubers or plants for in-house sale before our big Tuber and Cutting Sale on the 19th. Devi promises even bigger and more exotic varieties than in March. Who will bring goodies to staunch our DSC appetites?

DSC TRIFECTA:

Frank arranged for not one, but 3, Show and Tell speakers! Firstly, Valeria, the newest grower on the Hillside in Golden Gate Park's Dahlia Dell, demonstrated how she and Sue made gopher cages from 1/4" hardware cloth. Using Tinnee's pattern, they determined the circumference and height, 10" being about as deep as they need to be. Add 3" to the height to account for the 3" slits for the bottom. Valeria and Sue used twisty ties to hold the cylinder together which makes it so simple to open during DigOut. They added an extra square BENEATH the cylinder to really thwart those pesky gophers. Furthermore, they leave 2" exposed ABOVE the ground to foil a genius varmint's overland strategy. Dig a hole large enough for your cage; fill it half way with soil; deposit your dahlia; fill in the rest of the way. In the winter, the whole cage comes out. Untie the twisties and voila! Out falls a lovely tuber clump. Moreover, all your cages flatten out for easy stacking until next year. What will they think of next?



TERRIFIC TRIO:



Devi, Lou and Pat have been toiling on the cutting benches since early January. Devi walked us through their various steps. Firstly, they arrange up to 5 tubers of each variety in big Styrofoam tubs filled with a light potting mix, warmed from below. The heated, humid greenhouse causes early germination. Lou razors off sprouts and Devi dips them into a rooting hormone. Devi pops these sprouts into 4"x4" pots with a wet mixture of soil, sand, vermiculite and perlite. Pat supplies Devi with labels for each and keeps a tally of every cutting made. Our expert team works with over 130 varieties. What magnificent early cuttings we saw at our meeting! Each flat of 25 containers then goes into the misting room "where the magic happens." The combination of mini mists every 15 minutes, light and heat results in robust root development.



For the last step, our crackerjack team takes the flats outside for hardening off. Last year they produced over 1600 cuttings! Wow! Make sure you take time to thank them for all their volunteer time and expertise to make our tuber sale so successful!



DOING THE DEED:



It is one thing to see slides of cutting making, and another thing to actually witness it right in front of you. Deborah brought examples of 3 of the 4 ways to make dahlia cuttings: tuber, stem, tip and leaf. Deborah reports that she has about 97% success with tuber cuttings, 85% success with stem cuttings, and 65% success with tip cuttings. But, she points out, "Since you need to top the rangier plants any way, you are ahead at least by 65%!"

BUYING FRENZY!

Zowie! What gorgeous plants we had to choose from and such varieties. Paula brought an armful of Fidalgo Julies. Soc donated burgeoning Show 'n Tells, Camano Sitkas, and Nick Srs. You could spot Deborah's by her characteristic milk cartons: Embrace, Japanese Bishop, Wyn's Pastel, and The Phantom. Devi carted in a forest of treasures: Black Monarch, Pink Jupiter, Tarathi Ruby, Pam Howden, Christie Dancer, Elsie C, Gloriosa, Prometheus, Fickle, Juuls Star, Stillwater Plum and Verrone's Morning Star. Pat's basket of tubers disappeared, so someone is growing Charlie Dimmock, Delta Red, and Eden Lemonade. What an unbelievable selection for so early in March!!! Imagine what we'll have for your buying pleasure at our April meeting!



DROUGHT DECISIONS:

Shower with a friend—of course a great suggestion from Frank. Others suggested putting buckets in the shower to catch the excess water. Urban Farmer has a terrific video about setting up a drip system and also about using grey water. Andrew Baxter discovered some snazzy crystals which hold water, water marbles—great for the garden but dangerous for children if swallowed. Roger suggests black plastic covering to hold down weeds and decrease evaporation.

DSC FLOWER OF THE YEAR:



Lakeview Glow

Because Hollyhill Cotton Candy did not produce cuttings, we have changed the flower of the year to Lakeview Glow. Everyone should buy one at our sale and grow it and show it. Pooh is our open-centered Flower of the Year. Likewise, buy one; grow it and show it.



Pooh

GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:

Thank you so much to Soc, Tony, John, Deborah, and Bill who found an empty room before our meeting and carried in all the tables and chairs and set them up. They were sweating by the time everything looked ready. Such a scrumptious chocolate cake with orange sauce from Baker Bill! Such healthy tangerines from Pat and yummy Danish rolls from Devi. Tony donated Van cookies and Leo brought Hostess Ho-hos. We all voraciously pounced on Maggie's box of See's! The Dingwall's huge bag of Meyer's lemons smelled heavenly. John D's donated plants went to good gardening homes.



