



# *Dahlia Society of California Newsletter*



## **NEXT MEETING**

**April 11 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: getting ready for the Tuber and Plant Sale and last minute planting tips. Please bring some tubers or cuttings to donate for sale. (Please remember that all the individual exchanges and swaps must take place outside in the parking lot. Exchanges should be arranged between parties prior to our meeting.) Who will bring Spring treats to share with hungry dahlianistas?**

## **WHAT'S IN YOUR SECRET SAUCE?**

**So great to have so many people attend our March Convocation in person on such a stormy night, including members all the way from Lodi and Mill Valley—and just as many on Zoom! Thank you Sarah and Erik for technical acumen. Deborah asked us, “When is the right time to plant outside?” Due to our atrociously wet weather, this is not the same answer it would have been last year. Normally in the Bay Area, any time after March 15, is ok; but this year the**



atmospheric rivers have washed away those dates; now we're looking at April 15 if not later. The soil has to warm up at least 6" below the surface. Jumpstarting tubers and cuttings obviates the temperature demands somewhat because these early starting methods yield a goodly root mass which can thrive at slightly lower soil temperatures provided there is adequate sunshine. After

digging your hole, pound in your stake before anything else, lest you forget and pound it in afterwards and impale your tuber or maim its roots. As for secret sauce, Tara says she always plants with bone meal. Deborah likes Dr. Earth Flower Girl fertilizer with its microbiota and microrhizie (@ a tablespoon per plant.) Deborah also adds a teaspoon of Calcium Nitrate, the so-called dahlia viagra for stronger stems. Peggy ventured that she grows rabbits and thus has bunny poop, utterly gourmet garden manure. Another person plants with worm castings—excellent for microbiota, as well. Erik recommended Dahlia University on the ADS website; it has wonderful YouTube tutorials FREE! Check them out. Ken tantalized us with his process of using hydrogen peroxide to remove certain soil blights. DAHLIA INSURANCE??? Peggy remembered the year she gladly donated all her extra



dahlia tubers to our sale only to be left high and dry when a couple of her sure things fizzled out, leaving her with empty holes in her garden. Deborah chimed in about how uncertain growing in a public spot like the Dahlia Dell is: you never know when a dog might tear through, or the rotten raven hooligans riot around destroying things for fun. You should hold back 5-10% of the amount you traditionally grow as “insurance.” Keep these potted in 1-3 gallon buckets, so if something untoward were to kill one of your precious plants, you’d have a substitute ready to go with little growing time wasted. You could bring some of your excess to our June meeting for other members who didn’t cultivate dahlia insurance and are bereft.

## FIRST SALE

Thank you to all five generous members who brought our first donations for sale. Erik offered up a sprouted Nellie Rose in a half gallon pot. Erika proffered 4 sprouted tubers in potting medium. Maggie donated several tubers. Sarah dangled lovely Make a Wishes 4” tall. Deborah brought milk cartons with her favorite “weed,” Hollyhill Show Time because it **WANTS** to grow. As a reward for being the first to bring in dahlia donations, Meredith awarded each with one of her beautiful note cards adorned with cloth dahlia patterns. Sooo fun!



## HUNGRY LEPRECHAUNS

In the spirit of the occasion, Debbie plied us with darling shamrock cookies. Jenna dangled Girl Scout Tagalongs. Peggy nailed us with exquisite See's mint Scotchmallos—too addictive! Ken and Kathy offered an entire bag of trail mix baggies. Patricia fed us with hummus, chips and lemonade. Thank you all for thinking of your fellow DCSers on such a nasty rainy evening.

## DAZZLING DAHLIAS

More eye candy for your delectation. Some of these can be found at [thedahliaaddict.com](http://thedahliaaddict.com)





**SPENNITHORNE Mabel**



*September Morn*



*Tahoma Shea*



17/08/2022

**Slavy Slavchev**



*Tahoma April*



*Tahoma Stellar Feller*

## FLOWER OF THE YEAR

Each year your DSC Board chooses a fully double and an open



and an open faced variety as “challenge flowers” or “flowers of the year.” This year the choices are Clearview Cameron, B C, and Eden White Knight, O wh.

