



Dahlia Society of California

May 2018



PAM HOWDEN  
From Wabash

e-NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING: 8 May. Sale: 7:00 PM Program: 7:45 PM. Erik Gaensler presents his delightful A YEAR OF DAHLIAS, including the history of dahlias, cultivation, how to's, and glorious photos. Invite your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and relatives. Devi and Pat promise almost 600 late-to-germinate cuttings from the greenhouse including varieties that did not make it to our Big Tuber Sale. Wow!!!! Please**



**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

TUESDAY MAY 08, 2018

7:00 TO 7:35pm – DAHLIA PLANT & TUBER SALE

7:45pm – FREE LECTURE, "DAHLIAS 101" WITH Q & A FOLLOWING

SF County Fair Building, REC ROOM  
9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, GGP, San Francisco.



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

donate your late tubers or dahlia plants, too. *Sale starts at 7:00 PM. Who will bring treats?*

## SALES AND STRATEGY

Devi and Tinnee set up 100+ gorgeous cuttings, including Harvey Koop, Nick Sr, Bloomquist Vivian and Clearview Calico. Deborah's milk cartooned beauties added to her 4x4" cuttings of cool varieties including Belle of the Ball, Bloomquist Jeff, Jessica and Hollyhill Showtime. Such bargains at only \$5! Tony reported on the Monterey Sale: more than 80% tubers and a few plants. He spotted many



different cultivars than we we grow up here. Colleen asked about tubers which look perfectly ok but are not sprouting. Deborah suggested wetting a serving towel, adding a couple drops of bleach and setting it over your recalcitrant tubers; put them in a warm spot. You'd be



surprised how this goes them into germination. Chad's tip of the night? For tubers

beginning to grow mold, give them sulfur facials. Clean the mold off and completely dip in sulfur to potentially rescue some. Our Marin/Sonoma





members Helpful Hint to ward off deer and varmints: special spray deterrent from Costco. Someone sighted a 1932 DSC Bulletin from 1932 on EBay! Imagine!!

## GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Laurie offered an entire bucket of Yucon, tuberous plants from South America grown primarily for eating. How cool! John donated a whole bag of popcorn. We pounced on Tony's jammy cookies. Joe smashed up his dark chocolate Easter bunny so several of us could have Sunday morning flashbacks. Did you see the bags of slashed milk cartons Devi offered up? And Ron, we dove into your huge box of Meyer lemons! Thanks to everyone for contributing to a better fed and happier DSC.



## NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T



Fortune smiled on our Big Sale. The Powers above fended off potential showers to grace us with a splendidly radiant day. The bureaucratic powers

b e l o w  
o p e n e d  
t h e  
p a r k i n g  
g a t e  
a n d  
a u d i t o r i u m  
d o o r s  
b e f o r e  
7 : 3 0  
s o  
o u r  
w e l l -  
o i l e d  
s t o c k i n g  
m a c h i n e  
c o u l d  
p o u n c e



even earlier than we anticipated. Friday, the day before, Devi, Lou, Tin and Pat debouched 800 verdant cuttings from the greenhouse where they had been producing these marvels since Christmas. (Please personally thank them when you see them for this



amazing, time-consuming labor of love they donate to the rest of us at DSC). Tony, led the truck brigade of Ron, Leo and Paula transporting our treasures. Some even had blooming flowers already! Astounding. John supervised putting up ALL the tables in our time-honed pattern. On Saturday morning, John, Annette, Ray, Paula, Carl, Chad, Loren, Cathy, Sue, Frank, Marilyn, Phil and Lola relied on our volunteers to distribute their tubers. John D even donated free wisteria starts for enterprising gardeners to branch out (as it were). A single stunning photograph of Devi's constituted a thousand silent salespeople: what a difference they made! Mike S. and Ron ran quality control throughout all



the tubers. John P, three-year veteran volunteer at the Dahlia Dell, admitted that he'd made the rookie mistake about not labeling his dahlias. Nevertheless, he sold his bounty to friends and work buddies and presented DSC with a check for \$200. Such integrity from

our biz whiz! Special thanks for sprucing up our dirty tuber sale with fine art goes to Kevin Woodson for bringing one panel of his dahlia triptych. Kevin set up a selfie station to remind people what their cuttings and potatoes



would look like soon. Dahlia culture turns into High Culture, indeed.

