



Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



NEXT MEETING

13 JUNE @7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: videos from Portland about their National Show in August. Dahlia Cocktail recipes. Bring your favorite Dahlia Cocktail additives for Show and Tell. Please bring any leftover tubers, cuttings or plants for our final \$ale. Who will bring summer treats for hungry gardeners?

KALEIDOSCOPIC STROLL



Deborah led us through a pictographic review of an entire year of growing dahlias. We learned about cats trained to catch gophers, above ground dahlia growing, and Hortanova netting instead of stakes for supporting our favorite blooms. Tips on how to spot earwig devastation proved particularly timely. (Earwigs have been



around for eons; they do not die easily.) We learned how to escalate from rolled wet newspapers, Sluggo Plus, Captain Jack's Dead Bug to BIG GUNS like Malathion and Seven. Grr! We broke attendance records in person and via Zoom, including out-of-state and even out-of-country (Australia!) participants. Thank you especially to our Tech Maven, Laura!

TUBERS, CUTTINGS AND PLANTS, OH MY!

Tinnee and Pat brought the last of the greenhouse cuttings and pot roots with photos! Deborah, Maggie and Lucy offered lovely plants in yogurt containers and milk cartons. Jeannie brought a whole clump of Taratahi Sunrise (a New Zealand introduction). Steve sold T-shirts, all of the profits of which will go to our DSC. (Note: the first one to a DSC member is only \$12; the subsequent ones are \$20.) Contact Steve: Parlando17@sbcglobal.net. Joe, our treasurer, smiled his very green \$mile.



MUNCHIES

Thank you to Pat for the nuts and to Kathi for her insane Insomnia Cookies. Bridget baked us cupcakes. Jaqueline and Ron shared pastries. Erik via Jenna donated chocolate wafer cookies—MMM! Thank you all for slating the goodie urges of your fellow gardeners.



HERE COME D-JUDGES!

DSC hosts this year's judging school on Saturday, July 22, 9 AM to 4:40 PM.

Lakeside Presbyterian Church, 201 Eucalyptus Drive, San Francisco, CA 94132-1514. Who can/should attend this? Anyone interested in digging a little deeper into dahlia lore and lingo (bract? picotee?) should sign up. Of course if you plan to show,

~ *Congrats, New Candidate Judges* ~



this is essential! If you plan to clerk, this would greatly boost your

Congratulations to PDS members, **Bill Tompkins** and **Dan Steves**, who completed the coursework and tests to be candidate judges through the [American Dahlia Society](#). They both demonstrated an interest in growing, exhibiting, and judging dahlias, completed the ADS Candidate Judge class, and passed the Candidate Judge exam.

understanding of forms, colors, and aesthetics. California needs more dahlia judges; we have lost valuable senior judges and need to restock with fresh new minds—please!! This is so important: you do NOT PAY for this seminar. Your benevolent DSC will pay your tuition which also covers snacks, beverages and lunch!! Please email



our Membership Chair, Debbie, that you intend to attend:
dfrank524@gmail.com We need to keep track for seating and food.

Even though Billy and Dan have moved to Portland, we are proud that they have both become candidate judges and will help out at the National Show in Portland, Oregon, Aug. 24-28.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

DSC hosts the PSW Conference next February. We need a lot of help. There's various committees: Raffle (headed by Jenna), swag bag (needing a chair), Food (needing a leader), Poster design and so many other aspects. Please contact Erik ehlg@yahoo.com or Deborah dahlia.dietz@gmail.com or Jenna jennakaiserw@gmail.com to get on board. Please **VOLUNTEER TO HELP!** A brilliant conference starts with monthly strategy zoom meetings.

DAHLIA FASHION



Jane Foster designs dahlia fabric, dahlia dresses, dahlia blouses, dahlia bags and soon,