Fortunately, our cutting crew have made a lot of both of these so you can buy them at our Tuber Sale if you don't grow them already. The idea is for EVERYONE to grow these two cultivars and display them at our Floribunda! August 19-20. Flowers of the year begin as exact clones, but under different stewardship, in

different soil, facing different sun exposures, unique watering regimes, and of course, enjoying different secret sauces, these will eventually produce variations in bloom. The CHALLENGE is to win BEST Flower of the Year compared to all your peers! Please try to grow these and show them at our August extravaganza. We all love to see just how widely the various candidates differ.

## DAHLIA TUBER AND PLANT SALE

On Saturday, April 22 we will hold our Dahlia Tuber and Plant Sale at 9th and Lincoln. Volunteers will arrive by 7:30 to sort, label, arrange signage, ferry dahlias to appropriate spots, put out photos, and move tables around. Please bring your labeled tubers at this time. WORKER VOLUNTEERS ONLY will enjoy the privilege of early shopping, if we finish set up in time. (Do NOT expect to waltz in @9 and buy gorgeous dahlias.) We will need volunteers to help with the public: counters to total bills, advisors to answer public's questions, door checkers, table tidiers as dahlias get

picked over, someone to help Debbie at the membership table, ambassadors to inform the public about our free May 9th meeting and the DAHLIA 101 lecture with photos and lots of roving ambassadors to spread happiness despite the feeding frenzy atmosphere. Please wear your DSC name tag and bring your ADS Classification Book, a sharpie, a pen and plastic surgery gloves. Please copy this poster and send it to all your FB friends, your instagram buddies, and all your email people. Please ask them to resend it to their friends. Our cutting crew reports the probability of over 700 spectacular cuttings. We hope you are bringing tubers, cuttings, and plants to donate to your society, too. We hope many of you will stay until noon to help with clean up.

### **ADS PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS**

Larry Smith has compiled this wonderful collection of the winners from the 2022 ADS Photo Contest. Check them out. Plan how you will enter 2023's contest! When you click on this link, you will also have the option to see the entire contingent of entries from each category in separate YouTube videos.

[https://youtu.be/O71\\_89AmyAU](https://youtu.be/O71_89AmyAU)

Larry also produced these tantalizing pitches for the 2023 National Show in Portland at the end of August.

<https://youtu.be/imFeRdg7w00> general highlights

[https://youtu.be/q8iTkr\\_hQaY](https://youtu.be/q8iTkr_hQaY) optional bus tours

### **BLUE DOT FARM FUN**

Erik reports: Liebe Patterson, who generously brought beautifully divided



tubers to the last two dahlia sales, invited DSC members to her Blue Dot Farm in Nicasio for March hands-on dividing clinics. The first group drove out in a light drizzle on Sunday March 19, arriving at noon. Our DSC team included Stasia Obremsky, after whom Eden Stasia is named, Alan and Susie Gregory, Sarah Smith, Shelley Marks and Erik Gaensler.



Blue Dot Farm exceeded our expectations in both its beauty and facilities! We were promised a barn to work in if it rained, which turned out to be a brand new pavilion with great tables, lighting, and multiple sinks. Three remarkably friendly cats supervised and

kept us entertained. Liebe had dug clumps previously and stored them in wood chips in bankers type boxes. The clumps were in excellent condition, and our team got through





multiple boxes once we all got the hang of it.

We then paused for a delicious luncheon provided by Susie and Alan, with hot tomato soup kept simmering in giant thermoses, fresh deli sandwiches,



and many types of cookies including Susie's home-made specialties. Even some Easter Eggs arrived three weeks

early! The lunch was so abundant that members were blessed with take-home dinner as well.



Thus refreshed, the team went back to work till 4 PM. Even the cats that perched on the boxes were impressed! Another crew is being assembled for March 26, 10 AM -2 PM.

Best of all, Liebe has extended an



invitation for a DSC summer visit when the garden is in full bloom. Erik and Sarah can be seen pointing to the twin rows that will soon be planted with 300 dahlias! Thank you, Erik, for this evocative recounting of your Blue Dot adventure.

