



Dahlia Society of California Newsletter



HAPPY NEW YEAR! WARNING!!! NO Meeting in January. Our next meeting will be February 10 at 7:30 at 9th and Lincoln.

QUELLE SWELL PARTY!



Luckily we averted the dreaded parking disaster by holding our gala on the one night in December that the Park was NOT hosting sold-out garden light show tickets! Whew! Soooo many merry revelers! Jenna, Jen T, Sarah, Maggie and Pat arrived early to deck the decks with table cloths and glittering fal de rol. Our libation table filled with an array of sodas to bubbly (thank you, Sarah, Tim, Len and Julia). As fast as Erik



ham, delicious slices whisked away. Such a juicy turkey Lola dismembered for our gustation. Brigid's chicken Martella and Tara's vegetable curry stuck to our ribs. Who brought those monster barbecued shish kebabs? Wow! We loved all the different salads and deviled eggs (with horseradish, Deborah?). And Lucy did it again: a spectacular Dahlia Cake covered in white chocolate curls. MMMM for both the eyes and the mouth! No wonder we broke





our previous 108 year record of hungry gardeners! Whilst Alex distributed magic numbers, Sarah played photos from 14 years of previous parties. (If someone knows how to make this better, we'd like to try to make this a tradition next year. Please help.) And what should appear? Lo! Santa knocking on our windows!!



St. Nick cited all the good dahlianeers from the last year and exhorted everyone to dig, divide and LABEL tubers for good ol' DSC" April Tuber Sale. Ringmaster, Deborah, harnessed the mayhem of Present Predation. Jennifer, long time Dell volunteer but first time participant with our group, bewildered, "I didn't know there were so many people so interested in dahlias! They all knew each other

and were so nice. What a variety of gifts from bulbs, t-shirts, tools, and Neem oil, to a knitting machine?"

When young Levi discovered that his choice was 3 large pinecones, his amazing upbringing really shined through. With a quick confused look at his mom, Anita, he smiled and took his dubious prize to his seat.

Recognizing his disappointment, Sarah forwent a table gift and stole Levi's



pinecones to release him to quest for more suitable treasure. So kind. When an unsuspecting person opened a strangely stuffed one-eyed silky dollish item, the entire room of 60 shushed in startled silence. What???? Again a good samaritan rescued the stunned recipient by stealing

what we later learned was a much sought after Labubu to liberate another shot at loot. So thoughtful. But then two more people generously “rescued” these good-hearted people by stealing pinecones and the stuffed monster yet again! Only dahlia people! Brigid kept track of the exchanges, declaring FROZEN when an item arrived in its third owner’s hands. Peggy nabbed the graceful vase with stunning dahlia blooms. The test tube dahlia carrier headed straight for Siberia. Paper whites, snips and garden shears, nuggy



sox, two different but lovely dahlia T-shirts and a vintage Vera Bradley dahlia bag quickly got iced down. The Deal of the Steal proved to be Jen T’s Rolls Royce dirt sifting screen complete with silver handles! Now you all have another year to conceive the BEST item for next year’s Present Predation.

Brilliant General Jenna pre-planned to-

go receptacles in which to take holiday leftovers home. Thank you to all who stayed later to clean up especially DJ, Cynthia, Jerrod and Will. You'd never guess what festivities we celebrated just minutes before.





FROM WHOM TO BUY NEW TUBERS AND CUTTINGS?

There are sooo many people dangling “unicorns” pandering to our NEED for more wonderful dahlias. Who’s legit and who’s not?

