



PAM HOWDEN  
Form: Waterlily



Altara Perplex

**NEXT MEETING:** August 11, 2009 at 7:30 PM at 9<sup>th</sup> Ave and Lincoln Ave.



Devon Mystique

**PROGRAM:** NOVICE ONLY Mini Show. Novices (those who have NOT won 3 novice sweepstakes) may enter up to 2 dahlias in each of the 18 form categories plus x3 and x5. Come as early as 6:30 to set up your exhibits. Please use the new 4-digit ADS numbers as well as name to identify each exhibit. Take this great opportunity to gain skill in setting up as well as stun your fellow DCSers with the first bounty of the season. Remember DSC reward\$ winner\$. Who will bring treats? If you have “too many” tomatoes or zucchinis or other garden extras, please consider sharing your bounty with your less endowed DSCers.

**IRON ARRANGERS:** In his inimitable style, Frank under promised and over delivered with not one Ikebana instructor but with two national treasures: Shugi Ikeda, of the Ikenobo School in the East Bay and Nancy Locke of the Wafu School in San Mateo. Shugi explained that Ikebana began as long ago as 500 AD when Buddhism was introduced into Japan. Like calligraphy and tea ceremonies, Ikebana developed as an art form by the Samurai caste. Ikebana trained the spiritual side of a warrior. Only educated MALE Samurai practiced Ikebana. By the 1800's rich merchants began training their daughters in these higher status arts to increase their marriage potentials. Admiral Perry's arrival in Tokyo caused a sensation sea change with the introduction of so many new tropical flowers and fantastic greenery. Over time more than 600 schools evolved specific styles, like jazz and hip hop evolved from classical music.



Running thin wires up Porcelain's thin stems, Shugi followed explicit precepts from a 600 year old style reminiscent of a waterfall on a mountain. “Everything aims down to the center.”

Nancy concentrated on teaching us principals and simple mechanics that we could all try at home. She turned 2 metal baskets into a fabulous sculpture and placed a container with a big frog inside the “beautiful space.” To avoid the background competing with the display, Nancy used orange Vincent Paradisios to be complimented by the dark brown metallic baskets. Instead of using wires, Nancy gently massaged the stems. “Stretch and twist,” she encouraged, although she conceded that neophytes do a lot of braking before they learn stems' limits. With an emphasis on Line, Color and Mass, Nancy tilted the flowers towards us viewers so they penetrated through the imaginary plain into our reality. Curtis remarked that Ikebana is so much the opposite of dahlia aesthetic: we prefer straight stems; they like bent; we like perfect, mature blooms; they like odd, different, even young blooms. We show with two leaves; they strip leaves and add mixed foliage.





Shugi also potts his own vases! With two pieces of grey hinged vases with multiple holes, he showed us how you could continue to rearrange the vases vis a vis each other to continue to get new insights into the balance of color, material, and line. This truly epitomized Ikebana as a “contemplative art” which “joins all types of people, bridging connections between people.” He combined Tinee’s Shinkoyus with her “really cute” poms and some euphorbia to make us “catch our breath.”

Cutting stems under water, Nancy suggested growing interesting foliage in addition to dahlias, including cedar, variegated hydrangeas, purple fountain grass, and curly maple. Using a small mouthed tall vase, Nancy combined dried bittersweet misty blue status to show off a single Juul bloom. She set the bloom askance “Not straight on like a mug shot. More like a portrait.” Into a low shallow container Nancy arranged dramatically cut Bird of paradise leaves (strong lines) with “soft” zebra grass. She amazed us by balling up a bunch of curly willow into such a tangle that she didn’t need a pin frog at all. Such creativity.

Meanwhile, Shugi, cutting the “so wonderful” stems of Tinee’s new cream WL seedling at angles to maximize their turgidity, built a wonderfully tall configuration: truly flower jazz. Shugi acknowledged that he has “built” arrangements up to 16 FEET tall.

Afterwards we thronged Nancy and Shugi with admiration and more questions. Nancy invited us all to a garden show to benefit the Burlingame Library Foundation, Thursday, Aug, 13. For questions and price: John Ward: 650 342 0683. Besides changing our conceptions about how to display dahlias, they opened our minds about the role of flowers in our lives and in our communities.



For more photos from the Ikenobo demonstration visit the DSC website.



**NEW FRIENDS:** DSC welcomed Penny and Betty, friends of Devi as well as Kacy, from San Jose, whose sweetie grows dahlias in Santa Barbara. DSC welcomes anyone interested in dahlias to come join us on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM.



