



Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



NEXT MEETING

July 11 at 7:30 PM at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Discussion of our show which is also a conference show and includes medals award in certain categories. Of course, we'll talk progress and problems in our patches. Please donate your extra tubers/cuttings/plants for sale. Who will bring treats for hungry gardeners?

SHOW 'N TELL

Kalpana brought her first 3 blooming dahlias to our meeting in the loveliest of containers. We discussed how the ideal stem length is 1 to 1 1/2 the diameter of the bloom. However, stems only count 5% so even a curly, giraffe-esque stem cannot detract much from an otherwise outstanding bloom. Every exhibit dahlia **MUST** be shown with its first



pair of leaves. **MUST**. Without two leaves, the exhibit will not be judged. So even ratty, ugly, chomped, mildewed leaves are better than no leaves at all! Exhibit dahlias **MUST** have first leaf pairs. All blooms must be disbudded. Someone also brought a tuber with leafy gall. For some of the people present, this was their first opportunity to see this nasty horrible problem up close and personal. Grrrr. Instead of one or two shoots per tuber, leafy gall erupts in 15-25 shoots from weird barnacle-like eyes. This should immediately be dug up and thrown away into the garbage **NOT** the compost! You should leave the spot where it had been growing empty.



LEAFMINER,
MILDEW,
EARWIGS

Pat discussed leaf miner, a small insect that leaves drunken tracks in leaves. Not only are these unsightly, leaf minor

can also be a vector for disease. Pat immediately strips off the affected leaves and then sprays with Serenade or Captain Jack's Dead Bug. June Gloom swamps San Francisco in murky gunk; we rarely see the sun. But even growers on the Peninsula are seeing unprecedentedly early mildew. Mildew looks like someone dusted dahlia leaves with powdered sugar. Tim has used Mildew Cure to excellent effect. Ron, who grows grapes up in St. Helena, sprays a systemic Luna Experience, which he gets at Wilber Elis. Defender PM by Arbico purports to be an organic cure for mildew. Deborah sprays Stylet Oil prophylactically. If mildew has gotten away from you there is only one thing to do: take off all the affected leaves. Spray with the mitigant of your choice. Wait 5 days. Spray again. Wait 5 days. Spray again. So 3x in 15 days. Your new leaves should be coming in happily green. But you have to keep on top of mildew. It's ubiquitous; it's in the air. Earwigs are nocturnal eating machines. They devour dahlias overnight. You rarely see one in the daylight. Sluggo Plus thwarts earwigs but can make some little dogs pretty sick. Diatomaceous Earth in a ring around the dahlia stem can obvert slugs and snails, but hardly slows earwigs down. Remember that earwigs need to hide in some dark hole or stem or under leaf litter during the daytime. Eliminating shelter, like fallen leaves and other detritus,



causes earwigs to hide someplace else. Crows and Ravens are again digging up tubers or pecking off green sprouts. Grrr. Ken suggests a ceramic owl, an age-old predator of grabby crows and ravens.

LeQuin learned how to take cuttings while helping out at the Dell. So she tried it with her big AA Lavender Perfection at home. Six beautiful rooted cuttings came to our meeting for sale. Deborah also brought a bunch of milk cartons and 4x4's of cuttings. Unfortunately, many people have had a rotten time starting tubers or keeping small cuttings alive in our crummy COLD weather. So many people were happy to have such mature cuttings available for replacement.

Thank you to Ken and Kathy for three bags full of home-grown cherries. So sweet! Cara, your kumquats are so exquisite! So very nice of you all to share these treats with your fellow dahlianeers. Thank you to Sarah for practicing in advance to coordinate her computer, the projector, Zoom, and the camera so that we could have people in person and at home participate. What a techie!

JUDGING SEMINAR

Saturday, July 22 at Lakeside Presbyterian Church, 201 Eucalyptus Drive, San Francisco. 9 AM-@4 PM. Lunch provided. This is for anyone interested in delving deeper into The Dahlia. Come learn from the best! Bring good questions and interesting dahlias. Please let Debbie know you will attend:
dfrank24@gmail.com

IF YOU DON'T BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

Kevin of Wolfe Lane learned that SoCal is a completely different dahlia world. First he built raised beds in the back yard and a long, lusciously composted bed in the front. Alas, the gophers



found it almost immediately. So he redug the entire plot, lined it with hardware cloth and let the edges raise 2-3" above the surface of his soil. Whew! No sooner had he

averted the rodent riot, but voracious grasshoppers flew in and devoured his new dahlias. His first bloom, Peaches 'n Cream, survived beautifully! Tune in for the next chapter of the Young and Hungry next month.



ART IS IN THE OAKLAND AIR

Our Kevin Woodson came back from Taiwan for his art opening at the Joyce Gordon Gallery, 406 Fourteenth St (at Broadway / 14th St. BART), Oakland. Kevin's show is open until the end of July. Whilst most of his pictures include birds, he did include one dahlia watercolor. Yay! Steve and Deborah caught his wonderful walk-through for his big fans. He also released a new book about finding your fulfilling vision and making it a reality.



