



NEXT MEETING: Alert! Change in usual date!!!! THIRD Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 PM. Same place; different room. Program: Dahlias 101. Either Deborah or Erik will outline basic dahlia history, genetics, planting, and pest control. Bring your family, friends, neighbors for this wonderful review of fascinating dahlia facts. Major FAQ's. Devi, Pat and Tinnee promise final cool cuttings from the greenhouse for sale. If you have cuttings, tubers, or milk cartoned plants, please add them to our DSC sale.

SAN LEANDRO SUCCESS TIPS

At the last minute Chad Baker stepped in to lead our discussion. Chad and Tom grow 130-150 dahlias depending on how ambitious (greedy? crazy?) they feel in any given year. To mitigate their clay, Chad adds 50 pounds of sand, chicken poop, alfalfa pellets and rice hulls.

Otherwise clay binds up his tubers into cramped balls of tuber snarls. For \$11-\$20 each, Chad buys 5 kilo bricks of coconut coir which he "fluffs" up. The coir is this year's mulch and then tilled under for next season's compost. Pat recommend adding rich compost to sandy soil. Tinnee has had great results with Espoma fertilizer she gets on line. Some of us battle deer, gophers and raccoons. Chad battles fruit rats--fruit rats with Ph.D.'s in evasion and



destruction. Devi suggested Repels All, a really horrible smelly spray. Someone else mentioned cayenne pepper, but Chad says his wretched rodents relish spicy treats. Elizabeth recommends YouTube videos about gopher and rat eradication. Chad has also started a worm farm so he can use the worm castings and compost tea. Tinnee swears that compost tea helped thwart her mildew last year. Because Chad is being more conscientious about protecting pollinators, he sprinkles diatomaceous earth around his dahlia stems as bulwarks against earwigs, snails and slugs. Sluggo Plus is too dangerous for small pets, like

Chad's schnauzers. Chad also deploys plastic bottles as mini greenhouses, sometimes painting half black. We admired how cleverly he fashioned stake extensions with a washer and a dowel. Ask him; it's ingenious!



GENEROSITY OF FRIENDS



Thank you to Joe for his lovely marked tubers and to Len for his marked milk cartoned dahlias. Deborah brought in a flat of cool

cultivars like Bloomquist Jeff, Belle of the Ball, Badger Twinkle and Wyn's King





Salmon. And what gorgeous cuttings arrived with Tinnee, Devorah and Pat. Bloomquist Mary, JS Jenny, Porcelain, Clearview Palser, and Francesca



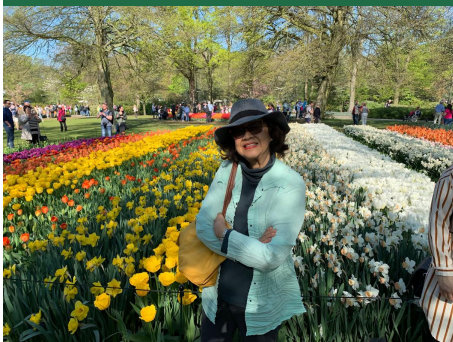
Evangelista to name a few. We binged –a buying frenzy!!! Frank has kindly offered to go down to Half Moon Bay with orders for Romeo’s. They sell in commercial agricultural amounts, but if enough of you go in on each item, they will be wonderfully cost effective. Major undertaking, Frank!

HALFWAY HOUSE?

My south-facing front balcony is wonderfully warm but gets a lot of wind. So my visiting sailor, Orlando, flew me a spinnaker. Thus my dahlias get some but not all wind protection, 95% sun exposure, and closer scrutiny from mom. It’s the perfect half-way stop between my greenhouse and the Dell. Meantime, cuttings for our tuber sale come out of the greenhouse and sit in tubs on my deck.



FRIENDS ABROAD



While they wait for their 120 cuttings to mature, Phil and Marilyn tour Kuenhof Gardens in



Holland. Such color, but tulips not dahlias.

