

# **Dahlia Society of California Newsletter**



## **NEXT MEETING**

**MAY 10, at 7:30 at the FairGrounds Building on 9th and Lincoln. This is the one to invite your friends and neighbors to. Erik will reprise his excellent talk with great photos about A Year of Dahlias. This is the time and place to ask persnickety planting questions. If you have any extra tubers or plants, please bring them for sale.**

## **GINSBERG ADVOCATES NO CARS ON JFK**

**Parks General Manager, Phil Ginsberg and his titular boss, Dave Iribarne, addressed our meeting to explain why there will be no private vehicles on JFK Drive. Mr. Ginsberg declared his love of dahlias and his support of our efforts and cited all the park's offerings: valet pick up, storage unit, and golf cart. Deborah explained that the "valet" concept was so onerous that NO ONE in 2 1/2 years has availed themselves of it. Moreover, no dahlia Dellian has ever been shown storage or a golf cart. Dave offered the use of a golf cart that could be driven to the Dahlia Dell. However, it would entail the Dellian finding legal parking, hiking over to wherever the golf cart sits idle, driving it back to ones car, unloading everything from that car and transferring it to the cart, driving across the sacred seven seconds of JFK Dr. and unloading at the Dell, etc. If they trust us crossing JFK in a golf cart, why**





**not a personal vehicle without all the packing and unpacking and trekking around???**

**Mr. Ginsberg stated that closing JFK blocks only 10% of the roads in our beloved park. Debbie and Maggie pointed out that it's the critical 10% used for museums, Science Academy, the Conservatory and our Dahlia Dell. DSC-ers cited the expensive underground parking prices. Mr. Ginsberg countered that it was less than several lots in The City and far less than meters.**



To conclude, they offered our 7 Dahlia Dell growers 5 parking passes: 3 on Conservatory Drive and 2 on Nancy Pelosi. Supposedly these are dedicated spots, but if someone has already parked there... no recourse but to have those cars towed. On certain days these passes might shorten our hikes in by a few yards: literally a step in the right direction. But they were adamant



that they did not want cars in Golden Gate Park. Except their cars, trucks, firetrucks, ambulances, dump trucks, shuttles, VIP Open Lands vehicles and food trucks.

## APRIL'S BAZAAR



What a treat! Meridith donated dahlia placemats, pot holders, note cards, tote bags and an apron to make a colorful addition to our sale. Everything sold out fast except for 6 placemats and one pot holder which will be brought to our tuber sale April 30. Peggy, Maggie, and Tony brought gorgeous tubers including Nick Sr. Just Married, and Mary's Jomanda. Chad and Maggie brought big gallon dahlia plants. Such a deal! Deborah brought 7 AA-A sized cuttings and 9 others including Jessica, AC Ben, Belle of the Ball, Eden Patricia and Blomquist Jeff. Erik entertained

us all with a slide show of the history of DSC at the Dahlia Dell. He stressed how much the handicapped had appreciated that they could drive into the Dell. The peaceful glory of our dahlias brought comfort and solace to many many people before they were excluded.

## TASTEFUL TOUCH UPS

Phil W. noticed that the weather had affected parts of the new paint job on the teardrop fence. David Zheng, who originally repainted our fence, volunteered to sand and touch up the offending areas in such a way that the retouched additions proved

unspotable. Thanks to Phil and Marilyn again for underwriting the beautiful wrought iron fence reclamation and to David for his expert flourishes. David's team does both inside and outside painting: [davidwhzhen@gmail.com](mailto:davidwhzhen@gmail.com)

## TALE OF TWO POTTING SOILS

Patricia of Manuel's Mexican Restaurant in Santa Cruz reported and documented the results of her experiment potting cuttings in two different potting mixes. "Just wanted to share my experience with two different potting soils. Same seedpod, same starting day, same environment, only two different potting soils. I got one bag of Miracle Grow organic from Costco. The price was good, but never again! I suspect the culprit is the 'recycled landfill material' they advertised on the bag (that I didn't pay attention to) probably contained herbicide or some other nasty stuff. Be careful out there!" Thank you, Patricia, for your contribution.



