



NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 10 and 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Integrated Pest Management. Learn the best, most efficient and earth-friendly ways to combat those pesky critters eating your plants. Who will bring goodies to share?

COMPOST = GARDEN GOLD

Master Gardener Mike Pettinari, outlined the University of California Co-operative Exchange for USDA's climate areas 10A and 10B. After 14 weeks of 6 hours per week, Master gardeners answer Help Lines, research and trouble shoot citizens' problems and sit on a Plant Clinic at least once a month. Mike demonstrated a cool bin



composed of a big sheet of wire mesh attached with bungee cords. When you're ready to shift the material, just

undo the bungee cords, unwind the mesh and reform it next to the old pile. It makes for easy shoveling, assembly and disassembly. Mike uses a 1/4" sifter screen box to separate out the items which need further composting. He recommends putting your compost on EVERYTHING! Good compost has 3 billion microbiota in a wee teaspoon of compost - truly fine humus! The center of a "working" compost pile goes up to

140-150 degrees and can burn your hands! Start recycling your grass, leaves, sticks, banana peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea bags, and other food scraps NOW. Mike suggests watering your compost pile periodically to keep your micro creatures happier.

THIS BUD'S FOR YOU



Maggie and Dianne brushed up on disbudding, deadheading and pinching out at Deborah's hands-on clinic at the Dell before our meeting. They noted that anywhere from 1-4 extra buds need to be removed from each terminal flower set. When having trouble deciding where to cut for a spent bloom, Deborah suggested cutting off the leaf pair to get a better visual down the stem to the next NEW Growth. Try to cut your dahlias BEFORE they begin losing petals; it will save you a lot of clean up details and not give bacteria and bugs extra fodder to dine upon. Cathy deftly disbudded bunches and bunches

of burgeoning blooms. So very thoughtful! We practiced distinguishing amongst straight cactus, incurved cactus and semi-cactus. We ID'd how waterlilys are different from formal decoratives. Twenty-three dahlias opened in Deborah's section by our meeting night. Wow. Lou, Pat, Tin and Sue all have first flowers proudly waving in the light. It will only get better from now on! Stop by!



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS

Not only did Ron bring his bounteous box of Meyer lemons, but he also brought a whole box of cool gardening tools to raffle off. Many many winners bore his loot home. How very thoughtful of Ron! Thanks to Pat for the lemonade and to Cathy for the home grown succulent strawberries. MMMMM! Gino donated a whole box of Little Debbies—such delicious little fat bombs. Who brought the yummy cookies???? Thank you all for taking care of your fellow Dahianeers.

WHY GO TO JUDGING SCHOOL?

Judging school teaches you all about dahlias. Learn more of our special vocabulary: revolute, involucre, disc florets, and picotee. What is the difference between hue, color, and tint? All Dahlias are so lovely, why should you “judge” them? Have you ever seen photos of dahlias from the 1920’s? They tend to have wimpier stems allowing their heads to bobble about in the the wind. Grandma’s dinner plates resembled day-long suckers: quite a diameter but



less than an inch girth—truly flat as a dinner plate. So in the last hundred years, hybridizers have been breeding for stems that display a “good attitude,” stronger stems; brighter colors; snazzier color combinations; dark and green foliage; higher petal count; novel forms; better disease protection; BIGGER!

Smaller. So take advantage of this great opportunity to immerse yourself in more dahlia lore. You’ll find yourself enjoying and appreciating our remarkable dahlia even more! Saturday July

28th, 9 am to 5 pm. Lakeside Presbyterian Church, 19th and Lakeside. Parking garage on 20th Avenue. Free to DSCers. LET TINNEE KNOW YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND (tinneelee@gmail.com).

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

John is thrilled with his first Irish Blackhart on his Twin Peaks terraces. Carl's first blooms are poms with bunches of buds ready to set his hillside alight.



