



Dahlia Society
of California

Dahlia Society of California Newsletter

September 2021



NEXT MEETING: Zoom: Topic: My Meeting
Time: Sep 14, 2021 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83808677262?
pwd=TUNXQzc4eHcvdzUyQ1NoaEFBTkxnZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83808677262?pwd=TUNXQzc4eHcvdzUyQ1NoaEFBTkxnZz09)

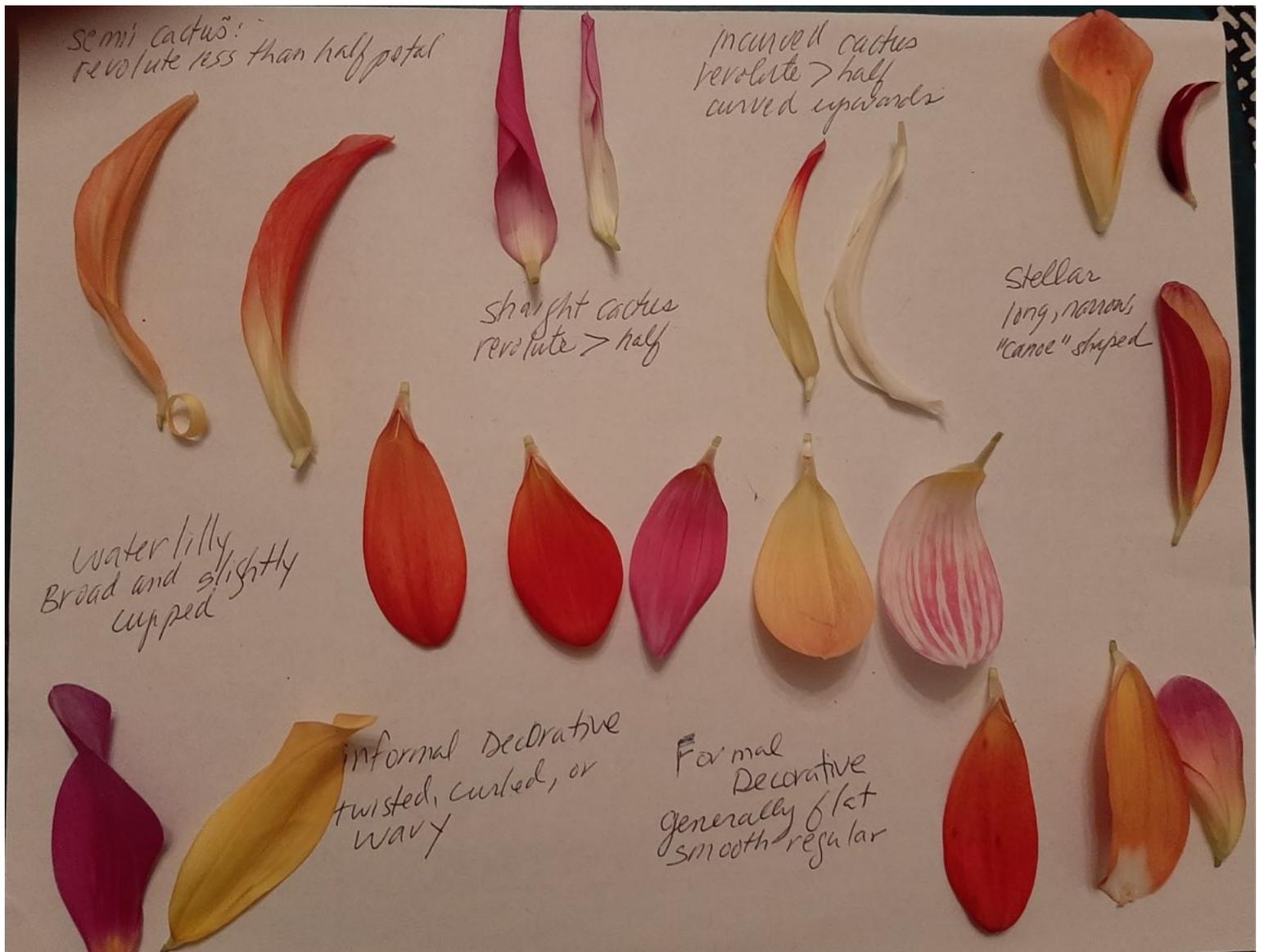
Meeting ID: 838 0867 7262

Passcode: 952814

We'll discuss what to expect with the waning light of Sept. Oct. and Nov. Let Deborah or Erik know what else you'd like to cover on Tuesday.