## LIKE LOCUSTS ON THE FOLD

Because our volunteers were so efficient, we were able to shop a full half hour before the public. Meanwhile, Erik and Martha roused the awaiting outside line with promises of fabulous varieties and helpful growing hints. With the help of Tinee's gorgeous posters, Deborah, Pat, and others got us great publicity. At 9:30 the long line of anxious gardeners stormed



in and literally mowed down the tables. Cathy offered each one a “shopping basket,” a cardboard flat, so they could buy bunches. By 10 o’clock, there were but a few open-centered stragglers left on a single table. All the



orphan tubers disappeared in a flashmob. The rest of the tubers evaporated almost as quickly. PLEASE PLEASE, fellow growers, please plan to bring in your excess tubers next year. We really need them. Thank you to Marilyn, John, and

Sue who counted up each person’s loot to speed up the lines. Joe, Paula and Deborah accepted checks, credit cards and cash cash ca\$h for an utterly wild half hour. Beneath Tinnee’s spectacular banner Devorah and Maggie plied DSC memberships and sold ADS Classification Books and passed out our lovely new DSC book marks.

## **FEAST NOT FAMINE**

Lou did a double take as Ray, Mike, and Erik began cleaning tables for our potluck lunch a little after 10 AM. Thanks to Pat for always making sure we have plates and utensils. Anticipating needs, Craig not only provided cheese, but also a big box of Kleenex because we lacked

napkins. Great minds think alike; Deborah and Tony both brought potato salad, although Tony also donated ham and buns. John and Annette and a mysterious donor all provided egg rolls. Dianne, won't you share with DSC your recipe for your colorful coleslaw??? Going good girl/bad girl, Lola baked chicken and brought a huge box of doughnuts.



What a fine Mediterranean platter Paula bestowed upon us. Did Joe surprise us with another dark chocolate bunny??? Thanks to Chad for the tubs of rice pudding and sodas which complimented Lou's waters and fizzy drinks. Frank, did you bring the luncheon wine???? We are so cosmopolitan. Erik's falafel were gobbled up.



Wow! Such desserts. Devi's flan cake deserved to be on Bon Appetite's cover. Tinnee thoughtfully donated our extra "shopping carts" to Strybing Arboretum for their on-

going sale. Thanks to all of you who stayed to the end, dispatching tables, stacking chairs and to Erik who literally swept us out. After deducting the cost of the auditorium, the materials and greenhouse and then adding back in the proceeds from the March, April and May meetings plus the two huge donations for Eden Louise and Eden Lucinda which Erik brokered, this is probably OUR BEST YEAR EVER!!!! Well done, DSC. It takes everyone doing his/her/our share.

## **HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?**

Chad reports: “After digging up all of the dahlias, we left most of the stalks there for organic matter. Tom’s been faithfully throwing eggshells in the garden for quite awhile now. He spread about 1.75 cu yards of rice hulls and chicken manure over the garden along with 50 pounds of alfalfa pellets again for more organic matter. He also added a 50 pound bag of green sand, which should help the soil drain along with the rice hulls. We had several large containers with dahlias in them last year and as we separated the tubers, we dumped the old potting soil into the garden. With all of this laid down, we tilled everything thoroughly before applying a comprehensive mixture of 30 million nematodes. Hopefully, this will aid in keeping down the pests and allow for fewer pesticides during the season. we keeps the soil nice and damp for the nematodes for about a week to allow them to get to where they want to go. Lastly he will spread about 5 pounds of AZO crushed volcanic rock, to replace some of the micronutrients that have leached from the soil over the last 3 years, and possibly another bag of alfalfa pellets

before a quick mix with the tiller before putting down the poles and tubers.”

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Click [HERE](#) to download

**DSC Aug. 18-19**

**9th Ave. and Lincoln Way, SF The Gallery**

**Flowers of the Year:**

**Olivia Maureen and Rae-Meister**

**Monterey Bay Dahlia Society, Aug. 25-26**

**Museum of Art & History**

**705 Font St., Santa Cruz 95060**

**Flowers of the Year:**

**Dark Sider and Cobequid Celestial Star**

**San Leandro Dahlia Society, Sept. 8-9**

**San Leandro Library**

**300 Estudillo Ave. San Leandro, CA 94577**

**Flowers of the Year:**

**Olivia Maureen and Les Pinkham**

**Heirloom Expo Sept. 11-12-13**

**Santa Rosa**

**\$2000 and great ribbons. Free admission to  
the entire fair**

## YOU'RE INVITED

Our own Kevin Woodson invites all members of DSC to his opening at the Joyce Gordon Gallery to celebrate his new paintings. Great news: Gordon's gallery is just a half a block from the BART stop. Easy Peasy.

