

# Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



## NEXT MEETING

Tuesday December 13 at 9th and Lincoln in the Hall of Flowers.  
**NOTE EARLIER TIME!!! 6:30. Program: FIESTA! PARTY! JUBILATION.** After 3 years, we will resuscitate our Holiday Party tradition. Please bring a yummy dish for pot luck and a white elephant style dahlia/garden gift (@\$10 or homemade) WRAPPED for a rousing game of Present Predation. In the past, DCS revelers have been known to don their glad rags, bedeck with sequins and glitter and snazz out. Crazy hats and even elf ears or reindeer antlers delight. Consider vying for the most stolen present. In the past, items swiped have included: spring bulbs, dividing chisels, loppers, a shovel, a box! of dahlia magnets, and inexplicably a purple Warriors T-shirt??? Delight us! Remember: 6:30 not 7:30. We have not decided about zooming our revelry, but if we do, you will receive a zoom link Monday or Tuesday before our Gala.

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Our Lou Paradise brought a shovel, pitch fork, various dividing tools, and 4 poster-perfect clumps to demonstrate the art of cleaving tubers. When Deborah commented on how text-book worthy his root masses were, Lou ruefully sighed, "The junk clumps are ALWAYS nice. But the ones you really want are a snarly mess." The corollary being: the more you paid for a variety, the fewer tubers





**you get at the end of the season. Lou recommends cutting down 2-4 weeks before digging up to encourage the tuber skin to harden and the tubers to go into dormancy. Otherwise, the might do poorly in storage. Lou uses his sharp shovel to pierce a circle 12" in radius around his clump. This severs any roots extending outwards. He makes a second round trip, gently jimmying up his shovel at each thrust. So by the time he places his shovel and his pitchfork at opposite angles, the clump**





pops up as he uses opposing prizing force. The Lous of the world can readily do this alone; we mere mortals do better with a prizing up partner and the count of 3. When the clump is thrust up, DO

NOT grab it by its stem and shake off the dirt! Lou admonishes you to be very careful of the NECKS of the tubers. Gently remove heavy dirt with your hands first. Lift the clump from beneath it. The weight of caked dirt can snap the necks, rendering them useless.



Lou recommends processing one clump at a time for several reasons. Firstly, keep the name tag with the clump at all times. Lou's maxim: A dahlia without a name is just a weed..... Lou uses a gentle sprayer to remove most of the soil. He places the clump on a 4"x4" block and uses various hand tools and even a chisel and hammer to cleave off tubers. All the eyes are found near the attachment to the stalk. So the neck has all the genetic material and the tuber is just food. So if the tuber is sliced in half, the dahlia can still survive; but if the neck is broken: Doom. All is not completely lost, however.



Lou has had success carefully taping the broken neck back together. Other masters resort to dipping the injured root in wax to try to save it. Lou dips his tools in bleach solution between clumps to lessen the likelihood of disease contagion. Deborah brought her Dremel oscillating tool and let members zzzt zzzt



beautiful triangle cuts off Lou's practice clumps.

Lou places his severed tubers in a 10% bleach solution bath for 5-10 minutes and lets them dry for 1-2 days before storing them in a combination of peat moss and vermiculite. He dips his exposed tuber edges in cinnamon. "Cinnamon smells better than suffer."

Lou showed how he picks his seed heads a little green and hangs them upside down in his garage to dry out. He gently separates the dry brown mass. Then he blows on the mess thereby separating the seeds from the chaff. Like magic! These he will plant in late February.

## ELECTIONS: POLITICS AS USUAL

Thanks to Sarah who arranged for voting ballots and conducted our annual election and also oversaw the inclusion of our Zoom participants. Our roster:

President	Erik Gaensler
2nd VP	Debbie Frank
Recording Secretary	Sarah Smith
Corresponding Sec	Deborah Dietz

Board Members Jan. 2023-2024

Lou Paradise  
Lucy Waskell  
Tony Socha  
Lola Pettit



## DEBORAH'S PORTLAND DAHLIA SAFARI

After celebrating a family memorial for 4 days at the end of September, my brother Tom offered two days of chauffeuring me around to visit 4 Portland dahlia gardens and 2 Washington dahlia back yards. Wow! Perfect timing; GREAT brother.