### **BEST OF THE WEST**

Louise compiled all the data from all the dahlia competitions in California last year. Then she sliced and diced it for us. Firstly she ranked the Top 20 cultivars by the ones which won the most blue ribbons and higher. Secondly she listed the top winners by size and form. Lastly she gave us a grid of all the winning Courts of Honor. Click [HERE](#) to see these lists of winners. Thank you Louise!

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?



Although Kevin has left Wolf Lane for southern climes, he still has prodigious plans for a dahlia garden this year. Check out his dining room lights project.

### **DOT FARM SECOND ROUND**

Christina and Tong shared these photos from the second weekend's Dahlia Dividing Clinic at Liebe's Blue Dot Farm. Christina reports that there



were all manor of tools



available including an electric oscillating multi-tool. Liebe, excellent teacher that she is, urged them to “cut flush to the stem if you can’t spot an eye.” Ken and Kathy dove right in and they all processed more bankers’ boxes of clumps. Everyone brought yummy goodies to share at break.





## FIELD DRESS WHILST THE SUN SHINES

Lucy invited Tara, Brigid and Deborah over to her terraced

gardens underneath the Sutra Tower. She had 3 goals: completely remove some tuber clumps; field dress certain masses, taking out 3/4 and leaving one quarter in place and undisturbed; and lastly, extricating 1/3 of a clump and moving it to a better location. During the past season, Lucy learned which of her favorites grew to great height and shaded out other favorites; some early risers became bullies and bogarted sun, space and





nutrients. The muddy helpers put in immediate dibs on Lucy's extra Irish Black Hearts. Forearmed, Lucy hopes for even more exuberant glory



this year. Deborah transported the remaining clumps to her Maus Haus where she'd set up for dividing, cleaning, bleaching, sulfuring, and potting up. Unfortunately, due to all the intervening, atmospheric rivers (!), Deborah had to store all the roots and dry potting soil in her living room. Lucy came over on the next dry, sunny day to help process and pop them all in Deborah's germination loft.

## POPULAR PALAVER

On the Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 PDT, Dan Baulig of the Portland Dahlia Society, hosts an interactive Zoom discussion group, Dahlia Talk.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87070954664?pwd=OUhWOG90UUpHNENiMU5sWHZpczFEdz09>

People from all over the world participate. Some people ask dahlia questions and some people proffer their dahlia solutions. He often invites guest speakers to share mini seminars on seed starting, making cuttings, potting up tubers, storage, et. al. It's a great way to learn new things, meet new growers, commiserate and crow with pride. Check it out.

## 2022 BEAUTIES



Especially with the wet muck all about us, these







remembrances of beauties

past will give us hope for the



next season.

## OUR CUTTING CREW

Getting ready for the most anticipated sale of the year, our “Cutting Crew” has been hard at work starting hundreds of dahlia plants that will be available for purchase at our Tuber and Plant



sale. Please thank Karen for these wonderful pix and thoughts about these dedicated DSC super stars.

Lou has containers of all kinds of tubers sprouting in the greenhouse. Like a surgeon with a scalpel, he takes cuttings from



each tuber. Tinee, with her green thumb and dibble, then plants each cutting in a 4 x 4



container. Pat methodically labels each cutting and tracks the number of cuttings on a database sheet.

The cuttings are then placed in a greenhouse on heated tables under a misting machine. In 4 to 6 weeks the cuttings produce roots and more leaves.

You will be amazed at the wide assortment of dahlia varieties that will be available for sale. Be prepared to buy a lot! Tell your friends!

## **AMAZING APRIL Tuber Sale**

Our Tuber and Plant sale is so exciting! Beware: You can get caught up in the frenzy. Have a PLAN. What do you need? Is

there a color lacking in your proposed plot? Is there a form under represented? Are you focussing on balls or stellars this year? How many do you really need??? Check your ADS Classification Book for the BEST of any given category. (We may have 10 of these ADS Classification Books for sale at our Tuber Sale....first come....) First shop for your necessities, then browse. Do purchase our Flowers of the Year: Clearview Cameron and Eden White Knight.

