

Dahlia Society
of California

Dahlia Society of California Newsletter

November 2021



NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, Nov. 9 at 7:30 PM at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Digging, Dividing and Storing. Lou reprises his excellent tutorial on how to dig, divide, process and store tubers for the winter. Everyone needs to review this. If you have a tuber clump that you don't care much about, bring it to try some hands-on practice dividing. Also DSC elections. There should be parking around the back on the extension of 10th Avenue. Please be at least doubly vaccinated (with proof) and masked. We'll try to maintain some distance from each other. No eating or drinking, alas.

REAL PEOPLE IN THE FLESH

How wonderful to finally have an in-person meeting! So great to see old friends and meet new people like Chad, Frank, Rose, Collette, and Dave. Please introduce yourself and welcome them when we next meet in person. Tinnee announced that she will secure the 4th Saturday in April for our Tuber/Cutting Extravaganza and the 3rd weekend in August for our Dahlia Show. So much to look forward to! She also announced nominations are open for our Board and officers for 2022. Please let her know how you might help with this process. You could make ballots, talk to potential candidates, or volunteer to be on the nominating committee. Please **GET INVOLVED!** It's the only way a healthy dahlia society works.



LATE SEASON CUTTINGS

Deborah brought in wee sprigs taken from very low on her stalks. Various DCSers trimmed off excess leaves so that only 2 pair remained. Intrepid volunteers tucked these sprouts into 1x1x3" containers full of potting soil and perlite. Tinnee pointed out that usually these little pots are quite saturated with water. (For the purposes of a cleaner demonstration, Deborah watered everything well afterwards.) These potted up little hopefuls then go under lights for the next 4-6 weeks to develop roots. You do NOT need a formal greenhouse—just lights! Try it at home.



See what you learn. You might produce some tantalizing beauties for our Tuber Sale in April.