IDENTIFYING YOUR DAHLIAS

As we discussed during our last Zoom meeting, Dahlia ID begins by pulling a petal about midway down your dahlia. Is it revoluted—does it curve under? Is it involuted-- does it curve up like a canoe? Is it flat or mostly flat like an Ester Williams bathing cap? Revoluted? Cactus! Less than half revoluted: semi cactus. Do the spiky petals shoot out straight or do they incurve towards the sky? Incurved cactus. Flat petals usually indicate Formal Decorative; slightly cupped up flat petals signify waterlilies. Mostly flat but a little twisty means informal decoratives. Canoe shaped is usually Stellar. Check out the pictures of petals here. They are arranged



by category. Can you discern which is which? Here are some groupings.



Can you spot the formal and informal decoratives? Can you spot the three types of cactus?



Which are the balls and which are the formal decoratives. Which picture has just waterlillies? Key out your own; for a bigger challenge, come key out some of the Dahlia Dell lovelies.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Our John recently added this wonderful tour of the Golden Gate Park Dahlia Garden to his Instagram feed. Check out [p sf garden](#) Thank you, John, for all your help at the Dell and for your luscious views of our color riot. _

BLOCKS LONG DAHLIA CARPETS?

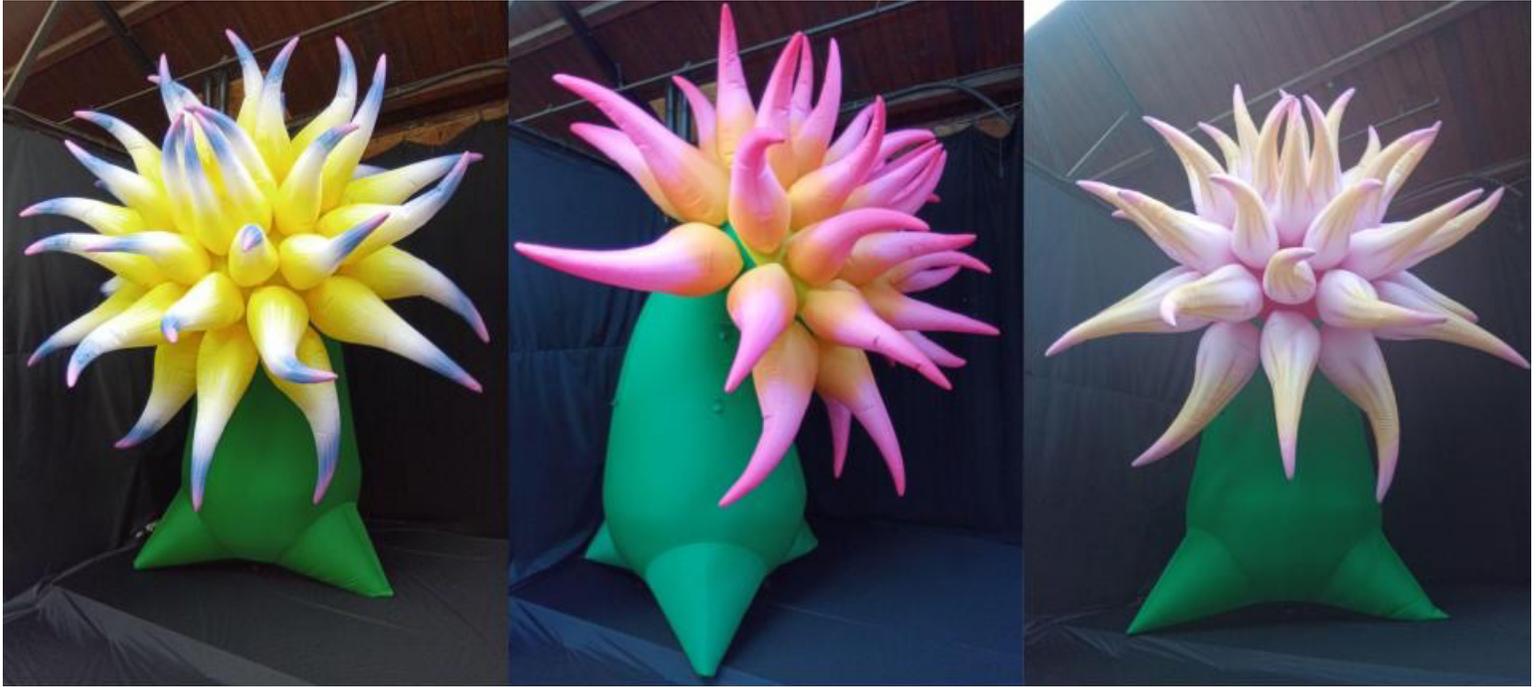
What an annual tradition! The highlight of the 2-week festival in Huamantla, Mexico, is celebrated with flower carpets miles long. At this church, the religious theme prevails and is surrounded by a dahlia display that everyone can appreciate. Thanks to Martin Kral for sharing.