TUBER SALE PREPARATIONS:

Please bring your tubers with names on them or your cuttings with labels. Do reserve 10-20% as backups lest a catastrophe occur: gophers, errant dogs, inadvertent slip, too much fertilizer. Devorah (drdevisf@gmail.com) asks that you contact her if you have a few of a specific variety so she can make pictures of the flower. People like to see how lovely their blooms will be when choosing amongst little ugly tubers.

Get on the sign up list to volunteer at our only fund raiser of the year, our Tuber and Cutting Sale April 19. To qualify to help out (and shop early) you must have helped with kitchen duty at our meetings, volunteered at the Dell, hobnobbed at our DigOut, hosted at our Big Show last August, or donated tubers/plants. Either sign up at our April meeting or call Deborah (415-816-2118) to get on the door list. We would also appreciate people to help put up tables Friday at 3 pm in the auditorium.

Please wear a dahlia-related T-shirt and if possible, bring your ADS Classification Book, Black Sharpie marker, magnifying glass, and a delicious potluck dish to share at our victory repast after the crowd subsides. Starting at 8 am, we'll distribute tubers, label boxes, match pix to varieties, and classify donations by color, size and form. Last year you veterans fell to the chores with such alacrity and familiarity that we were able to have almost 45 minutes of "shopping" before we opened our doors to the public.

Do print the dahlia tuber sale poster and plaster it all over your favorite places. Post it on your Facebook page. Email all your friends. We are worried that because of the drought we might have fewer gardeners this year, so please publicize this glorious opportunity to buy pedigreed competition show dahlias.



Dahlia Plant & Tuber Sale
Saturday, April 19, 2014
9:30 AM to 12 Noon
Hall of Flowers
9th Ave. & Lincoln Way
Golden Gate Park
Come early
for best
selection



Parks Alliance The Dahlia Society of California is a San Francisco Parks Alliance Park Partner

[\(Download the poster and plaster it around town\)](#)



LET IT RAIN:

For the rains, O “flew me 2 spinnakers,” one on the front deck and one on the back deck. These visqueen canopies protect the dahlias recently emerged from my greenhouse from excessive rain/sun/wind. It’s a great place to harden them off before planting out in an exposed patch.



AT LAST APRIL!

I experimented and allowed many clumps to over winter at the Dahlia Dell. By the third weekend in March, 62 had emerged from the ground. Our webmaster Mike, up in Napa, reports that covering his tubers with big black pots has resulted in several already up. Some of his were rather long, spindly and yellow; so he cut off the top half. He first uncovered them in the early evening light. They should be ok by morning.

If you left your tubers in, you probably note several shoots coming up. You have three options:

1. Do nothing. You will have a bunch of canes, several flowers, but none quite as big, nor the stems quite as strong as last year.
2. You could try taking tuber cuttings, like I showed the group at our March meeting. Burrow down the length of the shoot to the tuber and carefully pry it off. Put immediately into a 2"x 2" or 4"x 4" container with loose potting soil. Keep in a warm, well lighted, humid environment. It should root in 3-6 weeks. Label immediately. Or lastly,
3. Note your 3 strongest stems. Leave them alone. Try extricating the rest of the stems still attached to their respective tubers. Pop these into milk cartons or pots and label immediately! Bring to our Tuber Sale or our May or June meetings for sale.

Snail, slug and earwig thwarting is critical now. Super Sluggo or Sluggo Plus takes care of all three and is safe to use around children and pets. Coreys for slugs AND earwigs is more toxic. The spate of showers might have diluted or washed away your snail offensive, so renew it as needed.

Check out the last few years of April planting suggestions. Planting cuttings is different from planting tubers. Especially, do NOT water tubers!!!! I prefer to start all my dahlias in milk cartons where I can completely optimize their early environment; when my plants are 1-1 ½" tall, then I rip open the milk carton and plant the entire brick of tuber-cum-roots.

BTW: Do you have tubers which haven't "eyed up" yet? Try the Erik G trick: on a flat covered with newspaper, spread them out. Get a wet dishtowel, wring it slightly dry and drape over your recalcitrant roots and put in a warm, warm spot—for example next to the water heater. Every couple days, re-dampen the towel. You will be amazed. So: plaster your haunts with our Tuber Sale poster, sign up to help with the tuber sale, bring a pot luck dish, buy a bunch of new and cool dahlias, and plant, plant, plant!

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

Editor: Deborah Dietz
Page layout: Mike Willmarth
Snail mail editing and mailing: Pat Hunter
Photo credits: Dietz, Harris, Schulkin

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DSC newsletter](#)

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