



Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



NEXT MEETING? NO MEETING IN JANUARY! Join your Dahlia Society of California on February 13 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Tim Wong tells us about growing his Sisterhood Gardens.



WHAT A HOLIDAY PARTY!!

Pat, Sarah and Jenna arrived early to cover our tables and lay out gay garlands so our room sparkled. Jenna set up an opulent BAR with liquid libations for most palates including wine from Joe, Jenn, and Ken and Kathy. Delightfully, Cara's

Buddha Hand lemons spiced up our scene. So many people expressed holiday spirit with flashing, blinking, or glittery garb. Lola's necklace pulsated along with Shelly's antlers. To further deck our halls, Allison brought 2 hand-wrought wreaths and Tara bestowed 3 festive swags upon our evening. Lola offered our throng a huge box of persimmons for homeward bound. Mini



fabricated all sorts of hair ornaments with glittered fabric dahlias which many of us promptly donned. So generous all of you! How nice that so many non-dahlia spouses made an appearance. So much fun!



It is a mystery how our buffet balanced out so sumptuously. Passing Jenna's sleigh with all the utensils accouterments, people were immediately tempted by such delicious hors d'oeuvres: pita and schemear and exquisite stuffed dates and Jennifer's replete cheese platter. The Gaensler clan baked a massive ham. Brigid's Masala Chicken and Deborah's Turkey Enchilada casserole complemented one another and fit in with Karen's Chile Relleno dish. Tony and Ens covered the beginning, middle and end with fresh shrimp, lumpia AND a cake!! Such salads! Anita's orzo salad and Teresa's Brussels sprout treats disappeared fast.



Tara's arugula and persimmon salad was as beautiful as it was delicious. Who would have thought to combine apples and dill? Lisa! John and Annette's Chinese salad and Allison's potato salad disappeared in a twinkling as did Lola's potatoes au gratin. Lola also shared 3 different half gallons of libations. Steve scored the recipe for the fruit salad. So beladen was our spread, that the desserts sprawled onto a second table! Strawberry Pie from





Tenaya, Maria's brownies, Lequing's colorful cupcakes were augmented with chocolates and nuts and Almond Rocca from Maggie, John, Tara, the Sasaki,



and Rose. Erik invited the security guards to partake; they hit our buffet twice! As we neared satiation, Erik urged us to eat more and/or wrap some up to take home. "Priced

to move," he exhorted. Thank you so much to Kathy who tried to track down dinner items with donors' names—a hopeless task with all the joyful mingling going on. What a dinner!!



And speaking of wrangling a mingling crowd, thanks to spouse Denis for making sure all the



participants in Present Predation had one of Tinnee's beautiful lottery numbers. And who should appear? Santa Claus banged at the windows and ushered in our gift exchange. Santa reminisced about how 21 years ago exactly when he had to leave our party suddenly because Shelly had gone into labor with Nick! That little baby has become a 6'6" bruiser!





Jenna draped a special show-and-tell tall dais just so all our diners could witness the unwrapping of each enticing gift.



Ringmaster Deborah called out



numbers. Ironically, the man keeping track of larceny became the most predated upon; enterprising shoppers looted our Tony 7 times! The first shiny treasure to get “frozen” was Jenn’s set of 4 dahlia mugs. Stunning! Scissors, bulbs, chocolates, dahlia magnets traded hands a lot. Tara scored a shiny compost sifting screen. When Gerry noted that the man who opened a hair ornament proved less than enthusiastic, Gerry stole it for his own shiny



pate. So thoughtful. Everyone applauded!

Jenna crafted a huge green foto op stopper for PSW, but debuted it at our





party. So fun.



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

Save this date: Saturday, February 24 in San Leandro. Your DSC sponsors this convocation for all dahlia growers in California. Please register as soon as possible so we know how much food

and chairs to order. A separate registration form will be sent out to everyone at a later date. There will be guest speakers (including a specialist on POWDERY MILDEW), workshops, lunch, swag, and a wonderful RAFFLE! Take this opportunity to hobnob with bloomerati of the Dahlia world. Learn new things. Pick up swag. If you have any items to donate (tangentially related to gardens or dahlias) contact Jenna: Jennakaiserw@gmail.com. Special tubers, dahlia art, books, rooted cuttings, vases, show paraphernalia, tools etc. would be welcomed.



SP Purina

CAVALCADE OF FABULOUS DAHLIAS



20th Ave Softer Peach



20th Ave Morning Mist



AC Pasayten



A C Tweedly

Allen's Cascadia B LC W Allen's Diablo Hart



Allen's Explosion

Allen's Imagination

Here are photos of amazing dahlias from 2023 to help get us through the mud months and motivate us to plunge into the various on-line commercial dahlia seller sites. You know how you LOVE to look forward to new and glorious and NEW dahlias blooming in your garden. Here are a few to wonder over.