BLOOMTOWN SF

BloomtownSF is a multi-layered, interactive art experience taking place on Union Street, between Steiner and Gough, running from September 15 through November 15. In partnership with Building 180, SF Parks Alliance is bringing large-scale inflatable dahlias and never before seen murals, repurposed from the temporary

Presidio Hospital, to the Union Street corridor. Placed across rooftops and throughout storefronts, these installations are sure to inspire curiosity and joy for visitors of all ages, while also encouraging the rediscovery of the corridor's local merchants,



restaurants and retail.

DSC EVOLUTION

Our brilliant membership wrangler, Devorah, is stepping down. She did so many amazing functions for DSC that it will take several people to step into her various essential roles. The first: Welcome Wagon for new members. When a new member signs up on our website, the Welcome Wielder would email them an appropriate welcoming letter, perhaps 10-15 times a month. This person would be the first face of DSC these new people encounter. This should not be an onerous job; we would so appreciate someone upbeat and ambassadorial.

The second job would be List Keeper. We gather lists of emails of people interested in our annual tuber sale. This person would keep this list updated. Various DSC members would give you lists they have obtained from speaking engagements, dahlia shows, the Dell, or inquiries. We would use this list before each Tuber Sale and Dahlia Show.

The third job would be Program Manager. This person would be on the lookout to find interesting speakers on timely dahlia-related subjects. Since we are still holding zoom meetings, these brilliant speakers could come from all over the world. Whilst this is a specific job for a person in charge of programs, **EVERYONE** should be on the lookout for great speakers and hands-on demonstrators.

Finally and toughest is our Website Manager. Devi and Tinnee have done this so expertly. We need someone with some real IT savvy. Please contact Deborah. Dahlia.dietz@gmail.com

DATING DAHLIA STYLE

The National Capital Dahlia Society is offering a new, larger, improved dahlia calendar for 2022 as a project to help raise funds to help support the 2022 ADS National Show, which NCDS will be hosting September 22-25, 2022 in Reston, VA. The 2022 calendar has four more pages than the 2020 and 2021 calendars, is being printed on heavier stock paper, and will be landscape in orientation (each page 11 inches wide and 8.5 inches high). The calendar contains 19 outstanding dahlia photos and some other dahlia-related photos. With a team of our best photographers and artistic consultants, the calendar will bring dahlia joy to each month in 2022.

NCDS is offering the dahlia calendars for \$10 each plus postage (minimum order of two calendars for shipping); \$8 each for orders of 10 to 24 calendars (plus postage); and \$7 each plus postage for orders of 25 or more calendars. (Shipping costs in the United States should run around \$5 for two calendars; \$8 for up to around 8 calendars; and \$15.50 for up to around 50 calendars.) Shipping to Canada is more expensive; contact me for quotes on specific quantities.

For more information or to order calendars, contact Alan Fisher at AfisherADS@Yahoo.com. Payment for calendars will be

by check payable to NCDS and sent to the Cliff Johnson, NCDS Treasurer, 15104 Centergate Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20905, 301-989-2508, cliffjohnson@comcast.net.