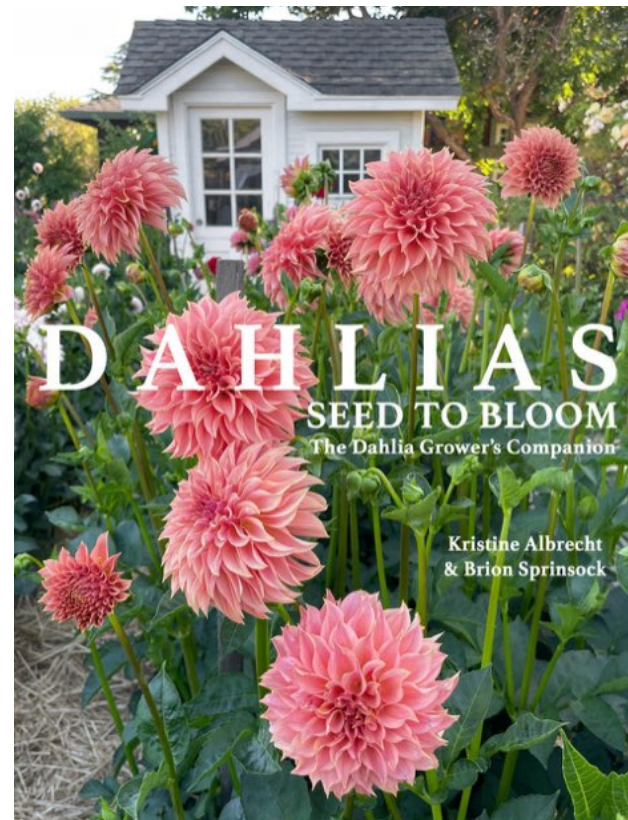
dahlia aprons. How did this happen? What circuitous set of connections stimulated her creations? Her friend, Cathy, in Marin

dazzled her with a dahlia. Cathy found out that Erik G had put up a basket of dahlia tubers for auction at a charity event. Cathy's doctor husband trained Erik way back. So the fix was in. Cathy gifted Jane with the auctioned loot right before Covid lowered the boom. Jane's raised beds produced such fantastic blooms. "I was so excited," Jane exclaimed. She started photographing dahlias, then drawing them, then designing them into fabrics, 4 designs of which can be ordered as yardage from Bloomflower.com. Jane has been teaching sewing and design for 30 years. Presently she holds class in her design studio in Walnut Creek three mornings a week. Check out her website: sewstudiojane@gmail.com



SEED TO BLOOM

Kristine Albrecht has written a new book illustrated by lush photos and YouTube video tutorials from her husband Brion Sprinsock on all aspects of growing. The title says it all: Seed to Bloom. So many followers asked interesting questions prompted by Kristine's instagram [santacruzdahlias](#), that she felt inspired to compile her answers. Kristine writes, "Our new book features nine dahlia growers from seven countries to share how they grow in different climates with different soil



and different goals for our plants.” Kristine’s book could have been ordered on Amazon for \$24.99 until the beginning of May, but now it’s bumped up to \$30.

MULCH MUCH?

Curtis has just mulched his dahlia plot at Lakeside Gardens in Oakland. “I’ve been a long-time believer in mulch. It prevents weeds, helps contain moisture in the ground, and over a season, composts into the soil, amending it for the next growing season.



Remember the mantra of the soil management expert who

presented at the conference in February? **COMPOST, COMPOST, COMPOST. And MULCH, MULCH, MULCH.**

When growing in my backyard at home, I used leaves and grass clippings—excellent mulch. Growing at Lake Merritt, I needed to buy something. I like Alfalfa because it is full of nitrogen, fertilizing during the season as well as providing the benefits of mulch. Some folks like to use rice straw, which works very well as mulch but does not provide the soil nutrients. I have not noticed much increase in bugs compared to not mulching. Could be, but certainly not in a significant way in my experience.”

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. Dan often invites guest speakers to share mini-seminars on seed starting, making cuttings, potting up tubers, storage, etc. It's a great way to learn new things, meet new growers, commiserate and crow with pride. Check it out.

HARDWARE OR DAHLIAWARE?

Look what Jenna found at Ace Hardware!

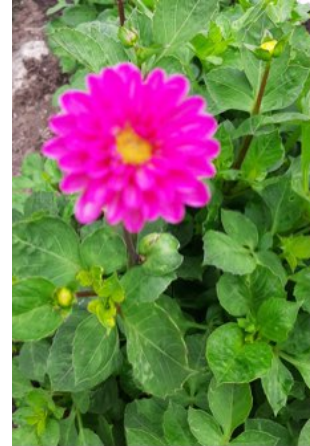


DELL DOINGS

Lou has planted his mathematically precise rows.



His tiny sprigs seem to double in size each a week. Erik and Joe have both sunk their gopher cages and planted.



