

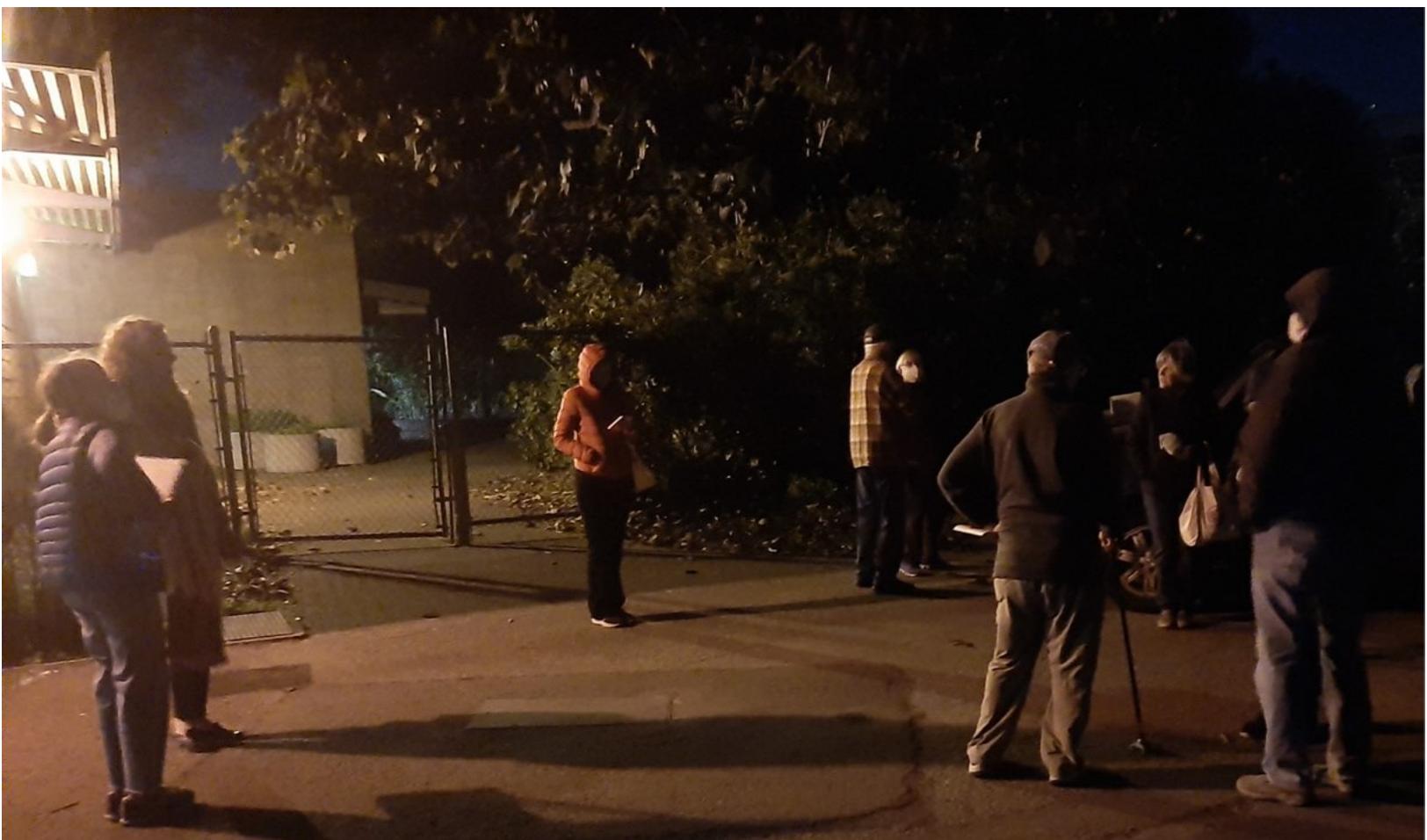


# *Dahlia Society of California Newsletter*



**NEXT MEETING:** April 12 at 7:30 at 9t and Lincoln. We would like to start earlier, but are still having trouble getting the guards to open our meeting room on time. **PROGRAM:** preparing for the tuber sale. Please bring any tubers or cuttings you'd like to donate and please do your swapping outside our meeting room. There is a possibility that Commissioner Ginsberg might drop by to explain his thoughts behind the park closures.