The Dahlia Addict is a great site to check on who’s selling which varieties. Most of the people who work with The Dahlia Addict are safe bets. Sarah recommends Triple Wren and Karen touts Dahlias by Julie. Jon Kawaguchi came through with this great list: North Cascade Dahlias (Bloomquist cultivars) [https://](https://www.northcascadedahlias.com)

www.northcascadedahlias.com

River's Dahlias <https://www.riversdahlias.com/>

Lobaugh's Dahlias <https://lobaughsdahlias.com/>

Old House Dahlias: <https://oldhousedahlias.com/>

Sungate Dahlias: <https://www.sungatesdahlias.com/>

Birch Bay Dahlias: <http://birchbaydahlias.com/>

Dane Flower Farm <https://daneflowerfarm.com/>
Delightful Dahlias <https://www.delightfuldahliaswa.com/>
Cowlitz River Dahlias <https://www.dahlias4u.com/>

Swan Island provides a wide range of reliable tubers. Certain dahlia societies are now selling over the internet like the Portland DS. Rivers Dahlias donated a box of cool introductions to our cutting crew last year so check them out. Please let us know from whom you've received good product and good service as well as where you've encountered problems.
dahlia.dietz@gmail.com



SIGHT FOR STORMY DAYS

Striking dahlias catch our eyes all season; but we luxuriate in reviewing them during the cold, wet months. Let the march of lovelies begin!

Bloomquist Rose



Bloomquist Wild



BLQ Affection

CUTTINGS THROUGH THE
MAIL?



BLQ Christopher



Yes, several dahlia farms now send small cuttings through the mail. These are snippets from already growing plants or sprouts from stimulated tubers which have been placed into starter plugs. There is a fine balance between how developed roots can be and still fit in plastic clam shells for mailing. Too developed, too leafy and the struggling dahlia gets squished; too young, the roots are barely there and might not survive their postal journey. When you receive your cuttings, if you have concerns **IMMEDIATELY** let your supplier know. I repot mailed cuttings as soon



as they arrive into 4x4" pots and put them in my greenhouse under 14 hour light. In lieu of a greenhouse, you can rig a light source or use a sunny south facing window. They enjoy misting; they want to be moist but not damp. Cuttings will produce beautiful plants the same season as received just as tubers will. Some people worry that cuttings do not produce tubers. The secret is 2 nodes under. That is, when you're ready to plant your cutting, it should be 7-12" high. Plant at least 2 of the visible nodes (the joints that look like bamboo sections) UNDER the ground. These nodes are where the new tubers will be produced. Unsuspecting first-time cutting planters often forget this, leaving them disappointed at DigOut.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

Kristine Albrecht informs us, "We are working on the Pacific Southwest conference for February 28 here in Santa Cruz. We are collecting tubers for the raffle and new garden related items as well.

Might you be able to ask your members for tuber donations? We are hoping to put the tubers into Ziploc bags with their names and possibly a picture prior to the February 28 conference." (LMK and I'll send you Kristine's address. Or you could bring them with you the



day of the conference.)

“The conference is coming along smoothly. We have good speakers lined up. Sandie Boley will be talking about hybridizing water lilies, we have an expert on Dahlia spreadsheets, we have the gopher gal talking about gophers and we also have Brion Sprinsock talking about photographing Dahlia’s. We hope a bunch of your members will come down. The cost is gonna be \$60 each(registration). We’ve already received donations of Agro thrive of 100 ounces per person. That’s almost a gallon at a value of almost \$40 so... It makes the conference pretty darn cheap.”

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pacific-southwest-dahlia-conference-hosted-by-monterey-bay-dahlia-society-tickets-1978195544124?aff=oddtcreator>

Mark your calendars and register for our annual convocation of dahlia growers from all over California. Monterey Bay Dahlia Society promises a great program. Not to mention a spectacular raffle. Consider car pooling down to Santa Cruz?

DAHLIA CALENDER

Pacific Southwest Conference	Feb. 28	Capitola Mall, Capitola
DSC TUBER SALE	April 25	9th and Lincoln GG Park SF
San Leandro Tuber Sale	April 25	
Judging Seminar	July 25	East Bay TBA
SLDC Show	Sept 5-6	
DSC Floribunda!	Aug. 15-16	9th and Lincoln GG Park SF
National Show	Aug. 27-30	Grand Rapids, Michigan

FRANCIS PALMER JIGSAWS DAHLIAS

“What do I do on rainy days?” Karen C-S asks. She loves dallying with her Francis Palmer dahlia puzzle! Moreover, she writes, “I

have finished it and I would be happy to pass it on to someone else who is interested in taking on the challenge.” So generous!