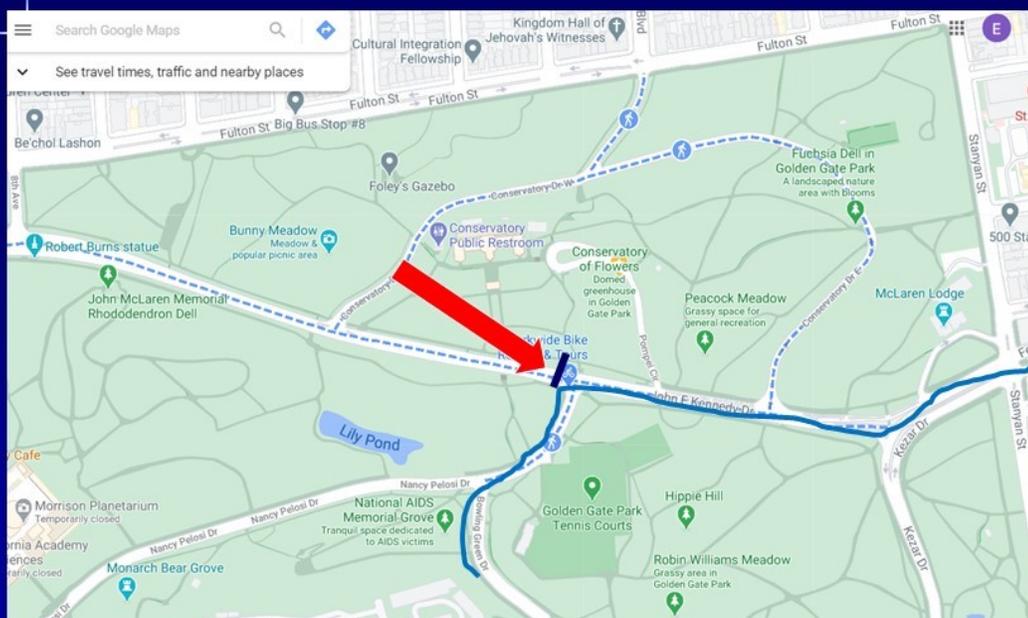
ARGUELLO AMBIGUITIES



Erik reported that since last January, the Powers that Be promised that Dahlia Dell Donors might be getting a little relief. They proposed to allow DDDs (Dahlia Dell Donors) to come in the Arguello Gate off Fulton and park by the bathrooms near the Conservatory. Interestingly, although we have 6 DDD's and many volunteers, the Powers were offering only 2 parking passes. Then suddenly there appeared a small sign on the Arguello barrier: admittance to cars going to the Conservatory of Flowers. In a trice, the entire 15 parking spaces were FULL! Were they all Conservatory visitors????? Hmmmm. Doubtful.

OPEN POMPEII DRIVE!

Plan B: Potential site of semi-permanent barricade to traffic, Mon-Fri: This would allow access to Pompeii drive, and service and tour vehicles & groups to SFCOF. Traffic could flow from Kezar to new tennis courts. Parking could be prohibited or metered at "Ballpark rates" that would prevent abuse and raise revenue.



BEWARE DAHLIA MOSAIC

The National Plant Diagnostic Network is a newsletter that excerpts all kinds of plant articles each month. In October NPDN featured research about Dahlia Mosaic and included some excellent photos:

Dahlias are popular in Utah's cut flower industry but can be affected by viruses. The USU Extension Plant Pathology lab identified several viruses in dahlia plants collected from Utah farms, as well as in tubers and seed purchased from suppliers. One of the most common viruses was Dahlia mosaic virus (DMV). DMV is a DNA virus in the genus Caulimovirus. It is transmitted by aphids and carried over in seed and tubers. There are three strains: DMV-D10, DMV-Holland, and DMV-Portland.

<https://www.npdn.org/newsletter/2021/10/article/2>

OUR INSTAGRAM ARTIST



John P. experimented with drying dahlias. He covered several smaller dahlias in a box of silica crystals for several days. Amazingly, they kept their color and form quite well. Then he embedded them in resin in the bottom of a vase. So there will be bouquets above and below! Our John P. has taken to recording the



Dell and his Twin Peak garden on Instagram [JP_Art_Garden](#). He is digging out his tubers now and glad to share.

CULTIVATING DAHLIA COMMUNITY

Our lovely Jenna sent some tubers to her best friend, Jenn Schlotbom, in Cincinnati, Ohio last spring. Jenn gave them to her mother-in-law, Rita Wetterstroem, for Mother's Day. Together they bonded over growing dahlias for the first time. They proudly sent this picture of their magnificent Pennhill Watermelon to their dahlia god mother, Jenna. Jenna forwards the newsletter on to them. Now Jenn and Rita hope to learn to divide tubers during our next zoom meeting. In trying to help them from a far, Jenna has encouraged them to join a local Dahlia Society. Jenna reports, "Jenn and her husband Rob actually came to our dahlia show in 2018. They are friends with the Geraci family, (Miles and Reid) Megan Geraci. Jenn and I went to high school together. I am really trying to spread the Dahlia cheer!" Well done, Jenna!



FLORAL RUGS?

Check out this aerial shot of a carpet created from 500,000 dahlia and begonia flowers at the Grand Place in Brussels, Belgium.

Every two years, about 100 volunteers show up to create this astonishing Floral Carpet that stretches out 19,000 square feet. Every two years it is a different cultural theme. This one is an elaborate piece honoring Mexico and Aztec culture.



INTRODUCING DEBBIE FRANK

Debbie has valiantly agreed to manage DSC's membership.



Debbie will be processing memberships as they come in by mail or over the internet. She will write welcoming letters to new members and bug old members to get their renewals in for 2022. Debbie will also dispatch our monthly newsletter out to all awaiting the latest in gossip, news and helpful hints. Debbie will be responsible for sending out "Blasts" to our membership when there are important items that cannot wait for the monthly newsletter. Please PLEASE rouse your reserved selves to seek Debbie out and thank her for her

tremendous service to all of us.