## **MARCH MEETING AND RAFFLE**





**How wonderful to see so many people in person! Despite having to wait out in the cold for a while until the guard opened our building up, we had a good time. Protocol was quickly**

**established: masks on unless you were speaking. It's so hard to distinguish sounds through those necessary safety masks.**

**We cheered the fact that we'll be holding a Tuber Sale this April, albeit one FOR ONLY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.**

**Everyone was urged to process their tubers and bring labeled roots for sale. We discussed sale and swap protocol. All**

**swaps must take place outside the sales area so as not to confuse between swapping and buying. Len reported that his group has 17 owl houses in the preserve. He used the detritus from many owl meals in his dahlia patch and wonders if it will bring better**



results. Peggy planted a cover crop and added Zoo Doo from the Oakland Zoo. Will her dahlias grow? Maggie and Peggy brought beautiful tubers to sell for \$4 each: Sandia Brocade, Snowball, Juul's Buttercup, and Just Married to name a few of their special offerings. Both Maggie and Peggy donated several tubers to our cutting crew in the hopes that they will turn into plants at our April sale. For our finale, Deborah raffled 6 hardened-off cuttings. Jennifer conducted a lovely raffle and lucky growers delighted in Pennhill Water Mellon, Pennhill Dark Monarch, Bloomquist Jeff, Pam Howden, Clearview Magic, and Eden Patricia, an introduction from Lou Paradise in honor of our lovely Pat.

## **TUBER AND CUTTING SALE**

Great news! DSC WILL hold a sale, April 30 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco. Unfortunately, our cutting team reports that tubers have been slow to sprout and so far only about 200 have been made. Naturally, the cutting makers get first choice at what to take to compensate for all their hours of work. So we are not sure how many will be available for our sale. We hope you will bring your extra LABELED tubers, cuttings and milk cartons to support your DSC. Because of the potential paucity of product, we are limiting our sale to DSC members and friends. Prices: named tubers--\$4; unnamed tubers--\$2; A, AA, B--\$10; open centered cuttings--\$5; all other cuttings--\$7. A blast will be sent out the week before our sale with details. Jobs will include: table erectors, sorters, labelers, counters, and of course, advisors. If we finish early, helpers will get first pick and then we will open it up to friends if any are left.

## **GONZO FLORIBUNDA: THE SHOW IS ON**

Our annual dahlia competition/exhibition is scheduled August 20-21. Tinnee and Lou will co-manage. Tinnee and Jenna will order ribbons. Consider if there is a category you'd like to sponsor (\$10-50). Do you have a favorite variety, or a favorite hybridizer, or a favorite form? Or a special combo? The Largest

**Dahlia in the World needs a sponsor this year. As Lou dusts off the show sections, he will let us know other established options for sponsorship.**

### **CREATIVE DONATIONS**

**Up in Healdsburg, Meredith can't process dahlias for our Tuber Sale. But she can sew! She has made lovely dahlia placemats, tote bags and a jolly apron to sell along side our cuttings. So thoughtful and generous. Meredith discovered dahlias at the**



**Heirloom Expo up in Santa Rosa and loved them. She joined our society and reads her newsletter every month. When she spotted some specialty fabric with riotous dahlias, she knew she had to try**

a few projects. Traditionally a quilter, Meredith fabricates many creations for her local Christmas Bazaar. Thank you, Meredith!

## **MONTEREY DAHLIA SOCIETY SALE**

Iris reports: April 2nd 9-11 at Deer Park Shopping center in Aptos right near the Red Apple Cafe.

Prices are \$7 for all tubers and \$12 for 4" plants.

I'm not sure how many tubers we will actually have. Kristine is having her own private sale this year. In past years she was always a major donor. She's not sure exactly when she's going to post on her Instagram about the sale but I do know you have to be able to pick them up at her house. No mailing and no contacting her ahead of time. Brion is actually going to handle all the details. They're trying to avoid a computer crash when they announce it.

We have 4 flowers of the year. I only can remember two of them off the top of my head. Sandia Brocade and Just Married. There is one more disc centered and one more fully double.

## **RALLY TO OPEN JFK**

Participant Peggy reports:

On March 10th, the SFMTA Directors held a meeting to hear the Park and Rec Director and his staff present their platform on why Golden Gate Park should remain free of vehicles.

Prior to the Meeting, I arrived in the middle of a very well attended rally on the steps of SF City Hall. Dressed in my Erve dahlia t-shirt, I quickly spotted a fellow Dahlia Society member, Tony, and together we listened to the passionate groups giving short speeches to support opening JFK Drive for all.

