



Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



NEXT MEETING

February 13, at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln. Program: Tim Wong will present how he built a thriving public garden at 116 Arch Street off Brotherhood Way, SF. Also last chance to learn about and register for Pacific Southwest Dahlia Conference, February 24. Who will bring yummies for your gardening buddies?



WHAT IS PSW?

The Pacific Southwest Conference is the once-a-year confabulation of dahlia people from all over California. This year our DSC hosts and sponsors it. We hope to have speakers about mildew, public gardens, dahlia genetics, swag, snacks, lunch and a raffle and silent auction. Take this splendid opportunity to hobnob with fellow dahlia-crazed growers, learn new facts and maybe get lucky with the

73rd Pacific Southwest Dahlia Conference

February 24, 2024, 8:30-5:00

San Leandro Senior Community Center
13909 E. 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94577

<http://www.dahliadell.org/psw-conference>



lavish raffle Jenna has collected. Here is the link for the registration form: <https://www.dahliadell.org/psw-conference>



Bloomquist Peach Sorbet



Bojangles

Registration Fee: \$50. Or contact Debbie Frank if you are less tech savvy: 415-652-7608

CAVALCADE OF SPLENDID DAHLIAS



Bloomquist Sweet

Brian's Dream

During the Mud Months, it's nice to watch beautiful dahlias march across your screen. Check thedahaliaaddict.com for sources.

Castle Drive



Clearview Tammy

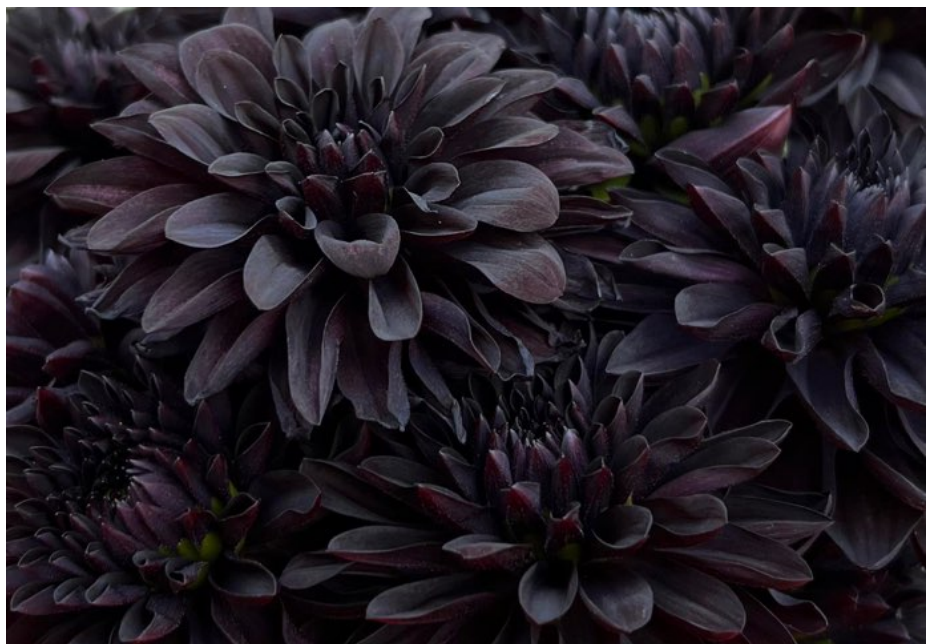


Clearview Peachy



Clearview Debby

Czarny Character



WHAT'S HOT IN CALIFORNIA?

Every year Louise takes all the data from all 5 ADS sanctioned shows in California and slices and dices it. We've put all her charts on dahliadell.org. On her Top Twenty #1 is Elvira, the winningest dahlia in all of California! #2 Valley Porcupine #3 Just Married #4 AC Ben and #5 Blomquist Jean. She also organized all 5 Courts of Honor so you can easily find the Best BB across the board, or what won Best in Show at each competition. Lastly, Louise divided up the data into sizes, so you can look up the top 5 winning AA's, top 5 A's and on to all the other sizes. Use these valuable lists to make wise choices when buying dahlias for this year's garden!