Sue's section is really bushing up magnificently. Sarah's milk cartons at home will soon be transported in her wagon to the Dell for planting. Sarah's sophomore Elvira wins **FIRST BLOOM** distinction. Pat and Tinnee have welcomed Jerry's help hauling,

weeding, digging, dividing and planting, even when it drizzles. LeQuin has waged a

war on weeds both on the hillside and in the teardrop. Wage on!

Thanks to Brigid, Karen and Tara for helping Deborah field-dress several of her sophomore clumps which burst forth too many stems! The team looked for the weakest and thinnest sprouts, dug their fingers down to the tuber and jiggled and jimmed them out, potting them up in



1x1x3's and 4x4's. Karen raved about Dahlias by Julie. "Beautiful tubers with excellent eyes."



JUBILANT JUNE!

Wow! Dahlia patches change every day now. I am still field dressing some of my sophomore plants which have produced sooooo many (tooooo many) shoots. So I am taking out the weaker excess and popping them into cutting pots in the greenhouse and adding a little (1 Tablespoon) Dr. Earth Flower Girl fertilizer to what portion remains in the ground. Some particularly prolific plants get divided in thirds. One third stays in the Dell; the other two clumps go into 2 1-gallon pots for insurance (and sales). Many people are delighted to see so many new

sprigs erupt; however, these will all be competing for nutrients, water and light. **NOT GOOD.** Better to be able to cossset just 2 (alright, maybe 3) stalks. Every year I try to discipline myself to eradicate all but 2 (or 3) stalks per clump. It's soo hard to choose.

LABELS

Lauren ruefully acknowledged that last year he used venetian blind strips and wrote impermeable Sharpie names; alas, they faded and he now has mystery tubers.

Sometimes low tech is best tech:

PENCIL! I label with pencil. It lasts for years!

Please send me pictures of your labels if you use something else and I'll share it with the greater DSC. John Morton loves his metallic labels clanging on his metallic rebar stakes. He thinks it helps keep the birds and gophers at bay. Remember

to make a map and keep an XL spread sheet just in case.



WATER

Many of you use drip systems. I recommend the emitters which you can hand regulate. They can be set at limited water right now as your dahlias are taking off and then gradually be turned up as

your plants' needs grow. Remember, your dahlias will tell you when they need water; they will slightly wilt. They like to be deeply watered and then to slightly dry out, forcing their roots just a little deeper.

PINCHING OUT, STOPPING, TOPPING

All these phrases mean the same



thing: removing the
send the excess
establishing better
Some growers do this
has 5 sets of leaves;
see the glimmer of
stop my leggy plants
of the greenhouse
reaching for the light.
snip, leaving the top
so I can root the



apical top of a plant to
energy into
roots and stems.
as soon as their plant
others wait until they
the first bud. I like to
when they come out
where they have been
If it's a rarer variety, I
set of two leaf pairs
snipped portion to