Tony and I went into City Hall to be an active listeners and participants of this much anticipated presentation by Park and Rec. Phil Ginsberg and his staff presented many power points, maps of changes proposed supported by the results of their survey.

After 60 minutes the Directors of the SFMTA asked detailed



questions of the proposal. The floor was then opened to participants to share their opinions in a 1- minute format. At this point I left due to time constraints and came home. I quickly dialed in on my phone to the ongoing public opinions. 45 minutes into the wait to share my opinion, I heard, "You're On." Stumbling with words, I quickly gave my opinion over the phone heard by all in Room 400 of City Hall and the other 96 listeners on hold. I was over taken with emotion that in that one minute I had been heard.



Deborah also called in, waited 2 hours and 43 minutes for the right to speak her 60 seconds to make the park open to everyone, not just bikers and hikers.

## COMPELLING LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sarah Smith writes so eloquently, that yet another of her impassioned letters was published in the Sunset Beacon.

<https://sfrichmondreview.com/2022/02/08/letter-to-the-editor-compromise-is-best-solution-for-jfk-drive/>

Here are some excerpts:

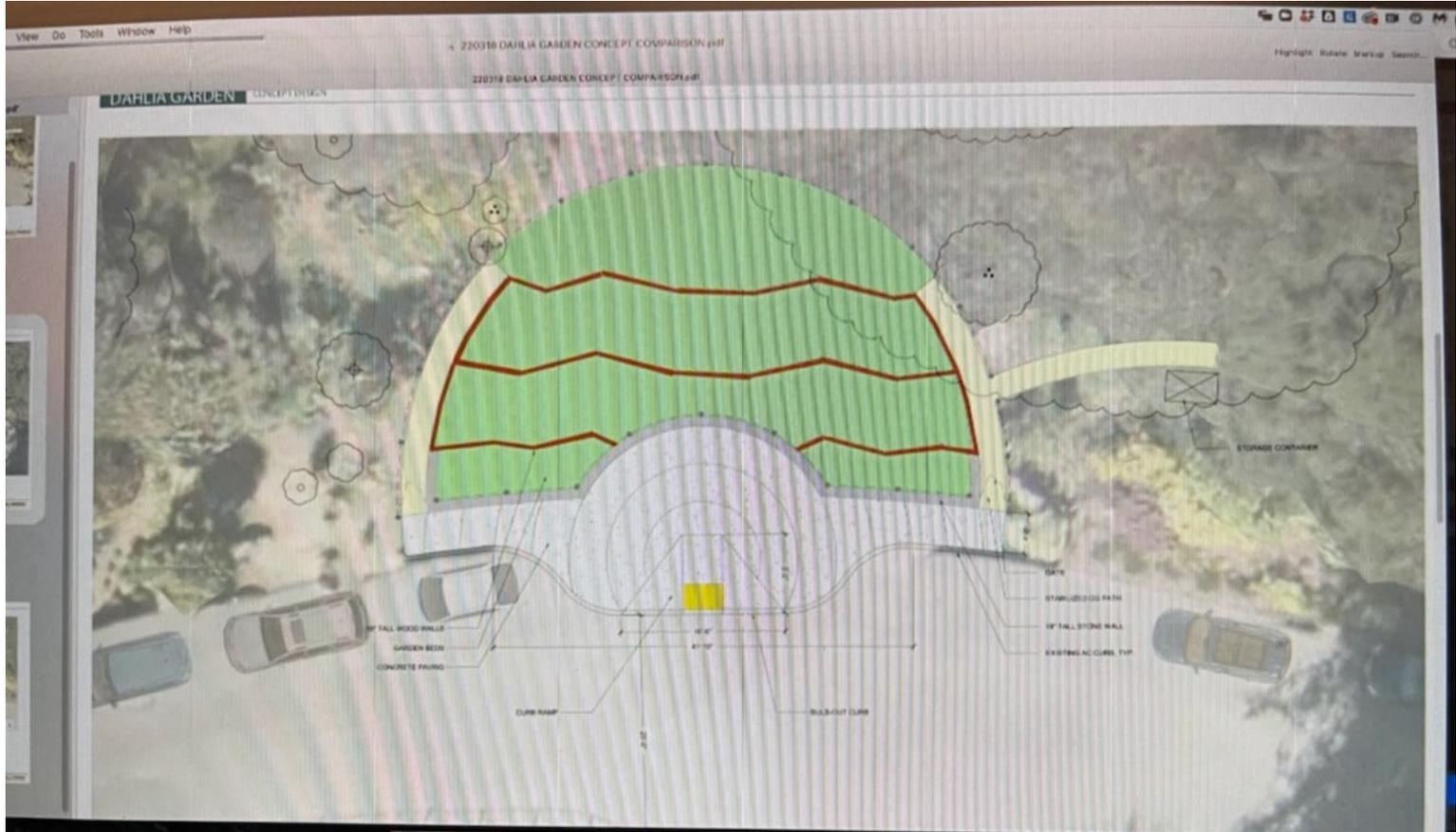
I have never (not once!) seen a single soul on the Golden Gate Park Shuttle. Every time, every shuttle is empty...