MAGNETIC SWAG



Jenna threw a working potluck lunch to show us how to make the magnets that will fill the pockets of our swag aprons for PSW. So fun. Jenna bought bags of plastic globes from JoAnn's Fabrics, popped them all in the dishwasher, cut out dahlia pix, adhered them with special glue, tempered the new objects, and added magnets and snazzy backing. Jenn T, Sarah, Debbie, Deborah, Pat and Steve, under her careful tutelage, produced more than half needed for the PSW Conference swag in one afternoon. Jenna will,

of course, perform quality control ministrations and buff them into wonderful prizes.



DAHLIAS HILLSIDE PROJECT

The entire first tier sits nicely all rocked up and leveled. The second tier had its concrete poured the last week of January. Disturbingly, two huge trucks came in to remove tons! of dirt. We are losing a lot of actual area in this new plan and certainly more than half the soil that had been built up. We are hoping that all will be finished and available for planting by April 1. Cross your petals.

PARADE OF WONDERFUL DAHLIAS

Here is our second tranche of pix to sustain you though the mud months.



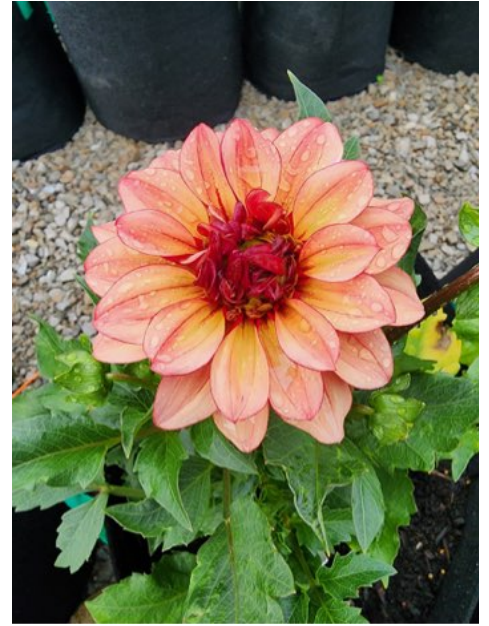
Connie Quan



Crazy Love



Crazy 4 Wylie Quinn



DARCY

Cynthia Houston

Creme de Cognac

Creme de Cassis

ELECTRIC FLASH

FIONA





Enchantress



Gitts Crazy



Good Golly Miss Molly



DSCER'S MUSICAL ENCOUNTER

Guess who met up with Steve on stage? Erik and Patricia enjoyed an evening at the San Francisco Symphony with the added bonus that Steve stepped down from his bassoon chair to personally welcome them.