DIEHARDS AT THE DELL

Sue has slowly been exhuming her clumps and carting them off in her wagon. Such an exhausting process. Tim has pulled up all his show stoppers and will slowly remove the also-rans as time permits. Sarah has divided a few and will let others overwinter in place. Her strategy yielded a riot of first color last May. Lou is completely dug out and letting his half become a verdant pasture. We watched ravens courting amidst the rich green, poking around for gift worms. When an unsuspecting squirrel tried to explore the teardrop, the bruiser raven lit out after it! The invader tried a couple more times, but BigBlack terrorized it away every time.

Wild Kingdom. Tinnee and Jerry will begin exhuming when Lou sets up the cutting bench in the greenhouse. Nicole demonstrated to Jennifer how to cut straight down around a tuber mass to bisect any roots and then gently prize out the clump with hands UNDER the mass not yanking up by the stalk. Jennifer successfully lifted out her first two root tangles. Deborah takes them home to divide on her deck. Amazingly, there are still a few stunning blooms to grace a winter table.

CAVALCADE OF



BLQ Fairytale



Coorabell Astrid

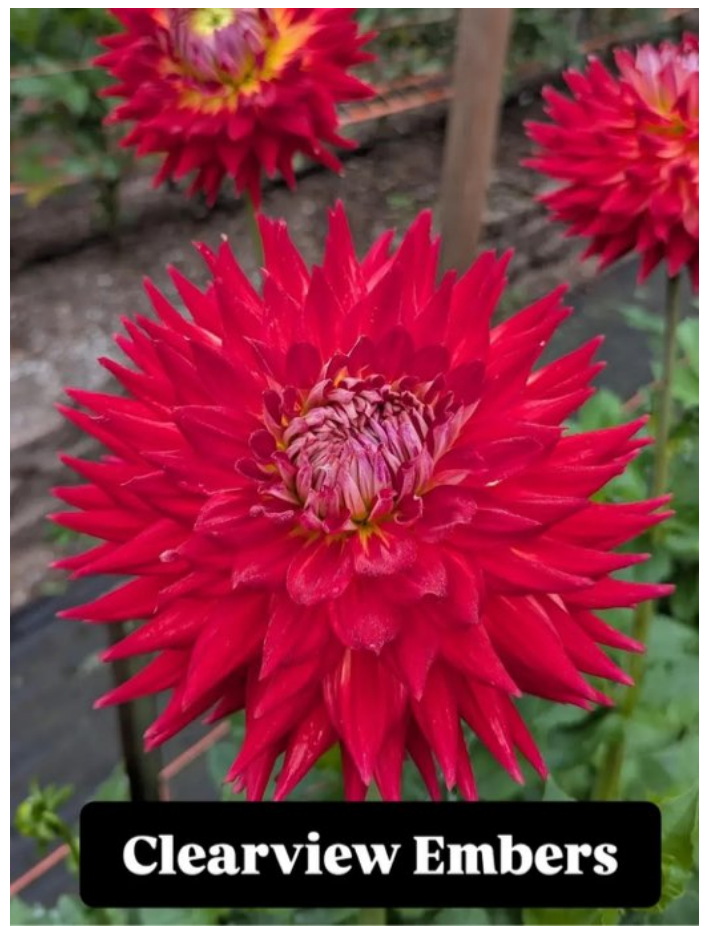
STRIKING BEAUTIES

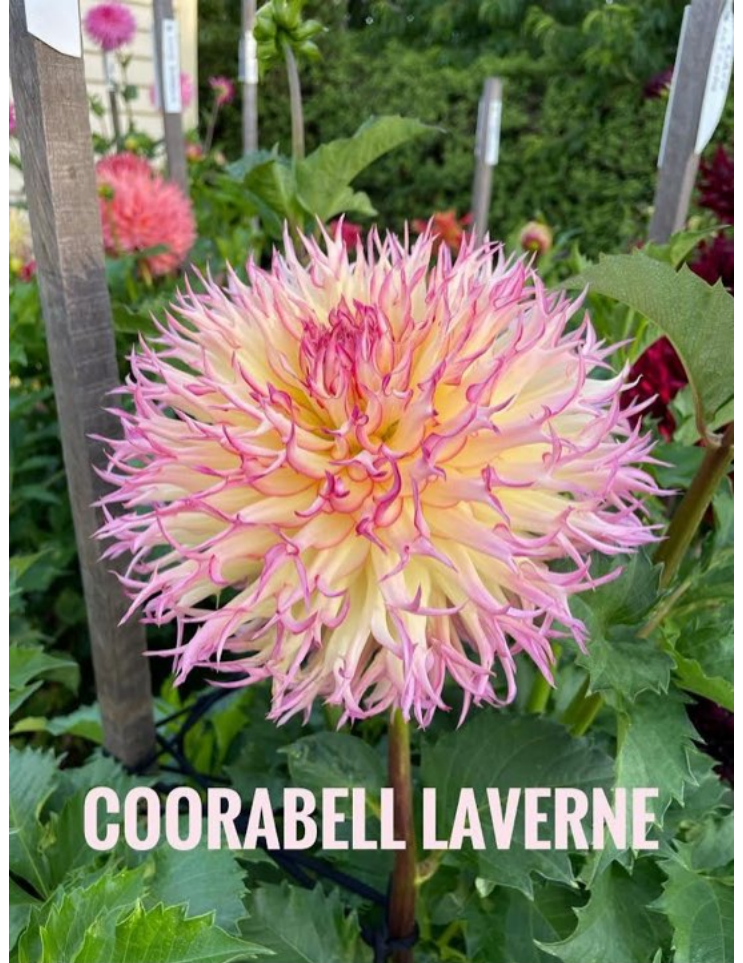


Coralie



CorbelMoonglow





Enchantress



Erpeler

JAUNTY JANUARY

January starts the 100th year of dahlias being the official flower of San Francisco. Please share your ideas of how to celebrate this momentous achievement. How will we inform our fellow citizens? Consider ways to publicize our April 25 tuber sale, giving talks to various garden and social groups, offering up tubers for school raffle fund raisers..... Please share your ideas.

When to Dig?