## **PARKS ALLIANCE FACT FINDING**

**Representatives from the Parks Alliance cruised to the Dell in a fancy Danish Urban Arrow electric carriage. Aimee and Luke**



wanted to know what the PA has done and what they could do for us. The PA runs the umbrella organization under which our Dahlia Society of California can receive charitable tax deductible donations. The PA takes 10% of the donated funds as their overhead. Aimee and Luke sympathized over the difficulty getting things to and from the Dell. They promised to talk to their people but to date we have heard nothing back from them.

## FINAL PARADE OF PEERLESS DAHLIAS

Here are photos of dahlias from the 2021 season somewhere in the world. Will they be growing in your garden this year?



Normandy Wedding Day  
Roid





**Salish Twilight**



**Skipley Spot of Gold**



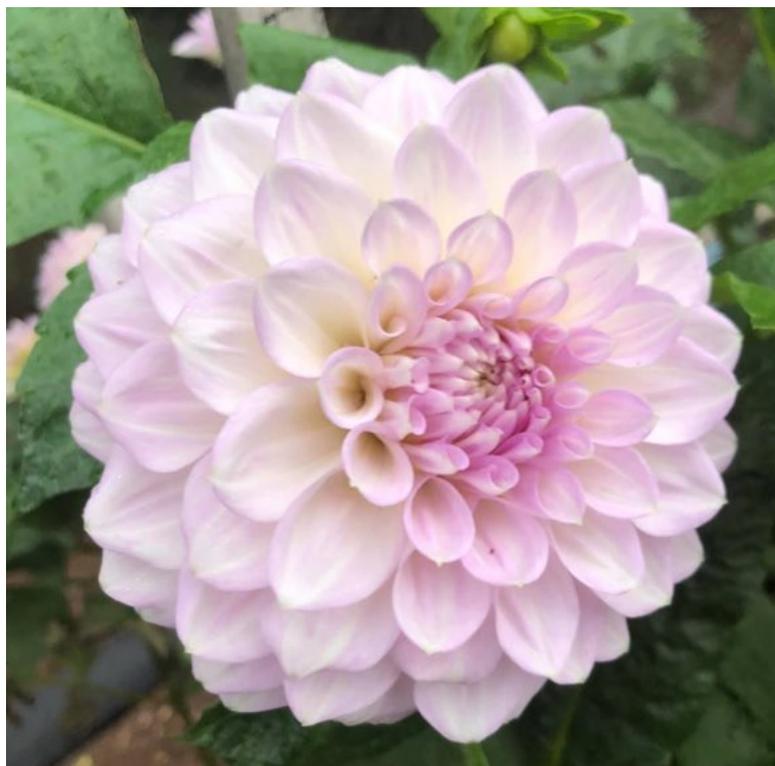
**Strawberry Ice**



**Tacoma Tailspin**



**Wyn's Alpen Glow**



**Wakefield Blush**

## **DEBORAH GETS AROUND**

**Deborah was delighted to share dahlia facts with a dozen 9-year old Girl Scouts in Bernal Heights as part of their Flower Badge experiences. They were mostly interested in the cost of tubers over time and the opportunity to visit the Dell in the summer. When asked to speak to the San Leandro Dahlia Society for their April meeting via Zoom, Deborah realized that SLDS already had amazing dahlia culture experts: John Morton, Roy Stier and Curtis Maxwell. They also had several growers in public places like Casa Peralta, Lake Merritt Gardens, and Root Park. Due to the 2-year lapse of contact due to Covid, Deborah chose to reintroduce the growers in our Golden Gate Park Dahlia Dell. Good discussion ensued over the traveling compost pit and ingredients in Secret Sauces of the famous and would-be famous.**



# COLOR GENETICS

Here is a great slide outlining some of the factors which predicate color in our dahlias. Dr. Wahlbot informs us that in bi-colors like Jessica, the length of the red tips relates to how early in the morning the plant is exposed to the sun's rays. Amazing. So many different factors. This is why so many competitive growers search for trace minerals in their fertilizers.