### LARRY SMITH

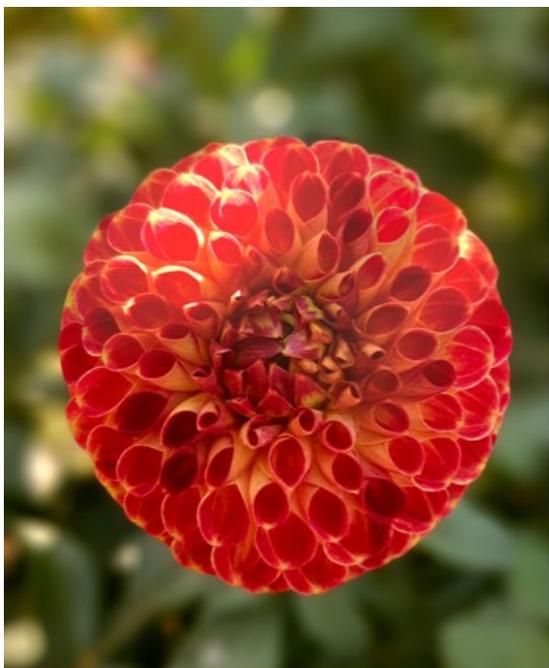
Just back from the National Dahlia Show in Washington DC, Larry Smith roused to usher me around



Portland. Despite his smallish yard (by Pacific Northwest Standards), Larry had a



gloriously winning year, finishing off with FIVE blooms on the head table in DC—in other words, Larry carried award winning dahlias clear across the



country on a commercial air plane! Wow! First I noted that Larry's leaves were immaculate. Next, I was astounded that his My Heros were as tall as we were! All his stems were so strong using no stakes at all. What a lovely or/yel WL Crazy Velvet. And Rycroft Blackberry!! MBa mixed oranges. Must have for '23. In the rear yard, Larry grew his prize winning micro collection, tiny orchids, WL's, and collettes.



## SWAN ISLAND

Over 60 acres ALL IN BLOOM! almost overwhelming! Linda Taylor, Portland Trial Garden Czarina and member of the ADS Research Committee, invited me to help with the Portland Trial

Garden judging. This felt quite different from the bench judging we do at our dahlia floribunda. Linda kindly walked me through the procedure. Three blooms that jumped out at me (but of course we did NOT know the hybridizers' names yet) were a humongous AA SC var. o/y/r behemoth, later revealed as Grandpa's Gift, a Gitts introduction. Quite floriferous





for one so large. The second seemed nondescript until examined more closely: 3-4 rows of fully involute petals like you'd expect on an orchid form. What a cool new direction this could be heading into! And the



one that blew my socks off: a spectacular variegated WL now revealed as Sandia CanCan which will be released by Birch Bay in 2023. Swan Island grows one example of every dahlia in their catalog right next to the Trial Garden area. So instead of trekking through all 60+ acres, you can mosey around 200+ plants. So convenient. My Forever, a luminous orange WL stood out.