CAN YOU HELP?

DSC needs someone with some graphics background to volunteer to be our Photo Library Curator. This person would keep track of what varieties would be coming to our Tuber Sale and have

photos and frames ready. This wonderful curator would also be responsible for printing the winners' cards at our annual Dahlia Show. Of course DSC would reimburse for paper and ink. This is just another of the amazing roles that our Deborah quietly undertook for us for so many years. Please contact Deborah 415-816-2118 to discuss contributing in this oh so essential way. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**



PROGRAM TALENT SLUETH

DSC also needs a creative person to ferret out cool speakers and interesting programs for our monthly meetings. Due to Covid, some of our meetings will be over Zoom and some will be in person. Obviously we could have experts from all over the United States participate via our screens. Up close and personal speakers would have to be invited from a closer geographic. What do we need to learn about???? Soil prep, pest management, hybridization, planning a dahlia safari, genetics? Our program manager could truly invigorate our meetings! Traditionally this job has been the purview of our DSC Vice President. Please contact Deborah 415-816-2118. Maybe 2 people could team up and have twice the invigorating ideas??? This is so important for the

vitality of our society. Please step up if this is something you might want to contribute for the next year.

JAPANESE DAHLIA BED

Tiptoe down the path and sink into this wonderful Dahlia bed in Japan's famous dahlia garden.



DUES DUE

Click here to go straight to our website membership page. <https://sfdahlias.org/join-sf-dahlia-society/>

Fill in the form; pay on line; over and done. Alternatively, you can download the membership form, fill it out by hand, write a check, put it in an envelop, address the envelop and affix a stamp. Mail it away. Devorah has simplified renewing your DSC membership.

SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

Some people can be so clueless. Thuy announced that she had baked a cake and needed to stash it in the shade. Deborah



figured that since Thuy had shared macarrons the last weekend, she was going to share cake this weekend. Michi arrived in Parisian elegance with many bags. Loren bicycled over. Pat and Tim moseyed in. Was Deborah even suspicious that this could be a 71st birthday ambush? Not a whisper of a clue—just delight that so many of her favorite dahlia people were

all together at the same place and same time. It took singing the song and Sarah passing out plates and cups to make it official: Surprise Party! Wow. So wonderful! Michi offered us all homemade vegetarian sushi; Thuy proffered homemade fruity cake as beautiful as it was delicious; Loren had a whole bag of home-grown apples. Michi further surprised us all with a card of one of her magnificent dahlia paintings and a ceramic tile depicting Skipley Splish Splash. Deborah laughed and laughed,

utterly delighted. Our recent deluge invoked past birthday presents, this glorious dahlia umbrella from Colleen. Let's birthday all month!



CREATIVE ELEGANCE

Mitsuyo Katsuta comes from a dynasty of artists: Her husband was renowned in Paris, his father famous in Japan, her son in Europe. Michi graciously allowed DSC to reprint a few of her

magnificent watercolors. If you catch Michi strolling around the Dell in vintage Parisian chic, please express your appreciation of her work. Michi's dahlia delight has infected other artists including a t-shirt vendor and a tile maker.





EVERBLOOMING DAHLIA TILES

John Erve has craftily figured a way to transfer his photos of this year's Dell blooms onto 6"x6" ceramic tiles. He has a selection of 22 blooms to choose from or can custom make one of your choosing. "Unlike real dahlias, these dahlias will last much longer

so you can enjoy them year-round and....NO watering necessary.”