Why can't there be a compromise? Why start the closure at Stanyan? Why not consider what the volunteers of the Dahlia Society believe would be a fairer situation. Start the closure on the west side of Nancy Pelosi Drive, so people can access Pompeo to enjoy the Dahlia Dell, Native plants, and the Conservatory of Flowers.

When I talk to the "keep JFK Drive closed" folks, they often end up agreeing that a compromise is a good solution. I was unable to show my recently-deceased father the Dahlia Dell the last two years of his life because we couldn't drive up to the flowers and he wasn't strong enough to transfer. He had dementia....Why deny them all this access totally and completely, seven days a week? It's heartless.

## HILLSIDE CLUSTER \*&\$%###

Franz Kafka seems to be writing the story of getting our little hillside redwood ties restored. What should have cost less than \$5K TOTAL, now thanks to ever-increasing bureaucratic fingers



has metastasized to over \$170K!!!! So many different groups with weekly changing faces demand different contingencies. This latest picture illustrates a few of the ironies. Cars? Handicapped hillside and row paths? The parking overseers bemoan the potential loss of 2 spaces except NO CARS are allowed in at all! The handicapped watchdogs demand full wheelchair access up the sides of the hill and down the rows when the JFK closure makes handicapped access IMPOSSIBLE! Madness!!!

## AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY 2021 PHOTO WINNERS

Thanks to Larry Smith up in Portland for putting together all these beautiful collections of the 2021 Photo Contest winners. Just click on the youtube links to check out the entire category. Maybe you will enter this year??

**Class 1, Undisseminated/Seedlings**  
<https://youtu.be/dFdBKeLmLjA>

**Class 2, Portrait**  
<https://youtu.be/vxd7LKI13a0>

**Class 3, Multiple Blooms**  
<https://youtu.be/MW4qhfz9gJk>

**Class 4, Gardens**  
<https://youtu.be/pUah2TS-YA8>

**Class 5, Shows and Personalities**  
<https://youtu.be/UyPusjFeP-I>

**Class 6, Critters**  
<https://youtu.be/Qp31U4lrhH8>

**Class 7, Kids**  
<https://youtu.be/a2iQBR1Kxzc>

**Class 8, Digital Darkroom**  
<https://youtu.be/iDW esUuTAc>

**Class 9, Macro View**  
<https://youtu.be/z7RwP6pu05Y>

**People's Choice**  
<https://youtu.be/s9zXXbof2Fk>

**Best in Show reel**  
<https://youtu.be/hn863fd8xow>

**Award Winners reel**  
<https://youtu.be/4XnMwTHgHIA>

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?



This photo from Phil and Marilyn's tells the story: tubers just arrived in the mail and they're tucking them into milk cartons immediately. Their gopher cages are already sunk and awaiting newly sprouted tubers.

## ADVENTURES IN DIVIDING



Sarah bravely performed surgery on her favorite dahlia from last year, Daddy's Girl. Masterful! She rinsed the whole clump off; checked for great eyes; dusted their open wounds

with cinnamon; lined them up like showered soldiers to sun dry and popped them into milk cartons.

Crossing our fingers that some of Sarah's sprouted beauties come to our Tuber Sale the end of April..... Sarah also reports that her auntie sent her dahlia seeds which she successfully germinated. Her plan? 4x4" growing out and hoping for magic.



## FIRST TIME GARDENERS

Here is a story from Christine in Sacramento.

I am Christina Adams a member of the Dahlia Society of California. I've been to a couple of zoom meeting and last year I loved visiting the dell on Saturdays. I am planning on my first year of growing dahlias at my sister's house in Novato. Her name is



Cynthia and she has Down syndrome. We are both gardeners from our childhood on.... Our father loved roses and has amazing vegetable gardens. Here are some pictures of what we have been doing this month to get the soil ready and also I started the dahlias on top of the refrigerator as you



suggested.