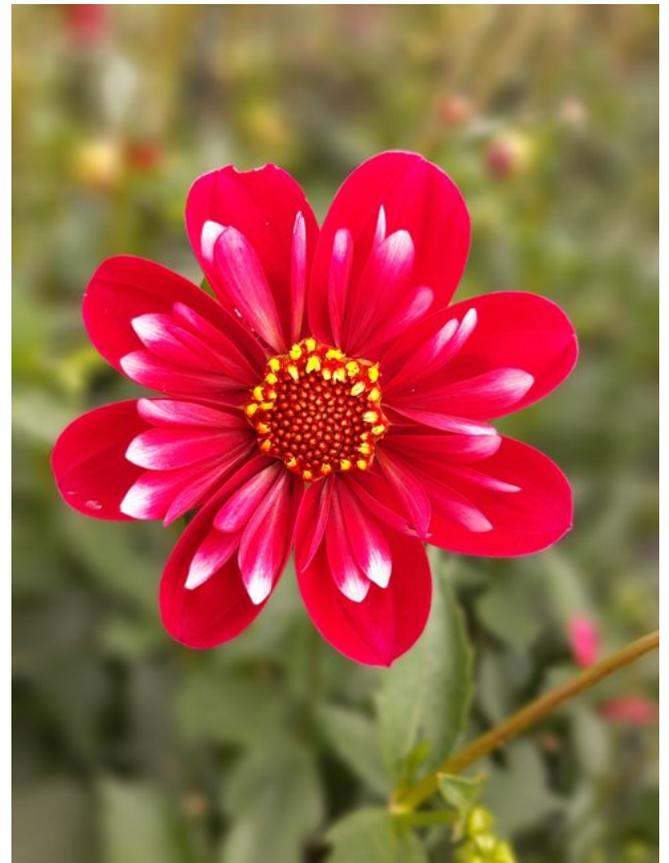


## **OLDENKAMPS**

Also just back from the National Show, ADS VP, Mark Oldenkamp presided with his knee up and ice water flowing through a cast from a nasty stumble the last day of the Washington DC show. Thus, Laura walked us around their 600 blooms on what had been a chicken ranch. Alongside an impressive solar array, we walked on weed cloth isles. We admired a honking big Hapet Electra and a



perfect Trengove Millennium, 2002, B FD yellow. What a cute red with red center collonette, Lakeview Redeye.



## ALLEN MANUEL

Plunging yet further into the verdant Oregon countryside, we arrived at Allen's acreage. For years Allen Manuel ran Douglas Dahlias, a commercial dahlia biz with tubers and cut flowers. Now he and his brother grow "only" 3000 or so" dahlias in 3 sections: the newest seedlings, the successful seedlings, and the potential seed parents. How fun to walk through all these amazing possibilities climbing over his berms and across his wet furrows. Allen's String Theory, AA R LC, exploded with color and writhing



petals. A yet unnamed third year bi-color whetted my envy. What a shimmery creamy pink B SC Candyland with so many blooms for such a big variety. I finally saw in person Kung Fu Kitty, presently labeled NX, but really more of a massively fimbriated laciniate. Very cool. We all paused in the crepuscular glow of dusk settling over the herds of magnificent dahlias.

Thanks to our ragged host Larry Smith, for showing us the Best of the

**Best in Portland! I'm sure he slept like the dead that night.**



**Kung Fu Kitty**

## **NEW DAY; NEW STATE: WASHINGTON**

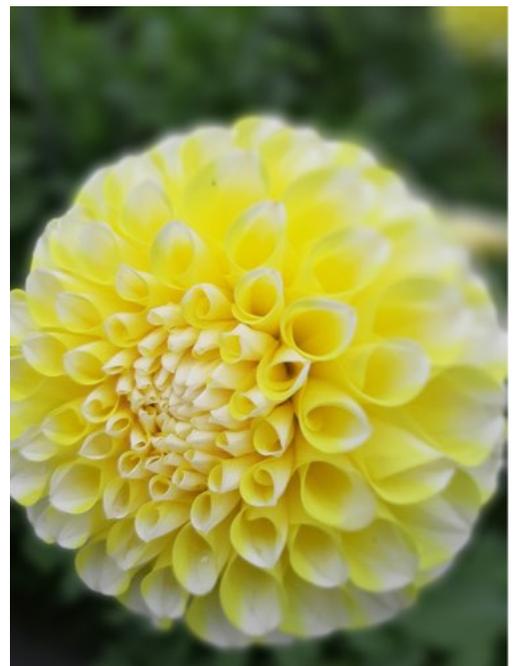
### **BOWLED OVER AT BAULIG'S**

Upon stepping into Dan and Vicky Baulig's huge back yard, my patient brother Tom exclaimed, "Wow! What's your secret!" The Baulig garden was so astonishingly exceptional. Some blooms were soooo tall, that Vicky brought a step ladder for me to climb up. Every single bloom caused me to gape but some stood out



more than others:  
Clearview Sharon, B C  
yellow. AC Petalicious,  
BB IC lav/wh was darling.  
River's Yellow Snow  
grows in all the  
competition gardens in

the Pacific NW: BA  
BI wh/yellow. Of  
course, I closed in  
on the flashy  
Josephine  
Sunburst, sweet  
yellow with striking  
magenta tips, but  
unfortunately  
betwixt forms. But  
stunning! Rumor  
has it that Dan and  
Vicky's magnificent