Contact him: Jevre@millbraecameraclub.org

DELL DOINGS

When the dahlias dance in full regalia, they magnetically draw the world to them. Early one Wednesday morning, 5 costumed fellows

and their videographer set up in front of Sue's Hillside. After a few rehearsals, they filmed their cover of a KPOP dance called



Red Velvet x YouTube group. They loved it when Deborah pointed out the clumps of Red Velvet exhumed from Lucy's garden. After learning how to deadhead and disbud by ministrating to Elvira for an hour, Jennifer returned to treat Dellians to home made cookies with lovely violets

embedded in them. Beautiful and delicious! So great to get a fleeting glimpse of Kevin. With less than 24 hours left in his US visit, our Kevin sketched up a storm at the Dell. "I need lots of dahlia ideas to paint from because I'll be in a 14-day quarantine when I return to Taiwan." Thank you to Maggie who drove Pat to the tennis court barriers and stayed to pluck off mildew leaves. Your hands and company were appreciated. How nice to see Chris from San Jose checking out our seed heads and late season cuttings. Chris grows 60 ball dahlias and hopes to hybridize that form. People ask what's going on with Lou's section. He is letting his dahlias go



seed—literally. The petals have to drop off, the seeds mature, the heads harden and then our hybridizer extraordinaire harvests them. Why is Deborah's section still blooming?



Sarah, Steve, Thuy and other volunteers have assiduously deadheaded, disbudded and taken off crummy leaves. The plants keep getting the signal to make more blooms. They



are NOT going to seed. Different purposes requires different tactics which yield different results.

NESTLING INTO NOVEMBER

Daylight savings has crushed our evenings; its dark by 5! Many dahlias have given up striving for the dwindling light. When your clump has turned completely brown, lop down to 5 notches above ground. These bamboo-like nodes act as water stops to prevent moisture from rotting out the underground crown from whence all the healthy tubers extend. Some people cover these stubs with aluminum foil; others use rubber bands to put plastic bags over the clump; some people get away with doing nothing at all. If you only grew a few dahlias, you could put 5 gallon buckets over their brown skeletons.



WHEN SHOULD YOU DIG UP? Your soil determines your options. If you have dense, clayish, sticky dirt, you **MUST** exhume soon. This is unforgiving medium. It will drown your tubers. They will rot. You will loose everything. So **GET THEM OUT NOW**. However, if you have well drained soil like we do at the Dell, you have the leisure of taking them out between now and the beginning of April. I like to take out only as many clumps as I can process in the next 2 days. They need to be divided, soaked in bleach, sulfured or cinnamoned, and stored **IMMEDIATELY**. Eyes, the growing spots where the tuber neck meets the stalk, can only be seen within @ 8 hours of exposure to light. So this is as much time as you have to work. If you ever give a clump to someone else to divide for you, it is thoughtful if you leave a healthy layer of soil around the fleshy fingers so the guest divider can begin

dividing at his/her convenience. Check out the April 2017 newsletter for a complete walk through from clump to milkcartoned tuber.



WISHLISTS: Like sitting at a 5-star feast and dreaming about future meals, our dahlia lust wanders towards **NEW DAHLIA** acquisition even before we've put the last crop to bed. Ah, the hours we can while away indulged in Dahlia Porn; we cruise sites

and covet ever more amazingly alluring dahlias. Ahhhh. Check out thedahliaaddict.com. This site lists all the commercial growers in the US. You can look up dahlias by size, color and form. If there are multiple providers, you can check prices. There are usually compelling photos. Swan Island opened their 2022 catalog in October. Clearview Dahlias sell their own originations. Many others will go public by Thanksgiving. The hot stuff sells out fast—even at outrageous prices. Paula and Sue bought lovely things from Delightful Dahlias last year. Three purveyors sell rooted cuttings, Phil's preferred option: Stonehouse Dahlias, Cowlitz and Julie's. Julie requests that you email her—dahliasbyjulie.com—and give her your requests, phone number and email so she knows what to put on her cutting bench as soon as possible. When I order tubers, I explain that I live in San Francisco where it rarely dips below 48 degrees. I request as early as possible deliver –sometimes as early as February! Go crazy! It's sooo much fun to look forward to NEW varieties surprising us next year.

ADS PHOTO CONTEST: get your entries in by Thanksgiving. Do it NOW.

Yours in dirt,

Deborah

Photo Credits: Dibner, Dietz, Gaensler, Katsuta, Len, Phan, Smith, Thuy

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