If you have any particularly lower areas of your garden, these might be the ones you choose to dig out first. I am beginning to unearth the soggiest ones at the Dell and also those which went brown first. I'll be holding dividing seminars on my Bernal deck in January, so if you're interested, email me dahlia.dietz@gmail.com and we'll set up a date (4 people per day max).

STEPS OF TUBER PROCESSING

After I have divided a clump: 1. Clean off the tuber in water with a little bleach in it with a toothbrush 2. Put in a 10% bleach solution for at least 15 minutes and clean the tools you just used. 3. Cover newly exposed





sections with sulfur or cinnamon. 4. Lay on drying rack at least over night. 5. Label with a Bottle of Ink in a Pencil, fat tipped Sharpie, surgical purple marker or stamp. 6. Pot up in milk cartons or place in plastic sacks covered with coarse vermiculite. Please save us your quart and

half gallon milk cartons. (We can't drink enough milk to support our dahlia habit.) This is a LOT of work to keep our tubers healthy and ready for another season. Please think of how many people your tubers and plants can make happy and how you can support your Dahlia Society of California with your efforts.

COVERCROPS AND UREA

Consider sowing hairy vetch, mustard seed or any of the bean family nitrogenators which nab oxygen from the air and deposit it at the roots after you have dug up your dahlia sector. Moreover, scour your yard and your streets for windfalls of leaves to cover your patch. They lessen the weed proliferation and decompose into the loveliest gunk. Manure: chicken, horse, cow, zoo doo, llama or bunny beans, even pigeon poop if you know someone

with a cote. All these sources are great. Consider up to 2" across your dahlia beds; **HOWEVER**, lay down the pungent poo at least 6 weeks before planting to prevent burning delicate roots. Dahlias are like teenage football players; they are always hungry. Keep your soil larder well stocked!

Yours in dirt,
Deborah





Photo credits: Barns,
Bizwell, Boley, Capp,
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