CHECK OUT DAHLIAS AT THE LIBRARY?

Ambassador and master gardener, Paula Jaffe, delivered a powerpoint lecture about our favorite flower at the Larkspur Library. After answering many questions, Paula exhorted the audience to come to our upcoming tuber sale.



BE\$T TUBER \$ALE YET!!!

Congratulations to all of us who contributed to such \$ucce\$\$\$. Our Cutting Room Heroes (Lou, Devi, Pat and Tinnee) brought a jungle of magnificent plants, many of which were BLOOMING.



Surely this amounted to more plants and more varieties than ever before. It takes time, effort and expertise to divide and label tubers. In fact, Tenaya put in 4 hours at Deborah's house to label. Much appreciation goes to Deborah, Erik, Frank, Joe, John P, Lou P, Len, Sue, and Tom & Chad for their well wrought roots. Mitsu, a DSCer from years before, even brought in lovely tubers,

beautifully labeled, and then went outside to wait in line with "the public." Deborah, Len, Maggie and Patrick brought potted cuttings. Without these people we could not have a sale and by extension, not have a dahlia society. When you see these people, please thank them personally for their contributions.

FRIDAY: Moving 1800 plants from the greenhouse to the auditorium taxed the cutting team and Chad, Debby, Jenna, Nick, Paula, Joe, Tom, and Tony. John Dale set up the tables. They organized all the dahlias--



even alphabetized them within their size. It's always something.



This time unbeknownst to us, a second group had rented the gallery, filled the



parking lot, and even had a huge HUGE truck clog the entrance. They captured most of the tables; DSC scrambled to find hidden pocket of doddering tables to set up. Very trying, but DSC PREVAILED.

SATURDAY: Working around the Paper Sellers and their trucks, we debouched tubers





and more cuttings at 7:30 am. Volunteers hove to, sorting tubers, labeling boxes, arranging signs, and matching photos from Devi's extensive library to both plants and tubers.

Veronica queried us all about our contributions.

Tinnee educated us on the new policy surrounding our 1 gallon pots. As

volunteers shopped, Erik addressed the long LONG line outside, which included many friends of DSC. Thanks to Pat and



Deborah sending out over 1000 personal emails, we rallied a lot of potential dahlia growers, even some from out-of-state! Four DSCers contributed their personal trollies for big purchasers to ferry their new dahlias to transportation. Great idea. Runners collected the pots from buyers, wrote their names on the pots



and stowed them in Will Call, so gardeners could continue shopping. Tinnee reworked Frank's original tally sheets to aid the





counters (Tenaya and Pat) as people waited in line. Joe accepted credit cards whilst Deborah and Paula took in cash and checks. In an hour we had sold 85% of our beautiful stock. Whew! Such a rush. Cathy diligently kept removing boxes and photos as various varieties disappeared. Tony began breaking down tables as soon as the product vanished. Christine made sure each new dahlia grower received a

cultivation sheet and an invitation to our May Meeting for Dahlias 101. Mike W collected receipts at the door, requested email



addresses and made people feel good about their participation in our big

event. Elaine, Lola, Maggie and Devi enthused about the benefits of joining DSC, sold memberships and ADS Classification Books. John and Annette, Len, Dianne, Craig and Frank helped shoppers make wise choices.



