

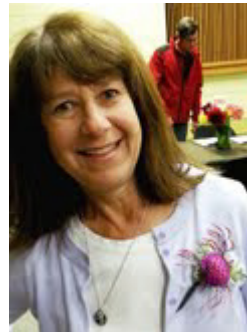


**NEXT MEETING:** Nov. 12 @ 7:30 @ 9th and Lincoln

**Program:** David Perkins of Lyngo Garden Equipment of Redwood City will teach us more about soil science and how to prep our plots for a fabulous next season. David will also educate us on the art of brewing exceptional compost tea. Please feel free to invite your friends and neighbors to this outstanding talk. Who will bring treats (not tricks) for our pleasure?

**CORSAGE OR BOUTONNIER?**

Large or small? Jenna Kaiser led us through the simple steps to fashion professional dahlia diadems. Add a bit of fern or leaf to a smallish dahlia. Cut the stems off @ 3" below the head of the dahlia so all are equal length. Then take 8" of sticky florist tape and begin wrapping tightly from the tops of the stems down and back up again until all the tape is tightly wound. Attach a decorative pin. To store until use, your corsages can be put in the refrigerator for up to 5 hours. Sticky tape and fancy pins can be inexpensively bought at craft stores like Michael's or JoAnn's. Jenna reminds us all to check on line for %off coupons.



**GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:**



Major thanks to Devi for her lacy cookies and yummy lemon bars and to Leo for his chocolate doughnuts. So many people gobbled up the Dingwall's October pumpkin strudel cake. Gino brought doughnuts and Pat looked after our health with luscious grapes. Thank you to all who share month after month!



## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Soc grows high on Diamond Heights giving his luscious dahlias a view towards the entire East Bay. He dotes on big incurved cactus forms in a highly structured setting girded by low boxed hedges. Starting in his garage greenhouse, Soc usually has his first sprouted clumps in the ground by mid-March. To the delight of his neighbors, Soc's dahlias bloom almost to Christmas. Each year, Soc donates between 50-100 tubers of prime AA-A-B to DSC. He often performs field triage on Deborah's special Dell dahlias, bringing a knife and spritz tank to dismember delicate clumps in situ.



## RIOTS OF COLOR ON THE HILLSIDE:

Paula's dahlias also thrive with a spectacular view of The City skyline from a lofty perch in Tiburon. Because Paula mingles her dahlias amongst over 3000 other types of cultivars, she plants 3 of the A or AA's together so they show up amidst the wild array. Paula augments her clay soil each year.



When she digs out a dahlia clump, she enlarges the hole and begins adding household compost and leaves until the hole is full. By spring worms will have worked this raw material into black gold. Paula's compost has won blue ribbons at the Marin County Fair! Paula also donates terrific tubers and plants to our April sale.



## DANCING GIRLS:

Why does the East section of the Hillside look so fine so late in the season? Sue and Valeria industriously kept their hillside two rows meticulously manicured for their first season in Golden Gate Park. Sue and Valeria educated the public both with excellent labels on each clump as well as answering the public's many many questions. Imagine huge Nick Srs, bursting Elsie Houstens, and a bevy of Pam Howdens bursting out in front of the superb Camano Sitkas so late in the season. Wow!



But the REAL SECRET to their success: fertility dances! At the end of each session weeding and deadheading, Sue cranks up the swing music and they boogey to the greater glory of brighter dahlias. Sometimes the tourists even dance with them.



## PLAYING THE GENETIC LOTTERY:

How to save seeds? Let your spent blooms stay uncut on the stem until all the withered petals blow away and the head is brown. I take my seed heads into the house and pop them in a glass of water cutting the stems  $\frac{1}{4}$ " every other day for a week. Lou likes to store his hanging upside down. When they are quite dry and brittle, spread out some paper and carefully separate the chafe from the seeds. Sometimes there will be several seeds in one head, and sometimes there will be none. You can store the seeds in a dry bottle until January or February. DJ reports, "I no longer use the seed matt system, rather just plant seeds directly into 2" pots - it makes everything several steps easier with similar germination rates. Typically three seeds per 2" pot with damp soil, put 'em up close to the lights and watch 'em grow!" Good luck with the genetic lottery!



## DAHILIA SCHOOL:

For the third year in a row, Erik has brought three classes of Marin Country Day third graders on three separate days to our Dahlia Dell. Nick, now a fifth grader, first educates his alumnae with a slick Power Point presentation in their classrooms. Then Erik continues their education with a great talk whilst they picnic in the park. Then the students proceed to apprentice to Deborah, Pat, Jenna, Joe and Erik for dead-heading, disbudding and weeding. Several dove into the compost for things to pretty to part with. They also loved jumping down Deborah's spongy compost hole, laughing the whole time. What a great group of young people! Each child went home with a cup-o-dahlia and great memories. Several enthusiastic youngsters have been invited back for DigOut 2014 to help Nick with the wheelbarrow brigade.



## NOVEMBER NOTES:

If your dahlias are still blooming, continue to cut severely down to new growth and limit watering; wait until your plants sag or wilt slightly. As the sun wanes, double disbud to get dahlias of any size or shape at all. Do not be dismayed if your plants start producing open-centered blooms now that our days grow shorter. Roy says he has some that bloom all year round. Bob Papp reports that down in Long Beach, his Jessicas never die back! Do NOT fertilize any more. To dig or not to dig: that is the question. If you have well drained soil, you might consider leaving some of your clumps in. I have marked which of mine in the Dell I want left in and which I want taken out. I've also marked which I am donating to the society and which I will plant again. This tells me early on how many new ones and of what kind I will need to refill my patch. If you choose to leave yours in:

1. Lop down to 4-5 notches only when plant is completely brown.
2. Either cover the ends of the stalks with tinfoil or plastic (dahlia condoms) or cover the whole megelah with a pot. The larger the pot the better. The pot keeps out snails and earwigs at the same time protecting the clump from undue rain and acting as a mini-greenhouse warming up the area in the spring. Ugly but effective. Alternatively, if you choose to disinter yours:
1. Lop at least 6 weeks before you plan to exhume.
2. Dig straight down 12" in circumference around your stalk, thereby severing any far-reaching roots.
3. Using a pincher technique with two shovels, lever up the clump.
4. Lift the entire clump up FROM UNDERNEATH, so as not to endanger the necks. Dahlias, like people, will not reproduce with broken necks. Now you have a couple choices: to divide or stash. If you choose to divide, use clean, sharp tools. Mike, Orlando, and Devorah highly recommend a hand held multi tool. This cuts tubers but not fingers. Soak your divided tubers in an 8% Clorox solution for 10 or more minutes. I like to dip my exposed ends in a combination of sulfur and Captan. Lou P pops his wet tubers in a bag of sulfur and Captan and shakes them gently to cover all the surfaces. Store in vermiculite or guinea pig shavings. Romeos in Half Moon Bay sells a huge bag of vermiculite for @\$25. Alternatively, you can get a large cardboard box, and put a healthy shovel full of soil in the bottom. Carefully lift the entire clump with as much dirt adhering to it as possible into the carton and cover with another couple shovels full of soil. Stack your boxes in a cool but not cold spot until March. To learn the art of dividing, apprentice yourself to a master divider at our DigOut the second weekend in January. I just saw colorful willies (knee high rubber boots) at the airport Costco for between \$20 and \$25: quite a deal.

**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  
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