Hi Folks,

Hope everybody has had a chance to get your dahlias in the ground. Between hot temperatures, drowning rain and cold days it has been a challenge again to get the growing season started. To those who still haven’t completed your planting, all the best.

Just want to thank all those who helped during our 3 plants sales over the weekend of May 14th-16th. We had propagated over 450 plants for the sales and we SOLD OUT. Even sold some plants donated by members. With Dave Cap gone to Wisconsin that weekend, those that volunteered for the sales stepped up big time! To those that worked the sales, transported plants and helped out at Willoway, many thanks. A special thanks to Sharon Swaney who made picture labels of each variety. These labels really enhanced the sales and allowed prospective buyers to actually see the plants they were purchasing. Great job Sharon. Also, another big thank you to Dave who organized all the logistics for the sales before he left for Wisconsin. We couldn’t have done it without you Dave!

For those who were unable to attend the May meeting, we have set August 22nd as our annual picnic. It will again be hosted by Brant Giere and Carol Sahley at their Maple Crest Farm in Brecksville. Picnic starts at 12 o’clock with a judging seminar included. Details in next month’s Digest.

At our meeting this month Ron Miner and Tony Evangelista will give a presentation on virus and its effect on dahlias. Also Don Dramstad, ADS President will be attending our meeting as a guest of Ron’s. He will give us some pointers on cutting dahlias and keeping them fresh.

Hope to see you all on the 19th. Good growing to all.

Mike
OFFICERS and CHAIRS

Mike Weber, President.......................... 440-647-3162
Jerry Moreno, Past President...................... 440-543-5658
Emily Halderman, 1st Vice President.............330-697-7368
Jim Thompson, 2nd Vice President...............216-926-7419
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Membership.....330-562-3296
Sarah Thompson, Recording Secretary.........216-926-7419
MaryAnn Moreno, Corresponding Secretary....440-543-5658
Dave Cap, Show Chair................................440-888-5589
Barbara Hosta, Archives and Librarian.........216-524-2635
Jerry Moreno Digest Editor........................440-543-5658
Barbara Hosta, Cleveland Botanical Rep......216-524-2635
Nancy Riopelle, Sunshine Chair..................330-483-3360
Tony Evangelista, ADS Representative.....440-867-3711
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster........................330-562-3296

REFRESHMENTS
Anna Kandra, Barbara Miner, Marilyn Weber

MEETING DATES for 2015

March 20    New Introductions; Waking up tubers
April 17    Tuber auction
May 15      Plant auction
June 19     Ron Miner and Tony Evangelista...on virus
            Don Dramstad...on preserving cut flowers
August 22   Picnic at Brant and Carol's
October 16  Photo contest, speaker pending
November 20 Speaker pending
December 5  Holiday get-together...Wembley Club

June 19 Programs

Preserving Life of Cut Blooms:

We are privileged to have Don Dramstad, the new ADS President, attend our June meeting. He will be in the Cleveland area attending a cut flower symposium and has graciously agreed to talk with us about prolonging the life of cut flowers in general and dahlias, in particular. He will answer whatever questions we have on that topic and the ADS as well. Thank you, Don.

Virus in Dahlias:

Tony Evangelista and Ron Miner will present an overview of progress on the ADS-sponsored research activities at Washington State University. Professor Hanu Pappu has authored a brochure that will be included in the June ADS Bulletin. That brochure can serve as a basis for making progress in controlling virus in our dahlia gardens. Jim Chuey and the Sheetz-Chuey Foundation are sponsoring the production and distribution of the brochure as well as supporting the university research program. Very much appreciated, Jim.
Meeting Notes from Sarah