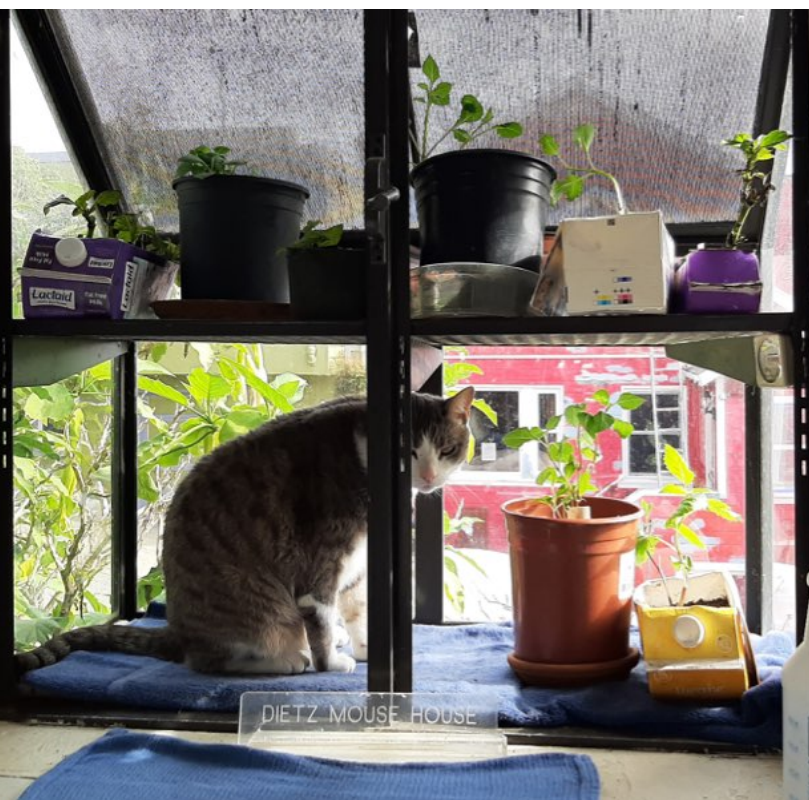
FEBRUARY FIXATIONS

Charlie and Phil use February to spread bags of chicken manure on their dahlia plots. This is a great time to add amendments like chicken manure or any other urea-full manure like llama beans, rabbit raisins, pigeon or chicken coop poop, or simply leaves. I scooped up my neighbors' ginkgo and red maple leaves for the Dell underworld critters to munch on. Banana peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, and veggie scraps keep your worms and other wee biota fat and happy. My brother, Jon, delights in his new Lomi Bloom Countertop Compost Maker; it macerates all his kitchen gunk. He adds some enzyme powder and it turns it all into instantly useable "soil" you can put directly on potted plants or favored outdoor specimens. He's cosseting three mango trees with this ultimate brown gold!

WAKY WAKY

We in the Bay Area have the luxury of planting as early as mid-March which means that we need to start "waking up" our tubers beginning in February. What do tubers need to begin germinating? NOT light. NOT water. But HEAT! Most dahlias respond to 62-70 degree heat. Some people try heating pads but this can inadvertently bake your tubers to death instead of perking them up. I use my loft which is where all the heat in my unheated 1907 earthquake shack rises. Other people like Peggy put their milk cartons on top of the water heater or on top of the refrigerator. Some people use a warm window. A shelf in an upper story room might be just the warm spot to induce little green sprouts. Kristine Albrecht uses heated beds in





her cutting room. Kay has found a spot in front of her big bay window. Erik remembers a time before life with wife, when he filled his entire living room with milk cartons and bags of tubers in vermiculite awaiting their sprouting. You need to find your optimal spot. I have a greenhouse window in my front hallway overlooking the street and facing East. My kitty, Tesla, mans it as his official sentry post. He provides excellent carbon dioxide for the dahlia cuttings

using his sentry box as a halfway house between my greenhouse and my deck.

CUTTINGS

Thanks to a wonderful neighbor who dutifully spritzed my greenhouse cuttings every day while I was swimming with manta rays in Hawaii, I have some wonderful little cuttings growing slowly in my unheated greenhouse in my back yard. I use sandy loamy soil with perlite. Other people are using artificial plugs in which to pop their wee shoots. Type in “Starter plugs for seedlings” and you will find an array of oasis-type growing



environments for dahlia snippets. Most commercial cutting sellers use these because they are sterile; they limit transmission of disease. These little plugs also readily display growing roots. Here is the URL for Dahlia Darlings wherein our Junior Champion, Abby, shows how she makes cuttings: <https://sites.google.com/view/darlingdahlias/grow-with-abby>

You will note that within 4-5 weeks, Abby transfers her plugs to a 4x4" container.

FIELD DRESSING

Two dahlias have already poked up wee green leaves in the Dahlia Dell: Elvira —always an early achiever—and KA's Cloud, a real surprise since A's usually balk for much warmer conditions. When I



I notice a few sprouts emerging, I can carefully remove 1/2 to 3/4 of the tuber mass without disturbing the remainder. The advantage to this is that the section left in the ground has roots intact. It is already growing and happy. I just add some fertilizer (I like

Dr. Earth Flower Girl), a teaspoon of calcium nitrate, and sometimes a teaspoon sulfur and let it grow. You can create a mini greenhouse by upending a liter soda bottle with the bottom cut off. Beware! If



Bon Odori

you see green sprouts, so do earwigs, slugs and snails!!! Get some Sluggo Plus and maybe a copper collar around each arrival or they will disappear in a buggy feast. Geoff found some copper flashing tape at the hardware store. It makes great copper ring barriers.

Somehow, the snail and slug slime reacts with the copper ions and causes a very unpleasant reaction, Granite Queen Bee thus repelling these slippery vandals.



Do attend our Pacific Southwest Dahlia Conference, bring something for our raffle, buy lots of raffle tickets and meet more wonderful dahlia people. Happy Valentine's MONTH! Be sweet to yourself and buy a few new dahlias!

**Yours in dirt,
Deborah**

Punctilious Proof reading: Steve

URL Procuress: Mini



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