John's Irish Blackhart

Carl's hillside pompons



Dianne's Petaluma garden sports not only green dahlias but also a wrought iron one. Guess what Dianne found in a hay delivery?





Tom & Chad's garden and pergola

Chad reports that Eden Benary, Lakeview Glow and Parkland Rave unfurled in that order.



AC Kuntz at Cabrillo Playground

C a b r i l l o
Playground Dahlia
Garden is off to a
great start with
Santa Claus, AC
Abby and AC Kuntz
flowering and
many more big
buds of A's and
AA's.



Apopa Beauty, Santa Claus, AC Abby in the background at Cabrillo



Jon with Bristol Stripe

Wildwood Marie erupted first for both Ameah and Pat.

Jon's geodesic dome is filled with giants both in size and height. His Hollyhill Cotton Candy is 8 ½ feet tall!



Jon's Geodesic dome

LET THERE BE DAHLIAS! Send me a photo of your garden in progress so others can enjoy, too.

WATER CRISIS CREATES WATER HEROES

For starters, the Park began updating ancient mechanisms that for a century have pumped water from springs and cisterns at the beach up to the Conservatory and the Dell. To operate on this delicate heart of the park, they turned off ALL THE WATER!!! Deborah and Helen carried water down from the greenhouse to hand water the most vulnerable plants. Then the Dellizens learned to water either early before the plumbers came on shift or late late after the engineers went home. Workable. Until..... a huge tree crashed and took out a major pipe. Then NO WATER ANY TIME early or late. NO WATER. Lou and Pat dripped the last drops out of the remaining hoses just before the HOTTEST DAY OF THE YEAR. Sue filled 8 5-gallon buckets at home and drove them to the park. Twice! So she could hand water her terrace section. Deborah was rescued by

the benevolent Conservatory which strung together many many hoses which snaked out of the greenhouse, through the gates, beneath the hedge, atop the agaves, down the stairs, across road and finally dribbled precious drops into the Dell. It took from 9 am to 3:45 but the dahlias got watered. Whew!

FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS?

I hope everyone's garden explodes in color by Independence Day. Now it's imperative to deadhead. Each time you snip off a dahlia before it turns to seed, the plant releases hormones telling it to try to reproduce again. It starts over making buds and trying to bloom. Try to deadhead before the petals begin dropping all over. Clean off the bottom leaves. As your dahlias grow taller, remove the bottom leaves so that none touch the ground providing lovely ramps for pests to climb into the canopy. Remove any branches coming 4" or lower on your bush. Leaving these on will break your heart. They will grow and grow and produce fine fat buds and then because of the weight break off! If you instead, remove them early, all that energy that would have gone into producing that big low arm of green glory goes into the main section of the plant.



Lauren observed Lou cleaning out his underbrush, "He was a machine!" Remember **ONLY BOTTOM WATER**, ideally only in the morning. Overhead watering encourages that scourge, mildew. Not getting your leaves and especially not your blooms wet. Ideally I add a bit of Stylet oil and change my balanced

fertilizer to super bloom in my foliar feeding “cocktail” now. Super Bloom is any fertilizer with a very low first number, super high second number and medium last number. The one I’m using right now is 5-55-30. This time of year I spray at least every two weeks and sometimes weekly. Spray in the evening when the sun will not react with your concoction and fry your leaves. “Worms!” exclaims Sue. Worm composting, worm tea, Worm castings. Her plants radiate health and glowing colors as a result of her latest wormy practices. Because everything on



Clearview Dahlias use of hortanova

the hillside is in gopher cages, NONE has been gobbled down. Now is the time to begin gentle dahlia bondage. Those of you using hortanova might add a second layer at 36" above your first layer at 18." I tie mine one to a stake. Lou ties his two to a stake. Corralitos aptly "corrals" their dahlia hedges with twine. Sign up for Judging School!

Yours in dirt,

Deborah

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Compost container or giant gopher cage?