- May 15, 2015  7:35—9:54 p.m.
- President Mike Weber welcomed members and visitors. He announced that Tony Evangelista has accepted the position of being our ADS representative.
- The April minutes were approved as written in the Digest.
- Sharon reported $12,783.01 in the Money Market account, $195.05 in checking, and $2,348.34 in the memorial fund (less $500 for the annual scholarship donation)
- This year’s picnic will be on August 22 at Brant and Carol’s Maple Crest Farm.
- Sharon announced that there are currently 123 paid members of DSO, 52 of whom are also members of ADS.
- 44 MayDigests were postal mailed and 32 were sent electronically
- Sharon reminded us to send her any dahlia pictures for the web.
- 450 plants were propagated at Willoway nursery this year
- In response to the discussion on dues for the past two months, a motion was made and passed to raise the dues to $15/single annually and $20/family annually.
- A motion was made to spend $200 for granite signage at the site of the dahlia garden at the Miller Nature Center. The motion passed.
- There will be two judging seminars this year. The first will be held during the summer picnic on August 22 and the second will be held at Petitti’s on October 3.
- Jim Chuey (and the foundation that he represents) sponsored the production of an informative booklet that discusses viruses that could put your dahlias at risk. It will be enclosed in the June ADS Bulletin and made available to DSO members at the June meeting.
- A card was sent to Alexandra Kermode’s husband in April.
- The business meeting closed, followed by refreshments, and concluded with the auction of the propagated plants.

Regarding Pests and Diseases

You prepared the soil in April/May, perhaps planted a couple weeks ago, continue to take care of the slugs wanting breakfast, lunch, and dinner, now what? Unfortunately there are more critters as well as diseases to manage. In addition to slugs that we talked about last month, aphids and earwigs are major pests. Powdery mildew is a common disease. And virus is the newest kid on the block that is being given serious attention as Ron and Tony will discuss at the June meeting.

An additional note on controlling slugs: Around each plant, spread a think layer of eggshells, coffee grounds, or of course various purchased baits—preferably organic. For those who have nothing else to do, take flashlight and salt shaker in the darkness of night and knock yourself out.

Aphids are bad news. Ladybugs enjoy eating aphids. Or you can use a strong water stream to wash them off. Be sure to treat tops and bottoms of leaves as well as the stem. A bit stronger treatment is 10 drops of DAWN in a large spray bottle. Be sure not to put too much soap in the water as young leaves can be killed. If those methods don’t do the trick, try an organic spray based on things like garlic, Neem oil, citrus oil, or tomato leaves.

Later in the season when blooms are forming, earwigs arrive. They are a real menace. They chew holes in leaves and petals and flower buds. Although I guess they are harmless to us humans, they are a scary looking bug. I’ve often wondered why they exist other than to aggravate the heck out
of me! (Ok, earwig lovers, I know that they are said to eat aphids, but…) So, what to do to get rid of these guys? Having watched several You Tube videos, a popular trap is to take a plastic container with a lid, punch a few holes in the lid and around the top of the side to be ports of entry. Fill the container with about an inch of any vegetable oil, add some attractor such as oil or water tuna juice or soy sauce, and bury the container in your garden up to the container’s side holes. A potential problem is that raccoons and skunks apparently also like this concoction. Bummer! Be sure to rid your garden area of moist hideouts for the earwigs such as wood piles and organic matter.

Hot, dry weather has the potential to bring on spider mites. They form fine webs on the underside of leaves that then turn the leaves yellow with brown patches. Wash top and bottom of leaves with water once they are discovered. Do be aware and watch out for them as I have seen spider mite infested leaves on blooms staged at a show!

Powdery mildew is a general term that covers various fungi. It is a grayish powder-like fungus that is often found on the lower leaves of dahlias. Poor air circulation and moist conditions create ideal conditions for the growth of spores. If your plants are badly infected, pick off the worst of the leaves and do not compost them. A 30/70 mixture of milk and water can be used to spray the top and bottom of leaves and stem.

HOMEMADE remedy for aphids, spider mites, stink bugs, powdery mildew: 1 cup of pure canola oil in 1 gallon of water. Spray your troubles away!

Dahlias in Containers

There will be a prize for the best container garden featuring dahlias at our DSO show in September. Basic rules are that the container must have three or more plants, at least one of which is a dahlia. The container may be of any size but it must be portable by one individual.

Members Only Directory

A directory of DSO members with their contact information is to be put on our website for use by the membership. If you do NOT want your name and information to be included, contact Sharon Swaney by June 30.