**garden may be on the tour at next year's National Show in Portland, Oregon. What a treat for everyone that would be. Dan and Vicky are innovators. They try all kinds of things. Check out how they elevated their strawberry clumps with laundry baskets so the bugs won't eat them. They use massive plumbing systems to both water and fertilize. Although they have only been growing a few years, Dan is already in charge of the ADS store that sells books, vases and other dahlia related items. Dan also hosts a call-**

in Zoom forum every 4th Wednesday of each month. He invites you all to join him whenever you can. **DAHLIA TALK ZOOM MEETING 11/22 @ 7:00 pm pst.** It's always the same zoom url. Topic: Portland Dahlia Society Zoom Meeting  
Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87070954664?pwd=OUhWOG90UUpHNENiMU5sWHZpczFEdz09>



### **SHEEP COUNTRY: MAX OLLIEU**

Max grew up in Idaho. He would watch over sheep flocks way up in the mountains for the summers between school years. Now he invites his neighbor's prime beauties to pasture on part of his verdant acreage. "The ram won a prize at the fair last week," bruted Max, pointing to a horned fuzzball. Max remarried early this year; love and companionship spring eternal! Max is also



famous (infamous) for winning Best of Show SO many many times! We finished our dahlia safari walking through Max's collection where his shade cloth had just taken down. At the end of every show season, Max invited the moms and kids of his neighbors over to cut as many dahlias as they could take home, always a sumptuous garden party that everyone looked forward to. So even though everything had been picked down the



week before, Max still amazed us with a humongous Felida Superb. Wow! Rhonda, a boringly perfect pom, wins ALL THE TIME. So great to visit such a champion grower, excellent neighbor and superb friend.

## PEER INTO DAHLIA FUTURE

Larry Smith edited this insightful video about the Trial Garden in Canby, Oregon, the home of Swan Island Dahlias. In 8 minutes he lets us look at potential futures for dahlia hybridizing directions.

<https://youtu.be/ZmkZ4vlq1lo>

## DAHLIAS HALLOWEEN STYLE

Jenna shared some of her autumnal arrangements which spruced up her Halloween party. So much fun.



Check out how Deborah



dressed as an entire flower garden complete with dahlias and butterflies.

## **PACIFIC SOUTHWEST DAHLIA CONFERENCE SURVEY**

The San Leandro Dahlia Society is hosting the 71<sup>st</sup> Pacific Southwest (PSW) Dahlia Conference/Annual Meeting on February 18, 2023.

The Pacific Southwest Dahlia (PSW) Conference is comprised of the California regional dahlia societies who in affiliation with the American Dahlia Society meet annually to plan and share our love of and information about growing, cultivating, showing dahlias.

The PSW Conference members include the San Leandro Dahlia Society, the Dahlia Society of California (SF), the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society, the John E. Stowell Dahlia Society, the Central Coast Dahlia Society, and the San Diego County Dahlia Society. Conference hosting is rotated among the societies and was postponed for the last two years due to Covid. It is San Leandro's turn to host in 2023. To that end, is this survey to learn how many plan to attend, the topics of interest to the attendees and to understand a little bit about the demographics of our conference members. The survey information collected is anonymous and for planning purposes only.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PSW2023conf>

### **TIS THE SEASON TO BE GENEROUS**

Thanks to Paul who donated to DSC not once but twice via the Parks Alliance. Parks Alliance graces DSC with their 501c3 status for tax purposes. Paul designated his gift\$ for the Dahlia Society of California. Thank you!



## DAHLIA SOURCES

Start with the ADS Classification site and [thedahliaaddict.com](http://thedahliaaddict.com). The [thedahliaaddict.com](http://thedahliaaddict.com) lists hundreds of varieties of dahlias and their commercial sources. The web abounds with people offering astoundingly fabulous tubers trying to capitalize on the dahlia mania which has swept US gardeners. Whom do you trust? Swan Island is the largest grower of dahlias in the US. They have realistic photos and middle of the road prices: \$6-40 for a single tuber. They have good service. BUT....not all their offerings are “show” dahlias. That’s where your ADS Classification bible comes in; use it to check out if the bloom won prizes in 2022. The ADS website lists both the Fabulous Fifty (the top US 50 prize winners) and Cream of the Crop (those varieties which won 15 or more awards ranked from most awards to least). Since you have only so much space, grow the BEST!