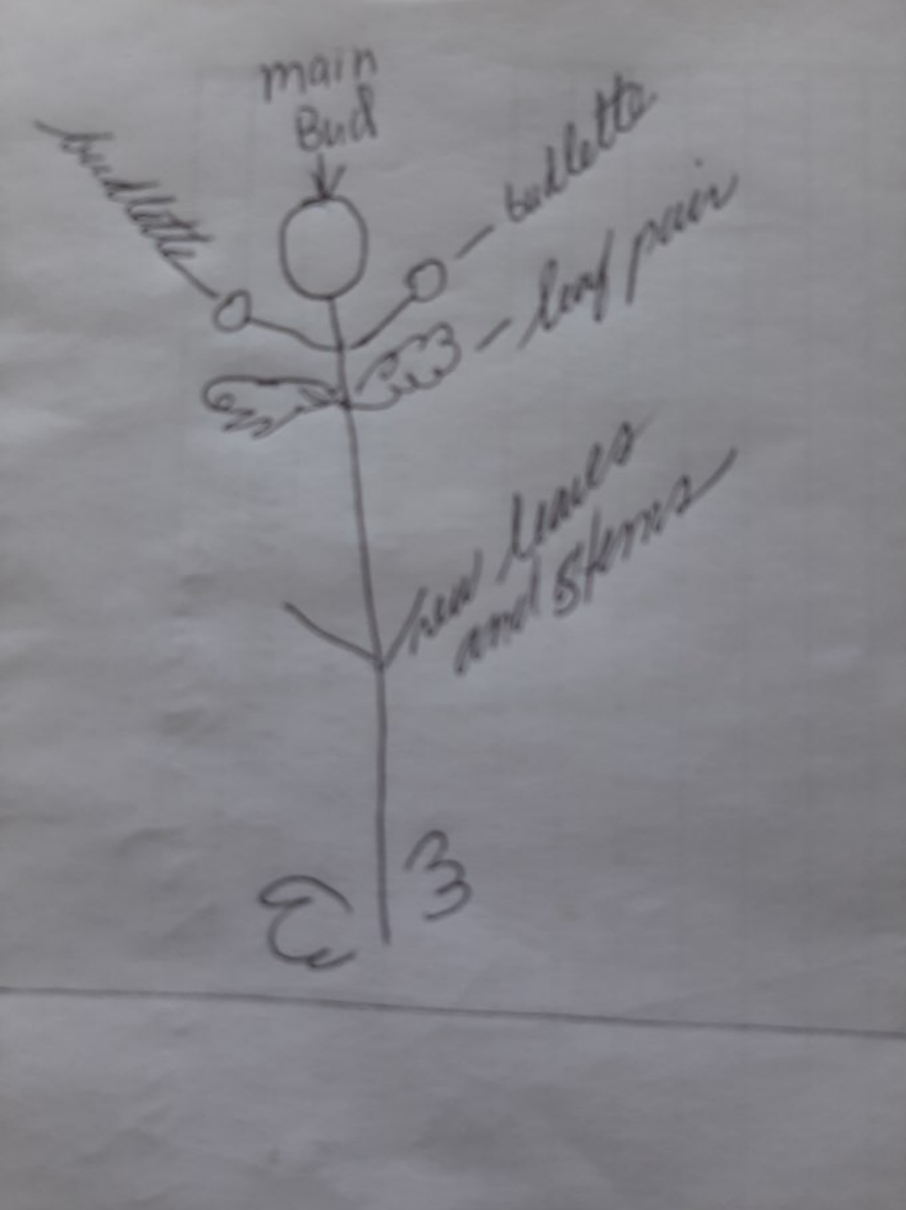


begin a new plant. If you want to be absolutely certain you are stopping in the right place, wait until you see a bud beginning. Usually, there will be a main bud accompanied by two little budlets on either side and a pair of leaves. Cut below this accompanying pair of leaves where two new sprouts should be forming. This main bud, 2 budlets, and 2 leaves cannot be rooted into a new plant. All the energy from this amputated piece will go into building better roots and stronger blooms in the future.



DISBUDDING

Some of us have already had the pleasure of disbudding, removing all but the central bud on a stem, thereby sending all that energy that would have pumped out two more scrawnier blossoms into just one glorious one. Years ago, my volunteer's



beau came to help. This massive man, a baker, had massive hands and huge sausage-like fingers. Nevertheless, he disbudded with gentle deftness and seemed to zone out. He returned without his sweetheart, saying, "I NEED to disbud some more." Yes, disbudding can be meditative or even addicting.

COCKTAIL TIME

Using my new electric sprayer, I dosed my entire section at the Dell in less than an hour. Every time I mix a dahlia cocktail, I re-evaluate what my patch

needs. Here is my recipe for my first spraying:

Captain Jack's Deadbug (for chewing insects including earwigs)

Diluted Stylet Oil (to prevent mildew)

Diluted liquid fertilizer (to promote growth)

A teaspoon of baking soda (to change leaf ph and thwart mildew)

A squirt of dishwashing soap (to act as a sticker and keep most of the spray on the leaves)

I am still putting some Sluggo Plus around specific dahlias which seem to have attracted a host of tiny (1/2" or smaller) black/grey slugitos. Grrrrr. They have been munching my leaves into lace.

SOOOO MANY DAHLIA PLANTS

Due to too many atmospheric rivers and a lot of field dressing, I have so many potted up dahlia plants. They are for sale at the Dell

on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. Or for the best selection, come by the Maus Haus, get a tour of the greenhouse, meet Tesla and buy a bunch. Tell your friends.

**Yours in dirt,
Deborah**

Photo credits: Dibner, Dietz, Foster, Gaensler, Kaiser, Maxwell, Shoemaker

Webmaster: Payam

Zoom artists: Laura and Sarah



Phil reports his inner Richmond garden is blooming!



When you have a lot of holes to dig in a hurry?