FLORIBUNDA!

It's a little over a month to our big DAHLIA SHOW! WOW. What can you do to get ready and what can you do to help at our show? Firstly, make sure you have a list of all your cultivars and their ADS #'s. Do you have containers with pin frogs? Check out garage sales and the Salvation Army. Remember: shallow and HEAVY. You want a relatively shallow vase because your specimen bloom must be shown with its first pair of leaves ABOVE the container's edge. You want HEAVY because some dahlias blooms counterbalance flimsy pots resulting in disaster. Particularly if you're showing x3 or x5, you want HEAVY. Consider sponsorship. This is when you donate \$20 or more prize money to

support a certain category, type of dahlia, or a specific cultivar. For example, Deborah sponsors a bi-color category; Lou often sponsors a Paradise Introduction; Paula puts up prize money for Best Orange Dahlia. We have some existing categories or you could suggest one of your choosing. We need these and your prize money now. At the show: setting up tables on Friday and breaking them down on Sunday. Kitchen, clerk, judge, ambassador and membership table are some of the jobs. The Kitchen person makes sure that refrigerated things get returned to the 'frige, gets lunch out both Saturday and Sunday and back into the kitchen, and makes sure the buffet table stays tidy. Clerks accompany the judges as they evaluate the exhibits. Clerks keep track of the winners, write them up, award the colored dots, and help run the winners to the Court of Honor. Clerking is a great way to understand the arcane workings of judges' minds. You do NOT have to be a judge, but attending judging school would be very helpful. Ambassadors rove the isles answering the public's questions and making sure they've voted for People's Favorite Dahlia. The membership people sit behind People's Choice and extol the advantages of joining the Dahlia Society of California. Contact Deborah: dahlia.dietz@gmail.com It's sooo much more interesting to participate!

TWICE AS NICE

Craftsman Quarterly has re-issued their extraordinary article on Dahlias, Dell and even a bit about Dietz with wonderful photos. Please share it with as many people as you'd like to educate further about dahlias.

<https://craftsmanship.net/of-dahlias-obsessive-growers-and-their-high-stakes-beauty-contests/>

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

A group of sculptors toured Paula's amazing terraced garden in Tiburon, especially noting how she highlights sculptural art. Of course, they had to visit the dahlia garden, even though nothing is



blooming yet. Can copper collars be considered sculpture? Or just slug deterrents?

Cris W writes:

“In 2020 I built a framed garden with irrigation for Ellen, and she grew 30 dahlias. In 2021 I helped her with 50. I learned to disbud and all about pest control, root drenching and so on. In 2022 I decided to join her and grow my own. Because I cannot get down on the ground due to arthritis, I built wooden racks at the height of my garden cart and grew them in pots I expanded this year to 35 and use





my racks to work on them,



then move them to another location in the yard. Last year

the bottom of the pots were always too wet. So, the first thing I did for my new cuttings is put 4 inches of #4 Perlite in the bottom of the pot, to help with the drainage. I emptied the soil from two of last year's pots into the wheelbarrow, mixed it with fresh potting soil, plenty of small perlite, and filled the pot. I dug a hole for the cutting and put a bit of worm castings into the bottom. I placed "Bell of the Ball" next to its stake, with more worm castings around the top. I put her on the cart and moved her to her new home in the yard and repeated the process for "Wyn"s



King Salmon. I'll keep you up to date on their progress.”
Excellent strategy, Cris.

MONTEREY DINE AROUND

The Monterey Dahlia Society announces its annual Dine Around, Saturday, July 29. Through the course of the day, 4 private gardens are opened to Dahlia Society members. Get the addresses and make a big edible contribution. If not all the breakfast dishes get devoured, they travel on to the second spot: lunch. Likewise, the leftover lunch items travel to the mid-afternoon snacks and h'ordourves garden. Finally, if you still have room in your eyes for more dahlias and in your stomach for more food, Desserts! If you have 5 people in your car, you should have 5 marvelous foodie donations for the gustatory delight of your fellow gardeners. Please contact wrenchergirl@gmail.com

DUES DUE

It is time to renew your membership in the Dahlia Society of California. Our membership cycle is now May 1 through April 30 of the following year. Please click this link for membership information and to join either online or by mail:

<https://sfdahlias.org/join-sf-dahlia-society/>

DAHLIA DELL DOINGS

Erik reports, “Spring dividing works!! Tinnee and Jerry did a springtime excavation and dividing of Pat's Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors. Some clumps were quite enormous and crowded. One was Eden Maritsch, named (for \$1500) by Shelley's Medical School roommate, Neelum, for her German mother who grew





dahlias. Lou had lost it, but Pat's trove came to the rescue when Neelum wanted tubers. Many of these late divides were sold at our May meeting." Peggy kindly took many of DSC's extra tubers and cuttings over to the second San Leandro Tuber Sale. In turn, Peggy brought back San Leandro's leftovers which Erik parceled out to Jane Foster and Dr. Virginia Walbot, who's investigating dahlias at Stanford. Moreover, Erik replaced the green hose on the hillside with a longer, more flexible