### How to Treat Your Cuttings

Depending on how developed the root mass is, you might be able to plant your newly purchased cuttings directly into your garden. Remember to plunge deep your stake FIRST so as not to amputate dearly paid for root development. When I buy a cutting with few roots, I transplant it into a half or full gallon pot of rich potting soil. If it is still

VERY small, I sequester it in my green house for further maturation in a protected environment for 1-2-or even 3 more weeks before I harden it off and then transplant it into the Dell. I am using my entry greenhouse



window as a halfway house in the hardening off process; Tesla uses it as his sentry post. I hope his carbon dioxide is strengthening my nascent dahlias.

## Planting

Yay! It's finally time to plant. I dig my hole as deep as it needs to be to accommodate the dahlia I'm planting. So if I have a cutting in a gallon pot, my hole needs to be at least a gallon deep; likewise, if I'm planting a brick of roots released from a milk carton, my hole is as deep as the milk carton. I immediately add a



stake. Thanks to Wolf Lane Kevin, I'm trying out green-coated rebar stakes this year. Next, I add 1-2 tablespoons of Dr. Earth Flower Girl Fertilizer and a teaspoon of Calcium Nitrate. I write in pencil on a venetian blind label and affix it to the stake. I put a copper ring around the base to thwart snails and slugs.

Depending on the development of the plant, I may slip a milk carton sleeve over the top like a silo without a roof or a 1-gallon bottomless pot. An upside down gopher cage also protects. These act as a bastion against the wind, yield a little sun protection, provide a bulwark against pesky

birds and squirrels and warm up the immediate air. Because everything likes to eat our beautiful leafy green sprouts, I sprinkle with Sluggo Plus which kills snails, slugs AND earwigs.

## Watering

Cuttings and tubers require different watering patterns. Cuttings have very fine roots. Like a baby, a cutting can take only a little amount of water at a time. So cuttings need a little spritz — sometimes every morning and evening—to start out until their root masses are better developed. Tubers have NO ROOTS AT ALL, so

they cannot take in any moisture; they will rot in the presence of water. Do NOT water a tuber sitting in the ground until you see substantial green sprout. If you plant a milk carton block of roots with a tuber at its center, then you can water. Watch until the plant begins to sag a wee bit and then give it another slurp of water. In the beginning, pay attention to the individual needs of each plant. Some people use variable drippers; you can adjust the amount of water each dripper gives and change it over the course of the dahlia season.

### WHO'S YOUR DAHLIA BANK?

Every year I ponder what to do with the extra, really rare and desirable dahlias I do NOT have room for at the Dell. I invest them in my favorite dahlia banks. That is, I foster them out to friends who have a little extra space who will grow them for the year. For example, Paula grew extra Rolfs. When my Rolf disappeared at the Dell she gave me a new one (bank interest) with which I won a bunch of prizes in last year shows! Likewise, Tony wanted Powder Puff Polka and replaced mine the next year when I lost it. Loren must be a Credit Union, because his Powder Puff Polka came back with 6 tubers of interest payments! Lucy invested several of her Red Velvets with friends; now friends of friends want Red Velvet, too, and she can rely on her "banks" to return her Red Velvet. There are so many ways to loose dahlia varieties; here's another way to try to



prolong their presence in gardens all around us. Who are your dahlia banks?



## BIRTHDAY VISITORS

Sarah and Steve celebrated the big 30 with a trip to San Francisco and the wine country. On their way back to Georgia, they stopped to commiserate about dahlia addiction.

## Map and XL Chart

Some people have superior memory capacity; others of us less. As soon as you have planted, draw a map and label each spot with your cultivar's name. I also fill out an XL grid with the name,

source, ADS #, form, color AND garden spot designation. Erik calls this the belt and suspenders security method of knowing next season what you've got this season.

Good luck! This will be a beautiful year for dahlias!

Yours in muck,  
Deborah

Photo credits:  
Adams, Capps,  
Clearview Dahlias,  
Dietz, Gaensler,  
Liebe, Sanchez-  
Corea, Spencer, Tang

Proof Marshall: Steve

Membership: Debbie

Webmaster: Payam

Social Media Guru:  
Laura

Please copy our Tuber  
Sale poster and send  
it to EVERYONE!







# DAHLIA TUBER SALE

SF Dahlia Society  
Golden Gate Park  
Hall of Flowers  
9:30am until Sold Out



APRIL 22



SFDAHLIASOCIETY