**FLORIBUNDA FLUMMOXES:** There will be changes to our Show of Shows. Because scheduling of the Fair Grounds Building has been transferred to a new administration, Parks and Rec are charging us more than 3 times what they used to charge us for the use of the exhibition hall while at the same time giving us no help with the table set up. Moreover, there is still a controversy over whether they will allow us to set up our blooms over Friday night into Saturday morning. This is ironic because it was the various flower societies who banded together many years ago to fund and build the Fair grounds complex. We have 3 plans depending on what finally gets worked out. Plan 1: same as last year: begin setting up blooms at 8 PM and continue through the night until 9 am in the morning with all night access

to the back parking lot. Plan 2: Set up from 8 to midnight on Friday night. Anyone who wants to stay the whole night may, but the back gate will be locked at midnight and not opened again until 8 am. Set up will continue until Noon Saturday. Plan 3: Set up from 8 to 10 PM Friday night. All doors and gates locked and no one inside until 8 am Saturday. Set up will continue until Noon. We understand that Plans 2 and 3 will result in significantly fewer flowers because of the limited access and diminished set up time. Cross your petals for the benevolence and concession of the new regime.

**GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS:** Thanks to DJ for donating a florescent grow-light fixture. Someone will have terrific pot roots this fall or early dahlias next year. Elise brought more big white buckets just in time for the show. Delicious thanks to Baker Bill for bringing mini cakes and to Devora for homemade brownies. We gobbled up Jaime's chicken empanadas and Peggy's raspberries and cake. Ron and Joann brought a medley of passion, orange and mango drinks. Our international Pat delighted us with English candy bars. Too fun.



**HERE COMES D' JUDGE:** August 8 from 9 am to 5ish. There is still time to sign up for our one day Judging School by calling John Morton: 510 276 0530. Church of Christ 601 Macarthur Blvd. San Leandro, 94541. FREE! Includes lunch. Even if you don't think you'll ever judge, take this great opportunity to further your understanding of dahlia aesthetics—you'll grow better flowers because of it. Moreover, you'll meet new enthusiastic dahlia growers. President Tinnee exhorted, "San Leandro".

**GARDENS AND GARDEN INNOVATIONS:** You can tell whom the dahlia bug has bitten by how much lawn has been replaced by dahlia patch. Devi removed enough green sward to accommodate 3 rows of superb plants. Jon Dietz needed immediate protection from the fierce Tustin sun for his emergent dahlias. In a pinch he used the sun pavilions he used to take to his daughter's soccer games. As a result, he reports that his dahlias are taller, greener, and healthier than last year. John Kreiner, the editor of the Georgia Dahlia Society, developed a great solution for tending his dahlias during hot Atlanta days: portable shade. Have you discovered an innovative way to solve a dahlia quandary that you'd like to share with your fellow DSCers? Please send me a blurb and a few pix and we'll post your great ideas.

**AWESOME AUGUST:** Hard to believe our first show is upon us at the San Leandro Library. Definitely plan to attend. This is a month for deadheading, disbudding, and cleaning off the bottom leaves of your plant. Begin rouging: toss out (do NOT compost) any wissend/virusy plants, any fully double varieties which consistently show their centers, or those which are just not performing up to your standards. It is not too late to replace them with your milk cartooned "insurance" dahlias. These will still bloom this season and produce tubers for next year. Check your labels against the ADS Classification Book (on sale at our meeting). In the early morning spray with a cocktail of Super Bloom (low first number, super high second number, medium third number), fungicide, and insecticide. I always add some dishwashing soap (NOT detergent) to help "stick" this healthy elixir to the leaves. Water when your dahlias need it; they will tell you. Dahlias like to be very wet and then very dry. When they begin to droop a bit, they want more moisture. Do NOT overhead water;

waterlogged blooms with snap off, perhaps wrecking your plant. So when to water depends on your weather. Lou L and Bob Papp swear by Osmacote, a slow-release plant food: pricy but effective. I have been adding a little calcium nitrate once a month when I bottom water. Purportedly this makes for stronger stems. Err on the cautious side. Where should you cut a bloom? Cut **BELOW** the first two leaves just above **NEW GROWTH**. If you cut above the two leaves that “belong” to the blossom, pretty soon you will have a bunch of stalks and no flowers. Cut down to new growth, and your bush could provide decoration for the Thanksgiving feast. Give dahlias away. I recently took a bouquet to my mama in the hospital. From the parking garage, up the elevator, across the ward



and for days in the room, people gushed about her spectacular flowers. Cause a sensation and give dahlias away. Try a few arrangements in the Ikebana style. Send in a picture of your efforts. Better yet, make an arrangement or 2 for our Floribunda! Aug. 15-16. Remember, you do not have to grow your own flowers to enter an arrangement; in advance work out a deal with another gardener. Enter the Novice Only mini show to get some practice. Scouper thrift shops and garage sales for containers. I prefer shallow and heavy. Pledge to help at our show. We need people to help set up tables at 5 PM on Friday, Aug. 14. We need “clerks” to accompany the judges on Sat. morning to record the results. We need friendly members to sign up new members, to explain the show, and to give the public dahlia growing tips. We especially need people at 5pm on Sunday to tear down the show. My personal goal each year is to have more **NOVICES** enter our Floribunda than ever before. So please, even if you only enter one or two dahlias, join in the fun and add to the magnificence. Your participation is **SO** necessary (and it’s a lot of fun). Bring your friends. Bring your neighbors. Bring your relatives. After you show them our show, twirl them around the Dahlia Dell.

Yours in Dirt,

*Deborah*

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