



**NEXT MEETING:** Dec. 9 at 6:30 at 9th and Lincoln. **HOLIDAY PARTY!!!** We'll **START AN HOUR EARLIER AT 6:30.** Please bring a delectable dish to share with your fellow dahlianeers and a wrapped gift (@\$10) for our rousing Present Predation game. Your gift should be at least tangentially related to gardening. If your dinner donation requires serving implements, please bring these, too. Both the oven, stove top and refrigerator will be available. Please bring hot pads if needed. Your benevolent Dahlia Society of California will provide plate, utensils and cups. Note: DCSers have been known to don glitzy glad rags; so could you.

**DIGGING FOR TREASURE**

Lou P. demonstrated his pincer method of using a spade and a pitchfork to prize tuber clumps from the ground. First Lou incises a complete circle all around the clump with a 12-14" radius to sever any roots which might hold the clump down. He reminded us that you can see most eyes only in the first 24 hours, so it's best to divide immediately. Lou uses a Clorox bath and Captan to staunch the exposed cut edges. After a day of drying out, he puts his treasures in bags with guinea pig shavings. Many of Lou's roots will go straight to the cutting bench in the greenhouse to provide outstanding plants for our tuber sale the third Saturday in April.

**VOTE IS IN**

You voted in basically the same slate of people for the next year. President: Tinnee; VP and program deviser Frank; Treasurer, Joe; Secretary: Pat; Corresponding Secretary and Newsletter editor: Deborah. Please let these people know how much you appreciate their efforts for you. Without amazing volunteers like these, we would not have a society. Let them know that you'd like to contribute your talents, too.

**DUES ENDUCEMENTS**

DSC offers you 3 big inducements to get your 2015 membership form and check in EARLY. If Devi gets your form and money by our holiday party you receive 3 raffle tickets for the for gift certificates to our April Tuber Sale. We will raffle off the certificates, worth \$25, \$20 and \$15, at the February meeting. (Wow!) If received by our January meeting, you get 2 raffle chances; if received by the end of January, 1 raffle ticket. The end of January also means you'll receive your ADS Classification Book when it is released by the ADS. So: **DO IT NOW.** {[Click for membership form](#)} Fill it out. Add a check. Voila! taken care of for another year.

For the Dahlia Society of California only:

- Individual Membership .....\$10.00
- Family Membership .....\$15.00

For the Dahlia Society of California AND American Dahlia Society (includes ADS Classification Book and quarterly Bulletins):

- Individual Membership .....\$34.00
- Family Membership .....\$42.00

Applications are accepted for both societies, or the DSC only. Combined membership includes ADS at a discounted rate only available in conjunction with local society membership.

## GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

How wonderful to see our past president, Lou Cornish, visiting from England with his twin daughters Jackie and Gill. While staying for two weeks at the Gaensler manse, they visited many old friends. Thank also you to those who sated us with their goodies: Pat Hunter with assorted cookies, Baker Bill with his double chocolate rum cake, and Gino with his Sock it to Me Cake. Add a generous helping of fresh fruit to fend off scurvy and all was right with the empire.



## PRESENTS FOR YOUR FAVORITE DAHLIANISTAS

Consider getting an electric oscillating tool to use dividing your tubers. Mike S and Devorah have battery operated Dremmels; Deborah's has an electric cord. There are advantages to either. These make precise cuts quickly without shaking the whole tuber mass and will NOT cut hands—only tubers.



Years ago Dick Meyers gifted Deborah with a plastic padded top for a 5-gallon bucket which turns the bucket into a stool. Simple but comfortable.



Perfect stocking stuffer: big loop handled scissors. I have several pair now which I bought for between \$3-5 on Clement or Irving Streets in the Chinese whatnot stores.

Have you ever knelt down in the garden and been stabbed with a little shot of pain from a small rock underneath your kneecap? Spare yourself this misery and get some professional tile-layers knee pads. I crawl around the Dell with impunity wearing this armor.



Last suggestion: Costco has colorful rubber knee boots for \$16. These are perfect during the mud months and beyond.

## DOUBLE DIVA



Kristine Albrecht's KA's Cloud won both the American Dahlia Society's 2015 Derrill Hart award and as well as the A.D.S. Lynn P. Dudley Award passing at all seven A.D.S. trial gardens in one year. Zowie! Her magnificent introduction, a huge A ID white with a light pink blush, is available from Corralitos Gardens for a whopping \$30 a plantlette. Even as an unnamed seedling, KA's Cloud survived driving up from Santa Cruz to Seattle in an air-conditioned truck and proudly standing on the Court of Honor at the National Show. Major congratulations to Kristine Albrecht and her Blackbird Farms introduction.

For more on KA's Cloud visit [santacruzdahlias.com/kas.cloud.html](http://santacruzdahlias.com/kas.cloud.html)

## DAHLIA PORN: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Who has sat in the bathroom drooling through the Swan Island lavishly illustrated Wish Book? Who has cruised hot commercial dahlia sites in the wee hours of the night staring at flashy flowers? Wow. How we fantasize about the many gorgeous dahlias we might grow in our next season. Indeed, treat yourself to a few new varieties! But be careful. Consider from whom you are buying.