### COLLETTE REPORTS:

#### Connell’s Dahlias

- 4 years of ordering
- reasonably priced tubers
- good customer service - one tuber not included in shipment and they replaced that season with an extra for good measure.
- tuber quality always consistent - has visible eye, tuber looks healthy and large enough
- favorites: Roque Starburst and Alejo (hardy and return year after year)
- some are beautiful the first year but do not return

#### Longfields (large reseller)

- 3 years of ordering
- 3/4 consistency but excellent customer service and they will replace if you send pictures of unviable tubers or wrong color.

- wait for a sale -this is also sold at Costco - even less expensive but less selection in bundles.
- They sell tuber clumps which are typically easier to grow and will produce a bigger plant in the first year. And have a better chance at re-birth the following year.

### Tall Grass farms

Good quality no problems

Ordered 2020

### Sly Hill Flowers

Good quality no problems

Ordered 2020

### Brent and Becky

Good quality and reasonable

ordered in 2018 and 2019

limited selection

### Frey's Dahlias

reasonable

Old School, run by an older woman, used paper for ordering in

2019, nice handwritten notes

a lot of substitutions in my order and limited selection of the more modern colors (more muted) that I like.

### Vendors that are fine but with reservations:

#### Swan Hill

Fine quality but they don't seem to return after the initial year.

Because I can't get them to grow more than one year, I find their tubers expensive.

#### K Van Bourgondien (reseller)

Previously some great prices but quality of tubers had been mixed recently. They will refund if the tubers don't grow but customer service is outsourced so its interactions are more mechanical. They sell tuber clumps which are typically easier to grow and will produce a bigger plant in the first year. And have a better chance at re-birth the following year.

### Eden Brothers & American Meadows (resellers)

Quality is a mixed bag but I was too busy to follow up, so don't know how customer service is.

They sell tuber clumps which are typically easier to grow and will produce a bigger plant in the first year.

My YouTube feed found this great informational soils lecture. A kind of masterclass on soil, its structure and life. Really interesting for the intermediate / advanced gardener about more recent theories on soil and the living components that are needed in the chain. I remember that someone in last month's meeting was interested in soil stability / amendments for fertility. This is part 1 of 4.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErMHR6Mc4Bk&t=1390s>

### **SONIA REPORTS:**

Eden Brothers

<https://www.edenbrothers.com/> Tartan

Regans Nursery (storefront in Fremont)

<https://www.regannursery.com/>

Good Day

FB Margie Buchannan (Moon Dahliary)

<https://www.facebook.com/margiemontgomerybuchanan>

Sweet Natalie

**Hollyhill Gordon**

**Jamie's Dahlias**

<https://jamiesdahlias.wixsite.com/2020>

**Hollyhill Bill M**

**Fancy Pants**

**Kitsapdahlias.org**

<https://kitsapdahlias.org/>

**Coralie**

**Dahlias 4 DIPG**

<https://www.facebook.com/Dahlias4DIPG/>

**Castle Drive**

**Crème de Cassis**

**Bloomtide**

<https://www.bloomtideflowers.com/>

**Penhill Dark Monarch**

**Peaches 'n Cream**

**Broad River Blooms**

<https://www.broadriverblooms.com/>

**Sugartown Sunrise**

**Linda Bontrager (FB)**

<https://www.facebook.com/BontragerLinda>

I found that both big and small growers, both importers and local, had disease issues.

## **DEBORAH**

**Loubaugh's Dahlias (carrying Clearview's New Originations).  
River's Dahlias. Dirty Girls' Dahlias. Cowlitz Dahlias. Locally,  
Becky Adams in the Monterey area sells tuber and plants for  
\$5-10. Both the San Leandro and Monterey Dahlia Society Tuber**