rubber hose with an easier on/off valve. The whole hillside is grateful for Water Warden Sue, who makes sure things get watered in a timely fashion. Joe donned 4 layers to garden on his terrace on the hillside. "When will it ever warm up?" Sarah field dressed a few of her sophomores and made cuttings. Cross your petals! LeQuin weeded the entire area in front of the hillside; the park gardeners kindly mulched it. So much more presentable. Even while Deborah





planted small cuttings, other plants bloomed already: BJ's Rival, Gonzo Grape, Jane, Fancy Pants, and a new collerette that needs to be checked out on last

year's roster. Nathaniel and Sonas visited and talked about their 20 dahlias growing in big



sliver water troughs in their yard. Peggy dropped by on her way to Bouquets to Art at the DeYoung and picked up a few (more!) dahlia plants. Deborah thanks all the people who watered whilst she traipsed across Croatia. So much watering, deadheading, disbudding,





deleting and weeding! Thank you: Karen, Brigid, Steve, Sarah, LeQuin, Tara, Lucy and



Jenn! What an AA effort!

JUST GLORIOUS JULY

Disbudding and Deadheading

We've all been excited to disbud our first few dahlias. We remove the 2-3 companion budlets to leave a single main bud with its leaf pair on a longer, stronger stem. At what stage should you disbud? As soon as you can safely remove the excess budlets. Depending on your finger size and your dexterity this may be different timing than other growers. Ideally you bend the budlet until it snaps off, leaving a flat spot. It's considered sloppy or "ugly" to have a portion of the tiny budlet stem left behind. If you are unsure about this, check out some of the excellent YouTube videos or come by the Dell on a Wednesday or Saturday morning. Why deadhead? If you let the spent bloom disintegrate on your plant, it's ugly.

Secondly, the cruddy petals fall all over healthy leaves and invite decay. The spent petals on the soil provide great hiding places for slugs and earwigs. One of the wonderful things about dahlias is that the more you cut them, the more flowers they produce. But you need to cut **DOWN**



TO NEW GROWTH. So if you have disbudded correctly, when the the center pops (shows excessive pollen), you should run your fingers down the stem below the leaf pair until you bump into a new set of bloom stems. Cut right above that juncture. If you were to cut above the spent bloom's leaf pair, the dahlia would not be able to produce any more blooms —after all, you'd already disbudded. So the plant could not make more flowers there. If you do this too often, you will end up with brown stalks the end of August or beginning of September. Tragic. If you deadhead correctly, you can enjoy blooms clear up through Thanksgiving! Again, stop by the Dell on a Wednesday or Saturday morning to learn **EXACTLY** where to deadhead.

Thinning out Sophomore Clumps

Volunteers have been helping me thin out the bushy sophomore clumps with 10+ stems. These sprigs are competing for nutrients and sun. Best in Show will not come from such internecine struggle. Ideally, we need just one or two very strong stems for a whole bush. Several of the sprouts have been potted up and

popped into my greenhouse. So if you need replacements, I'll have some very nice dahlias rooted soon.

Cocktail of the Month

For July I want to continue to establish roots, deter bugs, and prophylactically discourage mildew.

—Stylet Oil for mildew

—Captain Jack's Dead Bug or Serenade for bad bugs

—balanced liquid fertilizer

— a small amount of baking soda to change ph on leaves

—liquid dishwashing soap to help it all stick on the dahlia plant

Companion Flowers

When your clump is 2' high, begin to clear the yucky leaves out of the bottom portion. This gives more air flow which cuts down on powdery mildew. It also thwarts pests from crawling up the leaves into the plant. At this point you could add some low-lying ornamental flowers like alyssum or marigolds. Not only do these add color, they also attract beneficial insects which ultimately aid your dahlias and predate upon the bad bugs.

Shopping Chez Maus

So glad that so many people have come by to peruse all the excess tubers and cuttings I still have for sale. I am trying to make a bunch of pot roots for next year, but would love to have more visits at the Maus Haus. Come meet Tesla and cruise the greenhouse and buy more dahlias. So glad to see Quamrun and Ellen who each took flats full of cuttings home to their gardens. Lucy brought empty milk cartoons and took home full ones. Tony lugged off so many replacements. Still lots coming out of the greenhouse if you've a hankering for more.....

OSCAR DE LA RENTA

Jenna found these haute couture dresses by Oscar de la Renta starting around \$3K. Steep price, but darling. But isn't the tote bag fun?



**Yours in Dirt,
Deborah**

**Photo credits: Dibner, Dietz,
Echelmann, Gaensler, Muir, Sanchez-
Corea, Smith, Tobiasson, Wyte**

Webmaster: Payam

Proofmeister: Steve





DAHLIA PRINTED
CARDIGAN



DAHLIA PRINTED
TANK



Zoom techies: Sarah and Laura

Weeded and mulched

Sarah with first fully double bloom of the year, Eden Patricia





**Pat's many
sophomores**

Deborah selling cuttings





Nick is growing up, and up and up!



Downtown San Francisco Florist's mural