Devorah bought lovely surprises from Blossom Gulch [[blossomgulch.com](http://blossomgulch.com)] last year. I've already sent in my order to Birch Bay [[birchbaydahlias.com](http://birchbaydahlias.com)] —must have their Irish Black Heart! Sue, Valeria, and Roger tell me how well their choices from Swan Island [[dahlias.com](http://dahlias.com)] did. Pat grew beauties from Pride of the Prairie Roland Verrone [[wadahlias.com](http://wadahlias.com)]. Lou got some Chiacum Davie and I got Trengrove Millenium from Linda's Dahlias [[lindasdahlias.com](http://lindasdahlias.com)]. Phil's Aztec [[aztecdahlias.com](http://aztecdahlias.com)] roots produced beautifully. Les and Viv Connell sell lovely roots [[dahliasbylesandviv.com](http://dahliasbylesandviv.com)]. If you plan to germinate your tubers in a loft/oven/upper closet shelf/water heater/or cold frame, request that your tubers be sent as early as possible. Occasionally, I have received roots in late January; I sprouted them in my loft and was able to plant 2-3' bushes in April. Good News! Corralitos Gardens [[cgdahlias.com](http://cgdahlias.com)] has re-opened and is offering rooted cuttings.

A word of caution about dahlia porn: Those photos are meant to be very tempting. Not only Playboy bunnies receive Photoshop airbrushing to remove little imperfections. Now consider one of our Bay Area hybridizer's newest orchid. When it's good—it's outstanding! However, there are many not-so-perfect blooms on the same bush. If you had to choose a photo to represent this Wunderbloom—which would you choose? It's not lying; it's just putting ones best petal forward.

Use your ADS Classification Book to determine how great a certain cultivar might be. For example: there are 10 cultivars in the B ID DB category. Blown Dry has 15 wins; Veca Lucia has 16; Ferncliffe Illusion has 17. However, April Dawn in 2013 won a whopping 126 blues or higher. All the others have 0-3 wins each. Factor in the color combinations, which wins were on the West Coast, and which varieties you've actually seen at a show or in someone else's garden. Check the date the variety was introduced. For example, in the 1206 category there are only 3 SC Red blooms that took awards in 2013. Gordie LeRoux's Kenora Wildfire burned 109 wins; Cynthia Houston nailed 11; AC Kunst won only one. However, AC Kunst was only released in 2014. No one had it yet to show. It will be more telling in the 2015 ADS CB if that number goes up. If you have limited space, check the Fabulous Fifty. These elite cultivars took home 50 or more blues and higher. Order a couple of these that you haven't grown before. Lastly, check out the three lists collated from the five big competitions in California. (These come out in Feb. and are linked to our previous March newsletters.) They list the win-

ningest cultivars in California—always a good indication of what would probably thrive in your garden. Tinnie suggests setting up an XL sheet. I put all my variety names down the left side and then ADS #, form, size, color, and source across the top. At a glance you can see if you lack miniballs or purple dahlias. (A print out of this proves invaluable at shows, too.) Do you fancy a particular type of dahlia? Joan in Monterey adores anemones; she buys every new anemone she can track down. Soc lights up with incurved cacti; I swoon over bizarre novelties. What's your jones? Feed it safely. Don't be (overly) beguiled by pretty pictures.

## DESIDUOUS DECEMBER

Most of your dahlias have turned brown. Many of you have already begun lifting clumps from the ground. I store my tubers in vermiculite; Sue uses sand with excellent results; Lou P. chooses guinea pig shavings from the pet store. Other people have reported wrapping individual tubers in Saran Wrap. Whatever your medium, store your roots in a cool, but not cold spot. I use my basement. Roger stashes his under his eaves. Devorah caches hers in her garage. Given the rains of a couple weeks ago, some people are reporting their lilacs blooming; my cym-



bidiums are running riot and my raspberries are producing. Obviously, Nature has a bunch of Bay Area plants quite confused. Some of my dahlias have decorated their bare stems with lively green shoots. Sue, Valeria and I have taken some cuttings and popped them in my unheated greenhouse with shop lights for much of the night. I nabbed some from really crummy tuber makers: Jessica, Belle of the Ball and Hollyhill Bewitched. We'll see how they fair; I figure if any live, that's more than I would have had if I hadn't taken any cuttings at all. Bob Papp often asks if he's had 20 years' experience growing dahlias or only a year's experience twenty different times. His point is that we have to keep trying new things. Some will work and some won't. Sue wanted to experiment germinating tubers. She popped a few in her oven. Guess what? With just the heat from the pilot light, she's already gotten a few sprouted. I have

already stashed a few tubers snuggled up in milk cartons in my germination loft—the warmest spot in my 107 year old house. It's exciting to have a new season beginning. Remember to bring a delicious dish to share with your fellow DSC Revelers as well as a wrapped item which will inspire new heights of larceny in our crazy Present Predation ritual..

Yours in Dirt,

*Deborah*

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

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

[sfdahlias.org](http://sfdahlias.org)