## THE CHEMISTRY OF DAHLIA FLOWER COLOURS

### WHAT CAUSES DIFFERENT COLOUR DAHLIAS?

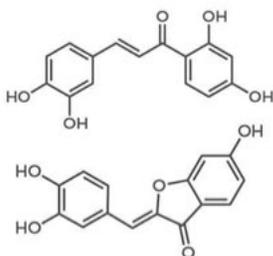
The colours of dahlia flowers are a result of anthocyanin-, chalcone- and aurone- derived pigments. Colourless flavones interact with and stabilise anthocyanin pigments, which also influences dahlia flower colour.

#### PIGMENTS IN DIFFERENT COLOURED DAHLIAS



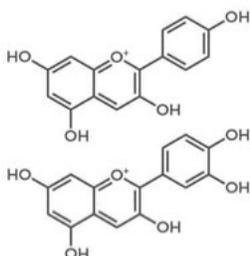
#### Chalcones and aurones

Derivatives of butein (top), sulfuretin (bottom) and isoliquiritigenin



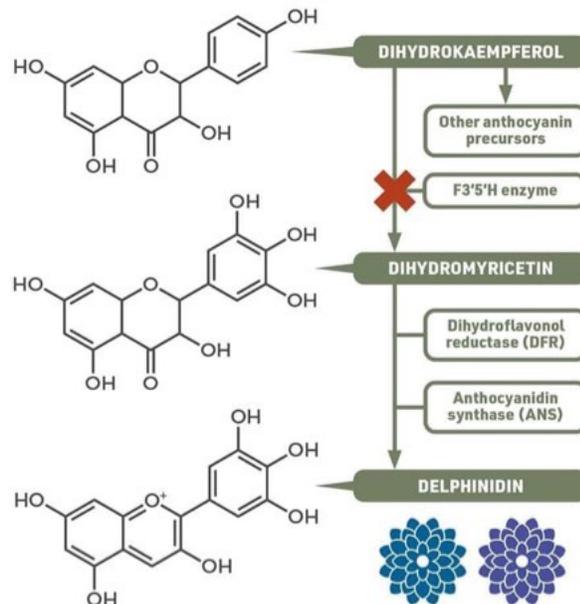
#### Anthocyanins

Derivatives of pelargonidin (top) and cyanidin (bottom)



### WHY DON'T WE SEE BLUE DAHLIAS?

A single enzyme, flavonoid 3'5'H-hydroxylase (F3'5'H), is responsible for generating the precursor to the anthocyanidin delphinidin. Delphinidin-derived anthocyanins give blue colours. Dahlias cannot make the F3'5'H enzyme, so blue dahlias aren't possible.



## CHANGING OF THE GARD—NERS

For several years Tinnee has cultivated the western Hillside at the Dell and introduced us to several new and wonderful varieties. This year she has relinquished her fiefdom and chosen to help Pat

in her third of the teardrop. It takes a big trowel to fill in for Tinnee. Thus, two people step up to the challenge: Sarah and Joe. Sarah has volunteered at the Dell for the entire Covid siege. She bought a red wagon, soil amendments, stakes, shovel and gopher cages. The first time she lugged all her gear back to her car parked somewhere up Nancy Pelosi Dr. she



started laughing. She stuffed things into the back, then pulled them out, rearranged and rearranged. “Now I know why Deborah has such a specific pattern of loading her Element.” At first 37 spaces seemed like a lot, but how to choose ones favorite 37? Paula invited Sarah over to Tiburon to pick up Ketchup and Mustard, Mars, and Clearview Cameron and Daniel amongst others. Paula showed her how she surrounds her emerging sprouts with copper flashing collars to deter the sails and slugs whose slime reacts with the metal ions in a very uncomfortable way. Hillside sister Sue also donated a bunch of rare tubers to begin Sarah’s custodianship.