Thank you, Christine. Wishing you bouquets of success!

## SHOP TEACHER'S SHOP LIGHTS



Loren sent in this wonderful picture showing how he can grow seedlings in the dark caverns of his garage by hanging a shop light over a shelf.



## DELL DOINGS

Sue is such a great educator. Tirelessly she answers questions from the public. Sometimes her zeal is rewarded. Recently, Carol noticed that Sue's laundry cart had crumped under the weight of fertilizer bags. She wondered if Sue would like one like Pat gave to Deborah, a Cadillac of carts to be sure. "Of course! But they're so expensive!" replied Sue. "I have one at home and I'll bring it to you." An hour later, Carol donated a primo blue Cadillac wagon to Sue. Wow. The kindness of strangers. The next week, like Meals

on Feet, the same generous Carol delivered quiche breakfasts to both Sue and Deborah! We love supporters like Carol! Christine drove down from Sacramento to see how various Dellions readied their patches for April planting. The park benevolently rototilled the pasture in Lou's section. Sarah has prized out every weed in Deborah's section



and tossed them in the continuous compost pile that plies the isles of her section. Pat's portion, raked to Zen perfection, has sent up its first



shoots. Tim popped by to hula hoe the tear drop pathways. Always keeping his eye out for us, Loren bicycled up with his latest



find: 4 beautifully sharp snippers. Deborah wonders if anyone knows a source for rebar stakes? The Pupps via Karen donated a bunch last year and she really likes them.



## SUPERVISOR CHAN FACT FINDING

Supervisor Chan braved a blustering trek into the Dell to ascertain how the closure of JFK has negatively affected the Dell Volunteers. She listened. She assessed the barriers at Nancy Pelosi Drive and heard various suggestions about



vehicle passes, changing the barriers, and opening JFK as far as Pompeii Circle. Please let her know your support for 7 vehicle passes for the 7 donors at the Dell. We need 7 seconds to cross JFK and to be able to park at the Dell whilst working to make it the world famous glorious display that has delighted the public for over 30 years. [Connie.chan@sfgov.org](mailto:Connie.chan@sfgov.org)

## **COCKTAIL (WEEDING) PARTY**

“Come help weed the hillside. It’s just like a cocktail party without alcohol. Great conversation, meet new people, no hangover in the



morning—maybe a little stiffness, but super esprit de corps.” So sung Erik’s dirty siren song. Craig and Tinnee dug a huge compost pit. Joe beat the refuse into submission. David



H(famous for indefatigable table set up and tear down) wrenched weeds from their roots. Allen G carried away hefts of rubbish. Sarah sifted for rocks. Young Mathew (of the Eden Elizabeth, Eden Jolen and Eden Sophie family) and papa, Andrew, joined the fray. So great to enjoy a sense of our dahlia community again without being invaded by a full-force Swat Company.

## **ABSOLUTELY APRIL**

Do you have several sprouting clumps that you left in last year? Are these sophomores sending out multiple shoots? You might try field dressing half or more of these. With your shovel, go straight down into the earth half way around the clump about 10" out from the center. Then begin to pry up this half of the root mass. It might come out all together or fall into pieces. Be careful to avoid breaking necks. These tubers can be popped into milk cartons or gallon containers immediately. If shoots fall off, you can gently place them in 1x1x3" cutting containers and put under light. Share these with your DSC neighbors at our tuber sale. LABEL !!! Into the hole that is left behind you can add your secret sauce. Then carefully refill to surface level and water. It's sort of like putting a teenage football player into a bedroom with a bunch of food. After a year, there are now 4-10 burly team mates but far less food for them. They will NOT be happy. So you relocate half or more of the teammates and refill the pantry.

Can you plant tubers directly in the ground? Sue does and look at her magnificent hillside. Lou deposits one cutting and one tuber of the same variety per stake. The cutting initially grows faster, but eventually the tuber catches up and you can't tell which one began how. I NEVER plant tubers straight into the ground. I can control heat, light and moisture better up in my loft. Since tubers need 62-66 degrees heat to germinate, this can take a long time to happen in foggy San Francisco. Maybe we'll get some blessed rain? If so, tubers without roots will not be able to absorb the wet gift and will turn to mush. So tragic. Loren tells me that raccoons love discovering that he's planted something; they HAVE to dig it up EVERY TIME. Grrr. Lastly, the wee green sprigs are so delectable, every snail, earwig, slug and other marauding muncher want to devour the delicacy as soon as it emerges. Sluggo Plus is a necessity. I saw it on sale at the airport Costco for \$22.