MORE \$PON\$OR\$!

Allison and Alex love Hollyhill Spider Woman and wanted to promote more cool oddities so they have pleaded \$50 towards the Best Novelty. Brigid anted up \$20 for the newest photo category People with Dahlias—should be interesting. And utterly generous Peggy ponied up \$30 for the Largest Dahlia in the World and another \$25



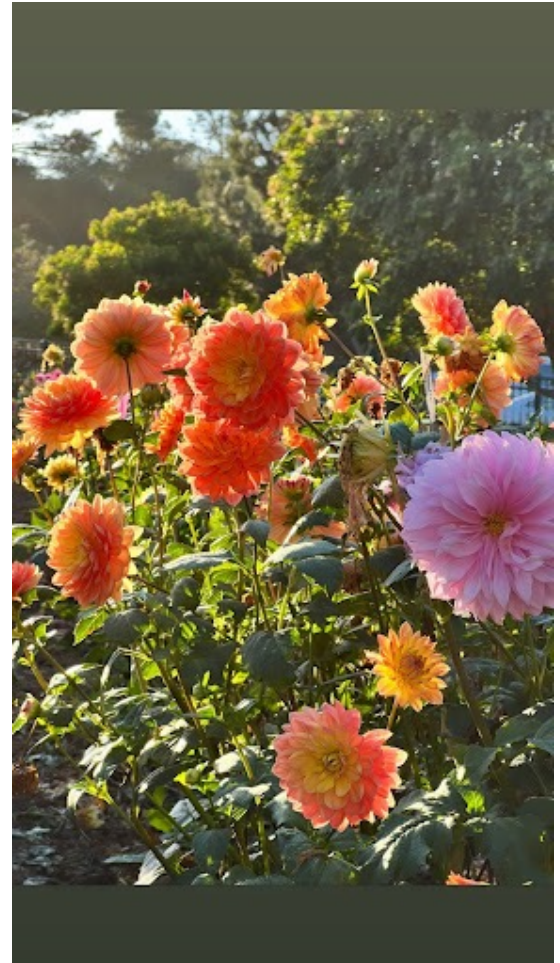
for a category yet undetermined yet
So generous!
Thank you all.
We hope to have the 2024 Show Schedule out as soon as possible.
Keep your eyes out for our Flowers of the Year: Blomquist Jeff and Lakeview Redeye.



SISTERHOOD GARDENS



Here is an update from Tim: We finally got all of our dahlias dug up and stored! We have mild winters in San Francisco (USDA 10a) so we can leave tubers in the ground provided they have good drainage; but



we distribute tubers each spring to share stock with other community organizations.



Our storage substrate we like using is 50/50 Coco coir and vermiculite that's barely moistened (It feels almost* dry to the touch) in our backyard garden shed. Outside temps are usually 45F- 65F, so our biggest issue is keeping tubers asleep and we always have a few that keep growing all winter long.

HILLSIDE RENOVATION

All the nasty old creosoted timbers and dangerous exposed rebar have been removed. Much dirt has been moved around. The sidewalk and photo op area have been leveled and defined with loose gravel.



Stone walls rise slowly as

pieces are matched and cemented in place. Huge roots from the eucalyptus trees and big bushes wreak havoc through the erstwhile "soil"; our hillside dahlias had such a tough time fighting for nutrients! A couple big white pipes with holes in them have been laid at the bottom of trenches. No one can tell yet if there will be more or less growing area with this new



plan. Exciting....

DAHLIA DELL DOINGS

New member, Renee, visited on one of Deborah's Saturday mornings and went home with a whole box full of actually pretty decent dahlias. Renee teaches Art in Santa Clara and will use the blooms in a photo project. Steve braved the cold and muck to fend weeds; every one he pulled up in December is 100 that 't infest the garden in January!

Tinnee and Jerry have dug out most of their clumps. Lou is all out and getting ready to rev up the Cutting Program by putting most of his masses on the cutting bench for us. Deborah welcomes volunteers to come Saturday mornings to help with weeds and learn about taking late



season cuttings. Meanwhile light shows abound: illuminated Conservatory and glass tree at McClaren Lodge.