Might someone volunteer to keep track of those interested in buying a 2022 Dahlia Calendar? That way we could save some \$ on quantity and shipping. Please call Deborah if you'd be this ombusperson.

PITCH HITTER PAR EXCELLENCE



Our beautiful Pat has injured herself. Fortunately, Tim has energetically stepped in to manicure her patch. Tim, a biologist/horticulturist at the California Academy of



Sciences, cares for the museum's live butterfly display, the Osher rainforest plant collection, dives in the aquarium, and helps with the colony of African Penguins. You might see him at the Dell during his lunch break or in the evenings after work volunteering for Pat. He's passionate about gardening for pollinators (particularly native bees and butterflies) and has started a Dahlia garden for Sisterhood Gardens in the Ingleside neighborhood with tubers donated from Iris Wallace. Thank you for leaping into the breach, Tim!

BLESSED DAHLIA DIPLOMACY

Thanks to the generosity of Phil Warden, the Dahlia Society was able to provide a big and beautiful thank you to St. Mark's Lutheran Church. St. Mark's is on Gough St., and you know kindly hosted our tuber and plant sale at the last minute this past May. Kris Iversen is St Mark's garden caretaker, and receives support from Dodge and Cox for her efforts. Kris became interested in dahlias after one of Nick Gaensler's fellow scouts, Mason Tuller, did his Eagle project installing irrigation in the St. Mark's garden. Kris was invited to the 2019 Dell Picnic and was inspired, and DSC provided tubers and plants.

Phil Warden had offered bring flowers to the St. Marks this summer, but he was in in Alaska! Phil kindly made arrangements for Erik and Kris to harvest from his home garden, which is beautifully tended and was at its peak. Spectacular blooms are supported lovingly by Velcro and zip ties rather than mere string. This visit, at the crack of dawn on a foggy Sunday morning, was quite an education for Kris; the cool weather meant the blooms were crisp and sturdy.

Thirty minutes later the flowers arrived at St Mark's and were arranged in displays for St. Mark's beautiful Parish Hall. Shortly after noon both the indoor and outdoor tables filled with fans of Pastor Elizabeth, who was retiring after more than two decades of



service. After the lunch and ceremony Kris made sure Phil's blooms went home with Elizabeth, members of leadership, and best of fans who we hope will DSC members! Kris more dahlias at the St. and if we are lucky the able to use their ideal future.



Pastor the St Mark's all young dahlia become future plans to plant Mark's in 2022, DSC may be spaces in the



DAHLIA DELL DOINGS

Visions of the past, Dorothy and Mike, San Jose dahlia competitors from 20 years ago, were re-inspired at the Dell. "I need to grow dahlias again. I'd forgotten how wonderful they are." Maggie, who provides Erik with bouquets for the Alta Bates Radiology group



every Monday, came to check out



our Dell. “I want everything I see here to grow in my Berkeley garden next year, “ Maggie declared. To remind herself, Maggie took hundreds of photos including this nice one of Steve. Nathaniel decided that more is better and put in a couple extra raised beds for his extra dahlias. Bin Bin, 80+ bundle of energy, dressed up in lipstick and apron with dangling white dingle balls to manicure Elvira and the petting Zoo. Thank you Bin Bin for your fastidiously accurate work. Steve and Sarah lifted their heads in wonderment as jangling Indian music wafted over their heads. The Hari Krishna folks threw a parade down closed JFK Drive complete with stupas, palanquins, umbrellas and chanting. Stupendous. Saffron bedecked acolytes proffered tapes and lollipops. Whilst Erik traipsed the East Coast, Jenna deadheaded for him and went home with Pennhill Watermelons bigger than her cheerleader’s pompoms. Erik graciously allows Shioko some

blooms to use in her arrangements at the Strybing Arboretum and at the entrance to the Conservatory. Very nice. Lou is critically evaluating his new seedlings. Check out the plants in his section with





numbers. Which ones would you keep? (all of them?!) Samantha drove down from Sacramento to check out our Dell. Sue's hillside is in fully glory. Check out her miniature black black black dahlia.