## PLANTING

Have everything ready first: shovel, stake, secret sauce, label (mini-greenhouse and bottle dripper optional). Dig hole 8" deep. Add secret sauce. Mix with the soil. PUT IN STAKE. Place your stake BEFORE you put in your plant or tuber so you don't accidentally impale wee roots or (gasp!) the tuber itself. If you are planting a tuber, only fill the hole half way up. Lightly sprinkle and then no water!!! until it germinates. If you are planting a cutting, remove the bottom 1-2 sets of leaves and make sure they are planted below your garden's surface. These are the nodes that will eventually produce tubers. Your cuttings will need limited water EVERY DAY for the first 2 weeks. Their hair thin roots cannot absorb a lot of moisture but they can dry out if neglected and not re-hydrate.

## MINI GREENHOUSES AND DRIPPER BOTTLES

I use 3 kinds of mini-greenhouses: 1. I cut the top and bottom off a half-gallon milk carton producing a column or sleeve to slip over a spindly cutting. This lets the sun shine on it, but protects from



the wind and gives a little support. 2. I cut the bottom out of a gallon container and slip this rugged cylinder



around my cutting. The black retains a little heat and protects from the wind. 3. I cut the bottom off a gallon translucent milk container and sink it an inch deep around the wee cutting. It lets light in, limits rain, and protects. **Dripper bottles:** fill a large transparent soda bottle with water; tip it upside down and jam the neck into the soil near your cutting. Tuck some extra dirt around it to support the upside down position. It will take 2-3 days to slowly drip drip drip away.



## SECRET SAUCE

Everyone has her own secret sauce to put in the hole when we plant. This year I am using the Dr. Earth Flower Girl Bud and Bloom Booster—about a tablespoon per clump. I add a teaspoon of calcium nitrate even though the Dr. Earth has some. This is like Viagra for dahlias, helping with pinocytotic liquid transport, keeping our blooms erect. Phil, an avid fisherman, puts a fish head at the bottom of each hole a la Squanto. Some people add extra bone meal, although most commercial products seem to be heavy on the meal and light on the bone. A balanced fertilizer where all 3 numbers are the same is a good addition: 2-2-2 or 10-10-10. A great place to buy chemical supplies for the whole season is Romeo's down in Half Moon Bay. Lucy and Sarah both found Eagle, a powerful fungicide, and Spinosad, a "green" insecticide there. Deborah bought a huge bag of sulfur and one of calcium nitrate that have lasted several years. Let them know you are with the Dahlia Society of California and get their 10% discount!

## LABELING TUBERS AND PLANTS

If you bring tubers to our sale, please label them. Writing on tubers can be difficult. Ideally, the Bottle-of-Ink-in-a-Pencils work great on WET tubers and can still be read when you dig up the



tuber the next winter. In lieu of these expensive markers, I have also used the purple felt pens used to write on bodies for surgery. One can also wield skinny Sharpies—carefully—they tend to shred tuber skin. Garden Labels: a **MUST**. I use pieces of Venetian blinds with a hole punched in the top. I write in pencil, which does not fade like Sharpie writing and does not wash off in rain or fertilizing. I hang these labels from each stake. John Morton

swears that the clinking of the metallic labels against his metal stakes drives the moles and voles away. Loren gave me a bunch of old blinds, so if anyone needs some, let me know. Sue, Pat and Lou produce beautifully laminated labels each year for the public's delight. Tony punches out his labels on a Dymo Label Maker: very professional. Paula likes the plastic long-spiked labels. What ever you use, LABEL IMMEDIATELY!



**Wolfe Lane all labeled**

**This is such a great time of year. Vow to help at our sale, donate cuttings and labeled tubers, offer to work along side fellow dahlianeers, buy some enticing new varieties and exult in this NEW SEASON!**

**Yours in dirt,  
Deborah**

**Photo credits: Adams, Dietz, Gaensler, Murphy, Smith, Wilson**

**Membership: Debbie Frank**

**Snail Mail Benefactress: Patricia Hunter**



**Cocktail (weeding) party: Bottoms Up!**