



Dahlia Society of

California

July 2020



PAM HOWDEN
Form: Whirly

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NEWSLETTER

APOLOGIES: Deborah's computer crumped. What a disaster. She was finally loaned a "beater" with some data installed. So Deborah and Devorah herewith endeavor to bring you a cobbled, but no less entertaining, July Newsletter.

NEXT MEETING: Zoom: We'll share cut dahlias and how to use our ADS Classification Book to look up mislabeled or unlabeled varieties.

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75973596405?pwd=Y2tCZytrTGZuSGt5MVJtTC9ueFRNQT09>

Meeting ID: 759 7359 6405

Passcode: 1Z5bHY

DSC'S FIRST ZOOM: Thank you to everybody who participated in our first zoom meeting, especially those of you who do not normally attend because you live so far away.

INFORMATION ON LEAF MINER DAMAGE

By Connie Thompson

Leaf miners are teeny tiny wee little bugs that live between the tissues of the leaves, right inside the leaf itself. Spraying is pointless as the bug is inside the leaf so the spray won't touch it.

What to do for an organic control? Squishing the bug is very effective but you also need to plant lots of sweet alyssum throughout the garden to attract the parasitic wasp.

This wasp kills the miners and it also goes after cabbage loopers and other types of caterpillars. Is a very good guy to bring into your garden.

The parasitic wasp is not a bee like wasp at all, it will not sting you, but it is a real force in your garden, going after all the bad

guys. Its larvae are also very effective in the garden, eating all sorts of bad bugs and their eggs.

You want this wasp in your garden... so plant lots of alyssum. Next spring, plant it as soon as you can, as early as you can, to go after the miners and the loopers right away in early spring.. before the bugs even have time to become a problem :) The wasp killing a caterpillar, will make it into a zombie and eat it alive... or lay it's eggs inside it so that the larvae will eat it alive when they hatch.



DAHLIA DELL DOINGS

Wow! Magnificent Dahlias all over! Lou has several new seedlings that show promise including a **HUGE** lavender/white bruiser. Check out his bevy of Eden Stascias! They shimmer between yellow and marigold orange with great stems. Without the grey tints, his Mary's Jomanda seedling can't decide whether to be a ball or a formal decorative. You judge. His KA's Cloud stops traffic. Look for his coliseum full of red-blooded Spartaci.



Sue's Hapet Perfekts have exploded! Masses of fimbriated gorgeousness. Her Thomas Edison reigns as the Purple King. Show stopping, is her mass of Nick Srs.



HAPET PERFEKT

Look for the dark foliage experiments on Tinnee's hillside. Erik has sprouted a whole hedge of Glenbank Twinkles—definitely an oldie but goodie.



GLENBANK TWINKLE

Pat (and all our visitors) delight in her magnificent KA's Champagne. Many covet her darling Skipley Splish Splash.



KA'S CHAMPAGNE



SKIPLEY SPLISH SPLASH

It's hard to see the dirt below Deborah's massive jungle. Clearview Magic plumped up to 11 ½ " and AA's Wyn's King Salmon and Trooper Dans dominate her back path. Delighting the public, Hollyhill Exotica tries to burst through its B size into A territory. Bloomquist Jean and Clearview Jonas stop traffic. Her Bumble Rumble is just too cute for words.





BUMBLE RUMBLE



CLEARVIEW JONAS

Mui visited after teaching 2 sections of Tai Chi and watered and manicured the Elvira hedge.



Kevin popped by for a lesson in “deadheading to new growth” so his Wolfe Lane Neighborhood Garden will last longer this season.



Thuy ministrated to the Petting Zoo (the outside row of clumps which are most affected by the public) by weeding and stripping off the old and mildewed leaves.





Maggie and Don avoided the crowds by strolling very early in the morning when the coyotes roam and the big ravens tussle over treats in the compost pile. After our Zoom meeting, Lucy drove down from Petaluma and bought a blooming Bloomquist Laura.