SURGING INTO SUMPTIOUS SEPTEMBER

My section of the Dell is a maniacal riot of color. I spend most of



I spend most of my time bushwhacking the isles so the other volunteers can get in to deadhead and disbud. I use a plastic coated twine to tie up my exuberant dahlias. Phil and Marilyn employ reusable Velcro ties: very efficient and simple to use. Sarah found some fatter spongy coated line at Sloat's that is great: no elasticity so no sagging. Whatever you use, USE IT NOW. In the old days, they used snagged nylon stockings; they were soft, strong and ubiquitous. How times change. Check the laterals growing from very low on your plants' stems. These are vulnerable to getting too heaving and breaking off, obviating all that wonderful growth from the last two months. Save yourself this tsuris; remove these incipient low low laterals early. Let all the energy flow into the upper level blooms.

We have been experiencing heavy morning dews and even visible "rain" at the Dell which soaks the blooms. Some dahlias have so many petals that when they get wet, the dahlia head just gets toooo heavy and snaps. It's tragic. The morning dew that doesn't dry off in the non-existent afternoon sun, can cause RAGS. These are the brown petals, rotting particularly on larger blooms on otherwise lovely but not-fully-opened flowers. What to do? These ratty tatty petticoats can

be pulled off to let your dahlia reign triumphantly a few more days in the garden or on your dinner table.

CATERPILLARS AND MILDEW: Yes, it's that time of the year. If you notice a frilly pattern of destruction to your blooms, look for an engorged worm. Oftentimes they cocoon up before you catch them leaving massacred flowers in their wake. Grrrr. Decide how much you want to share with the butterflies. Spinosad, the active ingredient in Captain Jack's Dead Bug, controls these pests fairly greenly. Only spray where you need it so that the rest of nature can continue unfettered.

Mildew: grrrrr! nuisance. The active; Sue baking soda has kept this bay. I've been my cocktail. If long—don't some Eagle—a Strip ALL the off your plant. diluted solution



What an unsightly secret is to be pro-uses milk and EVERY WEEK and dandruffy mess at using stilet oil in you've waited too give up hope. Get plant fungicide. mildewed leaves Spray with a

of Eagle. Wait 3 days; spray the diluted solution again; wait another 3 days and spray again. After these 10 days, wait a week and do it again. Are all the wee leaves coming in a dulcet shade of unadulterated green? Yay! Now spray in another 10 days. Good luck. In the Bay Area we can look forward to dahlias adorning our Thanksgiving Table.

DAHLIA COCKTAIL: for September, I have two different spray bottles. The first contains spinosad, Stilet Oil, milk, German green dahlia food, and a teaspoon of dishwashing soap—all slightly dilute. The second contains all of the above plus some Eagle to use on particularly recalcitrant mildew. September is the

last month for fertilizer of any kind. Folk Wisdom suspects late fertilization causes weaker tubers.

LABEL AND ROGUE: As the light begins to wane, your dahlias will naturally pop center more, grow spindlier, and take longer to bloom. **NOW** whilst you still have magnificent blooms, check all your labels. Make sure they are clear and correct. Rewrite if necessary for clarity. Decide **NOW** whether each variety is coming back to the party next year. Make some sort of designation on the label, on your map or on your spread sheet. If you have two or more of the same variety, mark which is better. This is the one you want to divide and replant next year. Sometimes we have dahlias that are perfectly ok, but we've grown them for awhile and we'd like to try something new. These are the ones to mark for our DSC tuber sale in 2022. Have you been babying a ratty plant? Sort of crummy leaves? Twisted growth? Shorter than all your other plants? Is this worth leaving in or should you just rip it up and throw it away? Be severe with yourself.

SHARE AND SHOW OFF: Profligately share your blooms with friends, neighbors, family, and fellow workers. Erik donates to flower arrangements to Strybing Arboretum and the Conservatory entrance. Invite people to come view your bounty. Ask if you can visit other dahlia gardens. Check out 39th and Cabrillo gardens. Devi's dahlias are magnificent! Dahlias light up birthdays, dinner parties, picnics and LIFE!

Yours in dirt,

Deborah

Photo credits: Dietz, Gaensler, Rothchild, Shawaf, Smith

Layout and Membership (still): Deborah

Snail Mail Angel: Patricia