MORE MERRY MARVELOUS DAHLIAS

More amazing dahlia pix. Allen's Sorbet



Allen's Candy and

Allen's Parfait

Alpen Sundown



Bloomquist Blush



Anne's Delight



Blomquist Award



Blomquist Ginnie



Blomquist Firecracker

DIVIDING DAY

On a warm dry day, Brigid and Deborah divided the first of Brigid's 30 clumps. First we set up 2 washing baths: a large one to toothbrush off most of the dirt to be able to see where to make our precision cuts and then a second bath for final cleaning before popping into the



oscillating Beast. On the newly gleaming blonde tubers we scribed the name using a Bottle-of-ink-in-a-Pencil and dipped exposed ends in cinnamon. Deborah took the long skinny thin-necked ones home to



10% bleach spa for for 10+ minutes. Brigid learned to look for the junctures between tubers and to wield the electric



box up in milk cartons with dirt. Brigid waited 2 days before putting the rest into vermiculite where they'll slumber until our Tuber Sale April 27.



JOLLY JANUARY JUST IN TIME

Have you set up your 2024 Dahlia Journal? Either on-line or in a notebook??? Now is the time!

COVER CROP?

Leaves? Have you scoped out the uncomposted weeds in your yard? in your neighborhood? Now is the time to cover your plot in scrumptious deciduous leaves from all over EXCEPT eucalyptus leaves. Eucalyptus leaves are actually slightly poisonous; do NOT include them in your compost or in layering over your plot. Now is also the time to lavish bags of chicken manure on your dahlia section. The rains will gently soak it into your soil. Did you consider a cover crop? Kristi reports that she has sown Casa Peralta with SoilMax Legume Mix with Organic Oats, Bell Beans, Organic Vetch and Organic Peas. Curtis splayed it all over at Lake Merritt. So many healthy nitrogenators. Other people use Fava Beans? Clover? Sweet Peas? Mustard? Or just gay wildflowers to blot out the brown gloom of the mud months. I've sown some

poppy seeds in front

of the Maus Haus. They always make me smile.

LATE SEASON CUTTINGS

Amazingly, I am still taking late season cuttings from Belle of the Ball, Jessica, Hollyhill Show Time, and AC Abby. They go straight from the Dell to my little greenhouse with 18 hours of light and a happy spritz every day. I just added a



couple Blomquist Jeffs and Blomquist Candy Corns; cross your petals that they make roots! I plant in composted Dell soil with about 1/4 perlite. John Ivy writes “I think Root Riot cubes are magical! I had good luck with cuttings in potting mix but almost 100% with Root Riot cubes. Plus no mess and I can gently split open partway and peek every other day to see what’s happening.” Most commercial growers who ship dahlia cuttings through the mail use a version of oasis plugs because they begin sterile and the emergent roots are readily visible. Try it; it’s fun.



TUBER STORAGE



People ask how to store their tubers. If you have dug up the entire clump, you could store it in a 5 gallon bucket with a shovel of soil on the bottom, the clump, and 2 shovels over the top. You can then stack these big buckets in your garage or crawlspace under your house as long as the temperature doesn't dip below 40 degrees. I have also

stored clumps like this in big boxes that can be stacked. This way your dahlias think they are still in the ground and stay dormant and safe.

If you divide your dahlias, do allow at least 1-2 days on a drying rack after their bleach baths. San Francisco is surrounded almost 300 degrees by water; our air is really humid. We have to be constantly on mildew lookout. In Idaho where my sister-in-law grows, it's very arid; she can store hers in paper bags with no medium at all; it's as though they were in suspended animation. I prefer covering my tubers with vermiculite. I tried the Saran Wrap technique and every single one rotted. Humidity? Not sure. Sue covers her tubers in architectural sand. Lou experiments with guinea pig shavings and peat moss. I just divided a sport of Hollyhill Dragon Fire and found several sprouting already! It's been so unseasonably warm before Christmas. So after I bleached and dried them, I boxed them up in light soil in milk cartons and tucked them up in my loft. Maybe we'll have something for sale at our March meeting???? A lot of people use vermiculite and plastic shoe boxes. They can tape labels on the front and stack them up to the ceiling.

TREE DAHLIAS



On the Hillside and near the picnic table at the Dell, single lavender tree dahlias bloom. Magnificent double whites adorn Phil and Marilyn's garden. I transplanted four starters from P&M which I hope to bring to our March meeting. If anyone else is growing tree dahlias, might you pot up a few to bring to our meetings or to our tuber sale,

please? These bloom as the last of our summer dahlias dwindle. Do check every clump for gall. It looks like way too many little white eyes starting. To me they resemble barnacles. When in Doubt, Throw it OUT! If you're having trouble making the diagnosis, send me a close up picture. Do not toss into the compost! Put in a plastic bag and toss into the black garbage bin, not the green City Compost bin. We all need to bleach or Lysol our tools between dividing clumps and just be generally alert for cleaner processes.

Hoping you all have major plans for your 2024 Dahlia Garden!









**Yours in dirt,
Deborah**

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Huy, Ide, Ivy, Kaiser, Kelly, Ko, Kurhan, Olieu, Pai, Susan's
Dahlilas, Vainish**

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