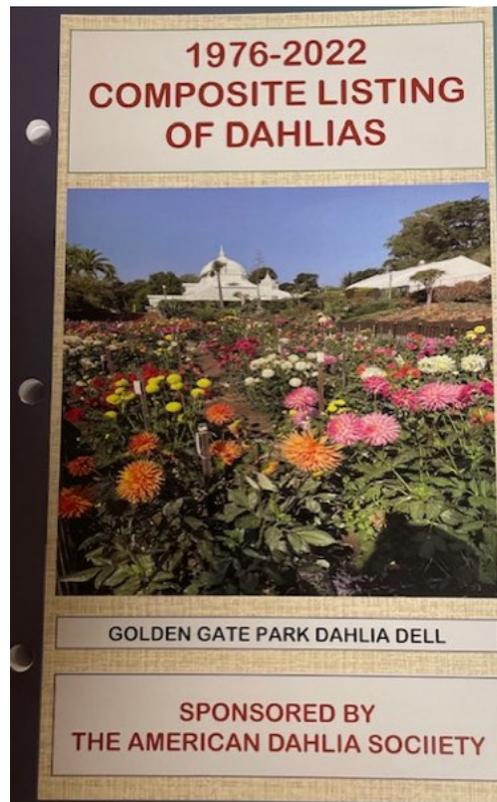
sales and of course the Dahlia Society of California's sale are great sources.

Thank you to everyone who sent in recommendations both yay and nay. Remember we in the Bay Area are in a unique weather situation. Our geography rarely experiences frost; we get warmer earlier. So when you order, request early shipping. I like to start my tubers in doors up in my loft. I start in January. Then I can plant 2' tall dahlias in early April and get first blooms the end of May. Serious show competitors start in March for bigger better blooms a little later in the season. Most suppliers hesitate to send tubers through the mail before March first lest they be caught up in route and freeze. Think about what you want.

## ADS COMPILATION BOOK

Dan Baulig is happy to announce the new 1976 - 2022 Composite Listing ADS

Book for sale at the  
It's already 3-hole  
This lists EVERY  
name that has won a  
1976! Look what  
cover! A fitting tribute  
who completes his  
Classification Chair.  
job Lou has done



Classification  
ADS on-line store.  
punched. \$17.00.  
dahlia variety by  
blue ribbon since  
garden made the  
to Lou Paradise  
last year as ADS  
What a fabulous  
despite Covid.

## DSC NAME BADGES

Patricia has kindly had all these badges made. Please pick yours up at our holiday party.



## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?



Abby and Sonia saved seeds from this season. They look forward to growing them in February. Although they know that most of the seeds will produce so-so blossoms, they hope to win the dahlia lottery with something really marvelous. Good luck! Kevin has dug up half his Wolfe Lane beauties already. Sarah sent in this excellent video about dividing which includes good tools and progression from an easy to divide clump to challenging to really tough. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3kBK7xe6el>

## DAHLIA DELL DOINGS



Pat and Erik have begun lopping their clumps; Lou and Sarah are completely cut back. These little recent sprinklings have revived Sue and Deborah's plants, yielding some colorful blooms even at



**Thanksgiving! Ken and Kathy drove in from Lodi for our November meeting and stayed overnight so they could visit the Dell on Wednesday morning. Ken hails from 4 generations of Central Valley farmers. Now that they are retired, they want to have fun experimenting with dahlias. They promised to document some of their new ideas to share with us as next season progresses. We hope to learn a lot from them. Sue has already begun pulling clumps out. It's pretty tedious when she can only cart out a couple at a time due to the park's ban on our automobiles. Jerry hopped off his**

**bike and weeded with Tinne and Pat on a beautiful day-before-**



**Thanksgiving. Deborah's team achieved her goal of producing a decent Thanksgiving Table bouquet. So delighted, the host made 4 arrangements to show off each amazing bloom. Now will there still be some blooming for OUR holiday party???**