Online Dahlia News and Information Sharing Groups

Four great sites (Dahlias-Alert, Dahlias, Dahlia-Net, and Dahliacreating) regarding all aspects of dahlias from growing and showing to sharing pictures to hybridizing may be found at:

http://www.dahlias.net/dahliagroups.htm
A DAHLIA SALAD

www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/dahlia-bulbs-zmaz09aszraw.aspx?PageId=3#ArticleContent

3 large carrots, diced, preferably a mix of yellow and orange
1 pound dahlia tubers, pared and diced
1/2 pound fresh green string beans, cut into diamonds
1/2 cup virgin olive oil
3 tbsp vinegar (tarragon, chervil or dill vinegar recommended)
Faux mayonnaise (see recipe below)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 hard boiled egg, quartered
Mixed herbs (dill, parsley, chives), chopped

Steam the carrots, dahlia tubers and beans for 5 minutes or until still slightly “al dente.” Put the vegetables in a large mixing bowl and add the oil and vinegar while still hot. Let the vegetables cool, and then add the faux mayonnaise so it coats all the vegetables evenly. Transfer the vegetable mixture to a serving bowl and garnish with the egg and chopped herbs. Serve slightly chilled or at room temperature. Serves 4 to 6.

Lower-Calorie Faux Mayonnaise

1/2 tsp ground mustard
1/2 tsp sugar
Salt and pepper
1/2 cup cream or evaporated milk
1/2 cup virgin olive oil
3 tbsp vinegar

Put the mustard, sugar, salt and pepper in a mixing bowl and stir in the cream or evaporated milk. Whisk in the oil, and then add the vinegar, whisking gently so the dressing thickens. Adjust seasonings to taste.

The JUDGE’s Corner

Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com

Hooray; planting time is at hand! Isn’t it great to actually be back in the process of actively gardening? We get to play in the dirt! We have all that potential for great flowers and great seedlings out there in front of us with none of the insect or heat or cold or rain or drought or other problems to worry about! They will be with us soon enough; enjoy the moment!

I got a head start on one of those future problems by looking for virus symptoms on the plants that were big enough to have foliage before I put them in the ground. Five of them didn’t even get into the ground! The discoloration and pattern on the leaves were not nearly as obvious as the discoloration on some of Prof. Pappu’s examples of virus, but it seemed clear that those five plants had a problem. It was sure easier not to plant them than to plant them and then have to dig them up and try to replace them later. I plan to save them in the pots for a while (away from the garden!) to see if they continue to show virus symptoms. Setting aside my only Hamari Accord was a little tough, but I wasn’t confident that it was ok. It only hurt for a little while. :-)

Last month, we talked about the broad perspective of show judging. Some of the basics are as follows: 1) Use your knowledge of
the Judging Manual to contribute effectively to your judging team. Provide your perspective on your observations of the entries; listen respectfully to other team members’ views; disagree based on your knowledge of the manual; respect and ‘own’ the conclusions of the team. 2) Award ribbons based on the relative merits of the entries, not on some sense of perfection. In general, it will be appropriate to give first place ribbons in every class and every section. In those rare instances where no first is given, a note should be written on the entry tag explaining the problem with the entry. 3) Be aware (and beware!) of your own prejudices. Remember, for example, that all the colors in the color chart and all forms are of equal merit! Avoid studying others’ entries during staging; you might need to judge those blooms later in the day. Never judge or comment on your own entries.

The Guide to Judging Dahlias, our judging manual, provides everything you need to know in order to be able to work with and contribute your share to your judging team. You need to read it and use it in judging situations to help grow your understanding of judging. Perhaps you did not agree with or understand a conclusion reached by your judging team. After the show, go find the relevant portion of the GJD and read up on the issue. Ask me or your judging captain about it at the next opportunity. Get comfortable with the team’s bottom line—or straighten out their error!

Differences of opinion on the best entry in a class usually result from 1) different faults being observed by the judges involved and 2) different ideas on the relative importance of the various faults. The former issue, regarding different judges finding different faults in the entries, can largely be minimized by the team approach to judging. When the faults are discussed by the team, everyone becomes aware of all the faults identified by the team members. The latter issue, regarding the relative importance of the faults, is at least partly addressed by the numerical values of the attributes used in scoring seedlings. The pie chart shown on the next page illustrates the relative values of those attributes. Those values serve as the basic link between judging in a show and judging on the seedling bench. The numbers serve to help prioritize the relative importance of faults.