We were graced with a Quinceanos party: So colorful!



QUARANTINE STAPLES

Our dahlia artist, Kevin Woodson, prepared for his 14-day hotel quarantine in Taiwan by stocking up on dahlias. He sketched and collected cut dahlias from our Dell, which he painted at his studio until they fell apart. These preliminary drafts formed the basis of his quarantine oeuvre. Kevin flew to Taiwan to live with his husband for the summer.

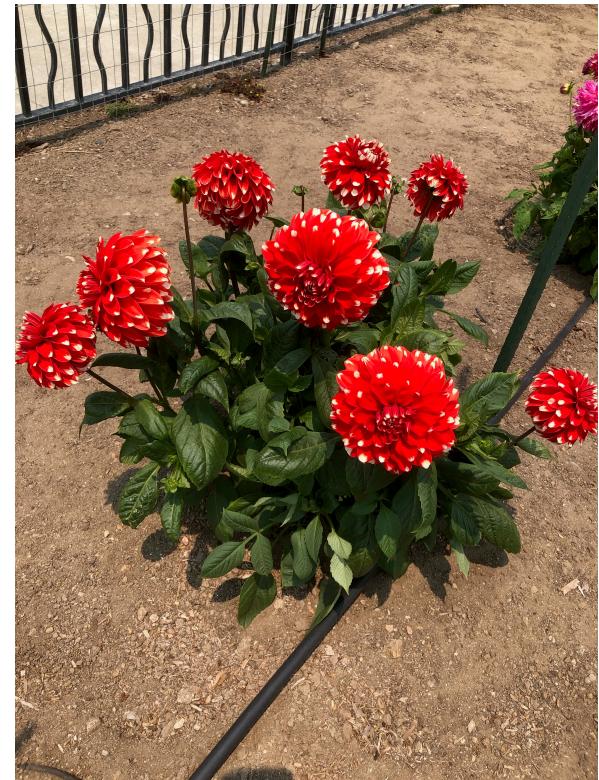
HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

The Cabrillo Playground Dahlia Garden is chugging along despite late planting. This year 4 varieties of milkweed and

fennel are planted along the playground fence for the butterflies.



BLOOMQUIST PARASOL



SKIPLEY SPOT

Our dauntless Dahlia Gorilla Warrior, John Mani, updated us on his pogrom against squirrels beyond the fence. So far his repellers are working!! John reports wonderful plants and lots



of buds. Go John!! Soon his dahlias will adorn nursing stations and shut-in rooms all over his housing complex.

Kevin's Wolfe Lane has lots of buds and a warning sign to passers by not to pick. Hope it helps.



Stacia, eponymously of Eden Stacia, wages war on diabrotica as the heat hits Healdsburg. Grrrr.

Maggie Rothschild's garden is a blooming mass of wonderful.



Please share some pictures from your garden

MUST BE GENETIC

Each Dietz sib grows dahlias. Tom uses his Portland-grown immaculate white to grace his parents' graves.



In Idaho, Mike looks forward to bounty from his 4 raised beds.



Jon gloats over a single day's harvest.

Deborah sends taunting text messages from the Dell. We remember how much fun our father had planting dahlias in random spots at his apartment complex in

the dark. He loved to share them with delightful women; they loved to give him chocolate chip cookies and beer in return.

JOYFUL JULY

July blooms so gloriously around us! As I perch on an upturned 5 gallon bucket deep in the Dell, my eyes swirl with fantastical colors. More than 60% is in bloom bloom bloom. Bloom. Ah! Back to work! I think I should bring a sleeping bag so I could just work work work. As soon as I spruce up one row, new developments already demand attention again. Good luck keeping up right now.