Check out Colleen's photos here:

[https://photos.google.com/share/](https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOJ2pF0FF9BsHDahqT5vpHmqv1NLYSGnx3yY7TMDohNnYIJ-kHVW8erpAfKWxkcrA?key=MEpVeXZIdDN6QkNMSThGNDFaR2taVIhRVzZqRzN3)

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[key=MEpVeXZIdDN6QkNMSThGNDFaR2taVIhRVzZqRzN3](https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOJ2pF0FF9BsHDahqT5vpHmqv1NLYSGnx3yY7TMDohNnYIJ-kHVW8erpAfKWxkcrA?key=MEpVeXZIdDN6QkNMSThGNDFaR2taVIhRVzZqRzN3)

BANQUET: AH! Our wonderful potluck. Even as a few shoppers looked over the last of the selections, we hearty few survivors dined. Joe's pickles and Elaine's salmon dip started us out with appetizers. What incredible mac 'n cheese from Tom and



Chad. Craig served hot-off-the-stove veggie samosas. Of salads we had many: Dianne's spinach and thinking alike, Deborah and Lola's potato. Maggie, the over achiever, brought both pinwheel sandwiches and homemade chocolate chip cookies. Paula praised Mike's brownies, "Worth every single decadent calorie." Her noodle casserole went down well, too. Tony, why why why did you bring those astonishingly alluring chocolate eclaires??? More cookies arrived from John D and Christine. Who brought the beautiful strawberries and luscious pineapple? MMMM. We feasted! (If I've overlooked someone's contribution, please let me know. I really try to keep track, but it gets wild.) So many of you pitched in to break down the final



tables and sweep the floor. Tinnee donated the remainder of our “shopping carts” (our cardboard boxes) to the Strybing Arboretum Plant sale. Dirt people try to help each other out.

MAYBE MAY?

Will you have first blooms in May? Maybe! My first two were not Elvira, but rather at the Dell Bloomquist Candy Corn which overwintered and at home a lovely potted Pam Howden I was using for cutting material. It's starting! Let us know your first to bloom! So just as we celebrate finally seeing dahlias again, I am going to tell you to pinch out your first



bud. ☹️ So tough to do, but so good for your dahlia for the whole season. As soon as I see the **FIRST BUD**, I pull its two leaves over its head and pinch below the leaves down to the next junction. Thus I force all the energy that would have gone into producing a flower, back down into the roots. This really does ensure a stronger, heartier dahlia bush. Some people even “stop” their dahlias more than once to keep them bushier rather than tall.

If you bought any of our luscious cuttings, you know that they need a little water every day for the first 2 weeks. Think of a baby: you can't stuff an entire Thanksgiving feast down its little gullet; you spoon a couple slurps of baby food several



times a day. Cuttings have superfine little hairs for roots which can only absorb a little moisture at a time. However, if those wee thin rootlets dry out.....they die. They will not resuscitate. The opposite is true for your tubers: **NO WATER AT ALL**, after initial planting. Your tuber has **NO** roots at all, so can't absorb any liquid. Wait until you see a sprout before you begin plying it with limited water. All of that said, I am rushing out to the Dell to put water on the 8 cuttings John P planted for me last weekend. This pineapple express blast of heat is wonderful for my new additions, but only if they keep their little feet wet.

Cocktail time? Yes! About three weeks after I've planted, I spray my first dahlia cocktail: Captain Jack Dead Bug, Stylet Oil, dishwashing soap, liquid fertilizer, and a tablespoon of vinegar (Chad's suggestion). I spray early in the evening, just at dusk, so the leaves will not burn. Err on the dilute side.

Shades, supports, mini-greenhouses: For some of my more gracile cuttings, I put a black pot with its bottom cut out around them. Some people use milk carton sleeves; some people use plastic jugs with the bottoms out. These give a little wind protection.

Major thanks to Christine who helped me hand water every dahlia up at the Dell—TWICE! And thanks to Tenaya who labeled tubers with me for 4 hours before our sale. Hands-on help and good conversation make a healthy dahlia society. Check out the plastic marker Larry sent in to show how he labels his dahlias. Does it cut the competition?



Yours in dirt,

Deborah

Photo Credits: Baker, Buyers, Dietz, Warden

Webmaster and Membership Queen: Devi Joseph

Snail Mail Mistress: Pat Hunter

FEEDBACK: Larry responded when I asked “What do you use for labels?” Thank you, Larry! Great idea.