The other factor that influences the relative importance of a fault is its severity. A severe foliage fault, for example, can outweigh a relatively subtle color fault even though color has a lot higher value than foliage. On the other hand, a severe color fault generally determines the choice between entries. In making decisions among entries in a class, you need to weigh not only the severity of the faults but also the relative importance of the attribute.

Experience is the best source of wisdom for determining the severity of faults; but some examples may help shed some light on fault severity. The severity of a fault in a bloom is based on 1) its extent and 2) its degree. Is the fault isolated to a single ray floret on the back of the bloom or is it present throughout the bloom? Is there a single wolf petal or are they all over the bloom? Those questions relate to the extent of the fault. Is the fault subtle, barely noticeable at arms length, or is it blatant? Do you see it as you approach the table? The answers to these questions help determine
the degree of the fault. If it is isolated, it is low in extent. If it is pervasive it is large in extent. If it is subtle, it is low in degree. If it is blatant, it is high in degree.

The symmetry of the center of a bloom may be the most important characteristic of our show dahlias. It is probably the best place to start the process of evaluating a class at the show. The pictures on the left illustrate differences in the degree of a common fault. The asymmetry in the center of the bloom in the upper picture is blatant enough that you would seldom even see it at a dahlia show. It is often called a bull nose and the degree of the fault is great enough for the fault to be severe.

The center of the white ball is also asymmetrical but the degree of the fault is much less than the one above it. The “center” consists of a line running from 10 o’clock to 4 o’clock. While I would not call that fault severe, it is great enough that you would not usually find that bloom on the head table.

Mixed form is another form fault we commonly find in our dahlias. The pictures on the left and top of the next page illustrate a difference in the extent of the mixed form fault. The bloom here has a couple pretty obvious florets whose form is not semi-cactus. One is near the center of the bloom at about 4 o’clock. The other one is pointed straight at us near the center of the picture. The extent of the fault is very low and the bloom could probably even win in its class.

In this bloom, it is hard to pick out individual florets with mixed form, because there is a broad mix of flat, revolute, and twisted ray florets all around the equator of the bloom.

That is, the mixed form fault is extensive and therefore severe in the bicolor or bloom (a seedling that probably never saw a show table).

Another key ingredient in show judging is understanding faults and using appropriate fault terminology. One of the easiest ways to begin the process of familiarizing yourself with the various dahlia faults is to look at the backs of the ADS Seedling Evaluation Scorecards. They were prepared with just that idea in mind—to remind the seedling judges to check for the presence or the absence of all of the potential faults in a new seedling. In a show judging situation, you are not searching for all possible faults, you are comparing a group of blooms to each other. Nevertheless, those sheet backs are very useful summaries of the faults you will encounter when judging a show. They are included in the back of your Classification and Handbook of Dahlias. Take a look at pages 101 and 103 of the 2015 CHD now if it is sitting nearby. Page 101 provides a listing of the positive and negative characteristics of each of the attributes. Page 103 provides more of the strategy to use in coming to a conclusion on the size of the penalty to impose for various faults. You might want to read down through that list before you start on a judging assignment. (You might also want to review the list when you are making a close call!)

If you didn’t get any of the seeds I distributed at the May meeting, send me an email and I will bring any extras to the June meeting. We will use them at the October Pefitti judging seminar. I anticipate that we will want to find not only the best but also the worst of the 2nd generation Blossom Gulch seedlings. More on that later!

Ron
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)

Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

Date: _____________________
Name(s): ______________________________________
Address: _______________________________________

_______________________________________
_______________________________________

Phone: ___________  Alt Phone: ___________
Email(s): _______________________________________

PLEASE choose one of the following membership offerings:

[ ] DSO Individual $15
[ ] DSO Family $20
[ ] DSO Individual + ADS Individual $39
[ ] DSO Family + ADS Individual $44
[ ] DSO Family + ADS Family $47

Snowbirds: Add $6 and enter winter address here:

_______________________________________
_______________________________________

Would you like to receive your Digest in digital format only?
(Be sure to include an email address above) Please circle:

Yes  No

Please make checks payable to DSO.

Mail to: Sharon Swaney
340 Aurora-Hudson Rd.
Aurora, OH 44202