## Night Flowers, New Work by Kevin Woodson

at [Joyce Gordon Gallery](#), 406  
14th St. in Oakland

May 4 - June 24, 2018,

Opening Reception, Thursday  
May 10, 6:00 – 9:00 PM



There's something special about people who linger in the garden after everyone goes

home and the stars come out. When I stay past dark, the world's poetry, myth, and magic come alive in the flowers.

Although I've painted flowers my whole life, this is the first time I've composed an entire collection of [Night Flowers](#). In almost every exhibit, I almost always include one or two moonlit paintings, but creating an entire after-dark show has been a dream of mine for years.

Painting alone in the gardens in the dark, I'm amazed just how much the dark of the night affects my work. Spend a night in the gardens and you'll understand the mysterious and romantic undertones of the Song of



Solomon, Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses*, philosophy of Zhuangzi and endless bodies of work from artists who discovered the night.

## THE FARMERS IN THE DELL

There's green on them thar hills! Tinnee spent hours weeding and trimming back the hedges on the hillside. Tin cut the edge off a black flat and uses this for her weeds. She can throw a clump of junk onto the flat and it acts as a sieve, allowing the excess dirt to fall through the cracks. Erik and Nicholas tucked in all their Tuber Sale beauties, which seem to double in size each week. Sue's array promises major fireworks this summer. Lou methodically laid out his stakes, planted both tubers and cuttings and then for his finale, planted his second year seedlings.



Pat's strategy of leaving a few dahlias in over the winter is paying off with a couple buds about to bloom—maybe before April slides into May? Deborah's dilemma this year is that more bushes survived the winter to sprout out than she thought possible; John has a tough

time spotting her few new additions between the leafy bushes already thriving. Meanwhile, Helen is helping Deborah re-establish watering berms. They hope to run the watering system the first Saturday morning in May.

## **MERRY MONTH OF MAY**

By now you should be at least 3/4 planted if not more. You've staked, labeled and sprinkled slug/snail and earwig deterrent. Now may be the time to begin your first round of foliar feeding. I combine a cocktail that includes Stylet oil for mildew, a balanced fertilizer or one slightly skewed towards nitrogen, and dishwashing soap to help it all stick on the leaves and smother any eggs which might have been laid so early in the season. If you notice leaf miner or thrip, add some Captain Jack's Dead Bug. Try to spray in the later evening, as the Stylet Oil can burn leaves if exposed to a lot of sun immediately (like with morning spraying). Devi researched and determined that the best price for Stylet Oil was from [Arbico.com](http://Arbico.com) for 2 ½ gallons. Go in with a fellow dahlianeer and split the order. Make a map. Write down the variety name in its spot on the map. Set up an XL grid with names down the left and columns for ADS #, Size, form, color, source, position in the garden and --if desirable, date of introduction. That way you can slice and dice your collection any way you want. How many BB's? How many reds? How many semi-cacti? It's a great way to spot trends and deficits. Ask Tinnee to tell you the story about the first time she built an XL "mistress grid" and what she learned from it. Just like children, not all dahlias thrive under the same

conditions. Cuttings have hair-fine roots; if they dry out, they're gone. DEAD. Done for. If they get too much water, they drown. Done. Dead. So cuttings need a little water every day. Tubers have NO roots at all. Until tubers sprout, they cannot take in any water at all. They do NOT need any water in the beginning. Obviously the bigger the sprout on a tuber or the larger the plant in a milk carton, the more water that dahlia wants and can tolerate. So be very careful about mixing cuttings, tubers and sprouted clumps on a regular irrigation system. If you are planting a fragile cutting, milk carton plant, you might use a milk carton with both ends cut off to protect it. Once it outgrows its paper tower, simply lift it off or cut it away. Although I say it every year, here it comes once again: after you dig your hole, put your stake in FIRST. That way you don't impale your tuber nor pierce your inchoate roots. Do NOT move on to another planting until you have affixed a LABEL. In Lou's immortal words, "A dahlia without a name is just a weed."



Yours in dirt,

*Deborah*

**Photo credits: Dietz, Fletcher, Hunter, Joseph**

**Snail Mail mistress: Pat Hunter**

**Layout and Webmaster: Devi Joseph**