DEADHEAD: always cut down to new growth. This means down to where new sprouts emerge or another flower stem surges forth. As long as your dahlia has some chance of flowering and making seed, it will continue to grow. When to deadhead? Ideally, you want to remove before your flower



begins loosing its petals. Fallen petals rot on the leaves they've littered on. I snip when I see pollen on my fully double varieties. Some of these deadheads look lovely in a vase for several more days. Check out YouTube for excellent videos on deadheading and disbudding.

VASE LONGEVITY: The MOST important key to ensuring lasting bouquets is a CLEAN VASE. I put mine in the dishwasher. A larger container, I fill with a 10% bleach solution and let it stand over night. This removes all the microscopic bits of mold, bacteria, or gunk that your sponge didn't expunge. Every other day, snip 1/8" off the bottom of your stems and change the water. Because dahlias' scent doesn't match their beauty, I like to add a sprig of lavender or rosemary to the bouquets I give away.



BLUETIFUL

DISBUD: Ideally leave only one developing flower per leaf pair. This results in a longer, stronger stem, and a bigger bloom. I know you want lots and LOTS of dahlias, but surely you also really want the most SPECTACULAR dahlias you can produce. Ultimately you get almost as many total blooms because each time you remove sidereal buds, you release the plant hormone that commands producing more buds. If you disbudd and

deadhead assiduously, your dahlias should produce at least through Halloween if not Thanksgiving.

MILDEW: GRRRRR! Our foggy days. Mildew spores live in the air. They camp on damp dark leaves. This is one reason to always water early in the morning your foliage will be absolutely dry before evening. This is also why stripping the lower ratty leaves at the base of your clump helps discourage mildew. Judicial addition of Stylet oil to your dahlia cocktail will slow this down. Always spray after the sun is down so as not to burn your leaves.



TOO MUCH SUN? San Franciscans rarely have this problem, but growers in San Jose, Petaluma, and Novato can endure 100 degree plus heat over several days. Try shade cloth. This can be as simple as taping an umbrella to a sturdy stake. Or you could erect shade cloth over your entire garden, making sure it's higher than your most ambitious dahlia. Shade cloth comes in many different percentages of protection. You may have to experiment. Look at this cute example of mini-tenting I found. What a good plan to get young plants established safely.



DAHLIA BONDAGE: Of late, we have been suffering ferocious winds. These blusters can trash your upcoming beauties. I use plastic twine to gently affix my dahlias to their respective stakes. Phil employs reusable Velcro. Corralitos Gardens creates corrals for long rows of dahlias. The idea I'm really warming up to is Hortanova netting strung at 18" and again at 36." Many of the commercial growers use Hortanova.



MUNCHERS AND CRUNCHERS: From now through October, you will see blooms that have recently ruffled edges and little black dots. This is caterpillar pruning and pooping. The greenest method is to spot this early and remove the caterpillar. Especially since we are not having any competitions this year due to Covid 19, this is the gentlest method. Ramping up, you could add some Captain Jack's Dead Bug to your cocktail. As you strip off your lower leaves, check for cocoons and eggs. Aphids: if you catch these early enough they will be

concentrated on one or two stems and buds. Simply snip off the populated sprigs and compost. Diabrotica? These are the green/black lady bug-like wretches which wreak ugly on your blooms. Mike in Half Moon Bay, deploys a gentle computer vacuum to suck them off the flowers. Then he dumps the buggers in his chicken pen! Ha! Or you could cover a bunch of yellow Dixie cups with sticky stuff. Diabrotica seem to be particularly attracted to yellow. Dangling fly strips work, too, but often catch gardeners as well as flying bugs. UGH. Please send me pix from your garden and include yourself in a couple. Let's share virtually even when we can't throw actual garden parties. dahlia.dietz@gmail.com



Yours in dirt,

Deborah

Photo credits: Demeter, Dibner, D. Dietz, J. Dietz, M. Dietz, T. Dietz, Hunter, Joseph, Mani, Obremsky, Rothschild, Thompson, Woodson, Xiu, Zimmerman

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