Deborah got her Thanksgiving Bouquet

## DECEMBER DECISIONS

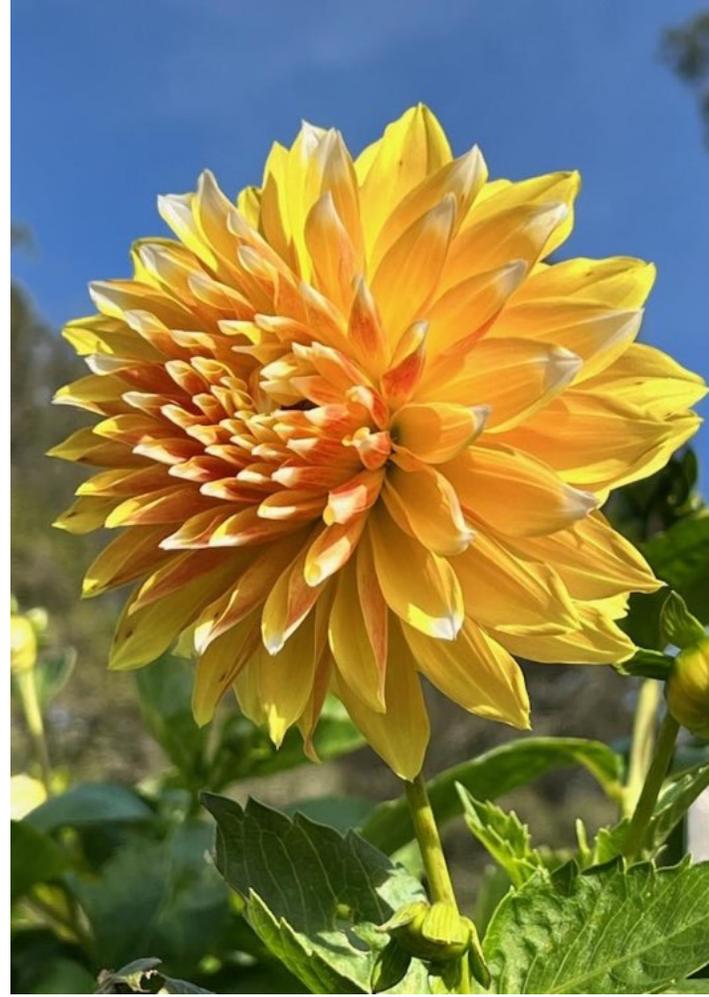
**TO DIG OR NOT TO DIG?** If you have well drained soil, you do not need to dig until March—unless you want to. For those with clay or very compact soil, putting off digging is NOT an option. You **MUST** dig up your clumps. Follow Lou's excellent instructions.

You do have the option not divide, however. If you only have a few clumps, here's a simple kluge. Dig up your clump, keeping as much soil around it as possible. Put it in a cardboard box with a shovel of soil below and another on top. You can stack these boxes under an eave or in your garage. Ignore them until February. Soo Simple.

## DIVIDING

DSC would certainly appreciate your dividing and labeling your tubers for donation in April. I use course vermiculite to store mine. Lou uses a combination of vermiculite and peat moss. Sue uses sand. Find out what works for you. Little bags of vermiculite cost about \$10; ask for the huge (4'!) bags of vermiculite )@ \$20—a much better value. I use Bottle of Ink in a Pencil which writes only on wet surfaces. Some people use purple surgical markers; others resort to Sharpies. Find what works for you and keep your labels together with your tubers at all times. Check out how Kristine Albrecht uses the plastic shoe box storage method. Home Depot has these on line for @ \$2 each.

If you plan to leave some of your clumps in the ground over the



winter, cut them down to 5 notches and cover with a 5 gallon pot. Put a potted plant on top to hold it down; it also mitigates the ugly. This acts like a mini greenhouse and protects your underground treasures.

## LATE SEASON CUTTINGS

Sometimes we enjoy a wonderful warm weather spell which stimulates your tubers to send up a few sprigs in the heart of our winter. These shoots make excellent late season cuttings which can be potted up and put under greenhouse lights. If you're curious, come by the Dell on a



Wednesday or Saturday morning to check out our process.

## MULCH!

Once you've settled your dahlias for the winter, concentrate on soil enrichment. Now is a good time to get your soil tested. If you've grown in the same spot for many years, you might have built up phosphorous or salt from all your fertilizer additions. Gather leaves and grass clippings from your neighborhood. Collect free ZooDO from the Oakland Zoo. Phil covers his plots with munificent bags of chicken



manure which will mature and soak in with the rain in the next 3 months. Think of dahlias as teen-age football players: they continually EAT. So fill your dirt pantry now. Another lovely way to rebuild your nitrogen supplies is to plant a cover crop. Try fava beans, mustard seed, or other type that collects nitrogen at its roots. So instead of brown reproachful dirt, your eyes dine on green happiness.

Yours in dirt,

Deborah



**Photo credits: Adams, Albrecht, D. Dietz, T. Dietz, Gaensler, Ifalxa, Lee, L. Smith, S. Smith, Tanlimco, Wong**

**Webmasters: Devi, Payam**