**Please stop by on a Wednesday or Saturday morning to meet our newest grower.**



## **DELL DOINGS**

**Lou staked out his realm and has begun planting a tuber and a cutting per stake. Both Sue and Sarah have sunk their gopher cages and will begin planting in May. Pat and Tinnee are both happy that more than half of the clumps left in from 2021 have sent up shoots. Yay! Erik will divide his clumps in time for our tuber sale. Great news: massive lady bugs have recently hatched and are crawling all over the little green tufts of dahlias. So great**

Did you know that a swarm of Ladybugs is called a Loveliness, A Loveliness Of Ladybugs.



to see. Thanks to Tim who brought a bunch of 4x4s and stayed to weed the inside pathway around the volcano. Both so appreciated. Deborah has bemoaned the wanton vandalism of either raccoons or crows. In their gluttony to uncover worms, these

destructive critters fling sprouts, tubers, and fat dinner worms all over. However, where Deborah has hung pots to clang against stakes in the wind, the varmints appear to have

avoided —hence so many dangling containers.



Grrrr! Loren brought by a nifty little gizmo that makes paper pots. He folds newspaper over the form, adds a little glue, and presses it into the mold. Voila! A tiny paper pot to plant in and drop directly into the ground after it comes out from under the lights. Good to see Soc, Jerry, and Nathaniel recently at the Dell. Wednesday and Saturday mornings are good times to catch up with our volunteers.





## **MAY MINISTRATIONS**

**Plant plant plant! I plant up to the first leaf no matter cutting or tuber. I dig my hole. Pound in a stake. Add secret sauce and mix in well. Refill hole around plant. If your new dahlia looks fragile, add some sort of collar around it: milk carton sleeve, transparent milk jug, or black 1 gallon pot with its bottom removed. These will protect the new dahlia from the rain and potential bird/squirrel/critter depredations. Water well. Sprinkle with Sluggo Plus, diatomaceous earth, or something to thwart snails, slugs and earwigs. They will turn your precious new plants into expensive salad buffet overnight. LABEL! immediately. Do NOT pretend that you will remember later.**

**Consider that cuttings have NO TUBERS under them. They just have tiny hair-thin roots. So they need to be watered a little EVERY DAY for the first 2 weeks to get established.**

**Ideally you have already set up your watering system. I use a PVC pipe with individual sprinklers only 2" above the ground. The hillside and Pat use a drip system with emitters for each plant. Lou prefers to hand water so he can follow the progress of each plant each week. So meditative. Whatever you do, make sure you are bottom watering. You do NOT want to every water your buds or blooms.**

**Set up an XL spread sheet. Mine lists the variety names down the left side and the ADS #, size, form, color, source (friend, sale, commercial dealer), and position in my garden. This shows me at a glance what sort of things I should look for to finish planting. I only have two stellar right now. So I am looking for STELLAR stellars and can trade wonderful things for them.**

As you read, Sarah has now matriculated to her own real estate on the hillside. I am looking for someone else who might want to volunteer on Wednesday or Saturday mornings or both. Contact me: [dahlia.dietz@gmail.com](mailto:dahlia.dietz@gmail.com)

May is the month to wheeler dealer to fill the final holes in your plot. We should have a few more cuttings and tubers for sale at our May meeting. Call your known sources for last minute treasures. DO NOT give away ALL your plants; save a few as insurance against calamity. Ravening crows, romping dogs, an oopsy step, or burst hose could decimate established plants. You want to grow a few back ups in 1-3 gallon pots just in case.

Yours in dirt,  
Deborah

Photo credits: Baulig, Boley, Cornett, Davis, Dietz, Gaensler, Joyce, Kennedy, Pentitila, Raga



# Snail mail benefactress: Patricia

