Hi Dahlia Lovers,

Dahlia fingers getting itchy? With such a mild winter, it is more tempting than ever to get the season started but except for Mike and others who are in the process of starting cuttings at Willoway Nursery, it’s a bit early yet to get started indoors. Think Spring nonetheless.

Thank you Mike for a splendid two years as our lead. You did a terrific job which is very much appreciated by all of us. I’ll try to fill Mike’s shoes for two years, then time for someone else. Two other officers’ positions have changed. Thank you Emily for providing us with good programs, picnics, and holiday get-togethers. That’s a hard job that Sarah Thompson is looking forward to doing in your stead. Marilyn Weber is new to the Board taking over from Sarah’s great former position as Recording Secretary. Otherwise the officers are the same—good from an experienced continuity point of view but not so good from getting new people and their ideas into the mix. Please consider taking a role in serving DSO as an officer or getting involved in its functions. Thanks.

One of the agenda items for March will be to discuss our hosting the 2018 Midwest Dahlia Conference show. We have done it a couple times in the not so distant past so we pretty much know what to do.

If you have any tubers that you are willing to donate for us to use in propagating cuttings for our plant sales and auction, please bring them to the March meeting. Please be sure that they are clearly marked, clean, and hopefully with an eye showing.

The power point of New Introductions will start us off March 18 along with what should we be doing in March and April to get the season started—always an exciting meeting filled with helpful information. See you Friday.

Jerry
OFFICERS and CHAIRS

Jerry Moreno, President…………………. 440-543-5658
Mike Weber, Past President……………… 440-647-3162
Sarah Thompson, 1st Vice President…….. 216-926-7419
Jim Thompson, 2nd Vice President………. 216-926-7419
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Membership….330-562-3296
Marilyn Weber, Recording Secretary….….440-647-3162
MaryAnn Moreno, Corresponding Secretary…..440-543-5658
Dave Cap, Show Chair……………………… 440-888-5589
Barbara Hosta, Archives and Librarian………. 216-524-2655
Jerry Moreno Digest Editor………………….440-543-5658
Barbara Hosta, Cleveland Botanical Rep……..440-729-9714
Nancy Riopelle, Sunshine Chair…………….330-483-3360
Tony Evangelista, ADS Representative………440-867-3711
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster……………..…330-562-3296

REFRESHMENTS

Sharon Swaney
Sarah Thompson
Marilyn Weber

MEETING DATES for 2016

March 18 New Introductions; Waking up tubers
April 15 Tuber auction
May 20 Plant auction
June 17 On carnivorous plants
August xx Garden Tour
October 21 Photo contest, Composting and organics—Tony
November 18 TBD Miller Nature Center Rep?
December 3 Holiday party, Burntwood Tavern, Solon

Facebook lovers—be sure to “like” us! The FB page is open to the public, so tell your gardening friends and dahlia admiring friends about our page. Send comments, corrections, ideas to Jim at dozer1028@gmail.com

https://www.facebook.com/dahliasocietyofohio

Please Mark Your Calendars to help sell tubers and plants for your society

April 9 Petitti’s Oakwood 9-4
May 12-14 Rockefeller Greenhouse 10-4
May 13 Holden Arboretum noon-6
May 14-15 Holden Arboretum 10-4

2016 Shows

August 13-14 Cuyahoga County Fair
August 26-28 Mahoning Valley DS Carnation Mall
September 2 set-up Geauga County Fair
September 2-4 Columbus DS
September 9-11 Dahlia Society of Ohio
September 10-11 Pittsburgh DS
September 15-18 National Show, Asheville NC
September 15-18 Midwest Show, Minnesota
September 23-24 East Liverpool Dahlia Society
October 1-2 DSO Member Show at Petitti’s

Artistic Design Categories for DSO Show

1. American the Beautiful—Formal design
2. Red, White, and Bloom—Informal design
3. Support our Troops—Linear design
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING?
March and April

March
- Repair/sharpen garden tools
- Tune rototiller (if you till)
- Prepare your arsenal to combat this spring’s slugs
- Check light fixtures and bulbs to start tubers indoors
- Build that cold frame you’ve been thinking about forever
- Check tubers. Discard those that rotted. Choose some to donate to DSO for plant propagation and sales.
- The not-too-badly shriveled might be brought to life by putting them in damp peat moss and warmth.

April
- If thinking of new beds——
  Dahlia like at least 6 hours of sun, air circulation
  Good mixture of sand, clay, silt, organic material
  Good drainage, tubers don’t like wet feet——will rot
  pH of between 6.5 and 7.0
- If planted a cover crop last fall, chop down and rototill in
- Pull weeds; fertilize according to soil test analysis
- Add leaf mold, compost, manure to your soil. Peat moss is acidic so check soil pH in case need to add lime
- Test soil (best in fall)——inexpensive soil test kits are ok for pH but a lab is needed for a complete and accurate analysis of your soil composition and what is needed for health.
- Get thee to our tuber sales at Petitti's April 9 and DSO tuber auction April 15.
- Start propagation indoors mid-April to plant in a month

The JUDGE’s Corner
Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com

Happy New Year!
The new season is beginning! :-) I have started to look at the websites for new dahlias and am looking at my list of seedling tubers for potential entries in the ADS Trial Gardens. I am enjoying increasingly summer-like weather. (Oops; that might just be a Florida thing; I tend to forget the difference.) In any case, it is great to be starting to think about the 2016 dahlia season.

A substantial number of DSO members should be sharing my vision of a Trial Garden winner in the 2016 season. Our first set of Blossom Gulch seedlings will be in their fourth year of existence and are therefore eligible for evaluation both on the seedling bench and in the Trial Gardens. There were some wonderful seedlings that grew from that first set of seeds! I certainly encourage you to send the best of them for Trial Garden evaluation. I always send cultivars to at least five gardens because you need to have at least 3 scores above 85 in order be in the running for a Trial Garden Medal. Our open-centered BG entries compete for the Evie Gullikson Medal and you can be sure that there will be great competition for that Medal. Nevertheless, I am confident that one of our cultivars has a good chance to win!

If you have questions about how best to get your seedlings evaluated, please email me with those questions. Thanks again, Kathy Iler and Blossom Gulch Dahlias, for making it all possible!!

Virus Update
DSO member and friend Jim Chuey continues to provide the support required to make progress on getting control over the virus that can invade our dahlia gardens. We are currently working on the details of a program that could make it possible for any of us - and any of our dahlia suppliers - to submit samples for virus analysis. Wouldn’t it be great to be able to buy tubers from suppliers who are able to say that the plant from which your tuber came was free of virus? I would be happy to pay an extra couple dollars for that assurance. We haven’t completed those discussions, but it is clear that the program would be too costly even to consider if Jim weren’t prepared to subsidize it! Thanks again, Jim!
If you have not yet looked at the virus article Sharon posted on the ADS Website in mid-February, I encourage you to check it out. Professor Papu tested samples from a number of DSO gardens for each of the six viruses that occur naturally in our gardens. The test results were very consistent with the brochure that was published with the June Bulletin. That is, leaves that looked bad, like those in the brochure, tested positive for virus and foliage that was clean in appearance tested negative for the virus. The label in the photo above illustrates the documentation that accompanied each sample. The foliage on that sample was clean and no virus was detected. The bottom line was that the “If in doubt, throw it out” strategy was basically validated.

The implications of the sample testing project are substantial. Not only are most of our plants free of virus, but those with virus can be identified and eliminated based on the appearance of their foliage. Carl Chuey was convinced that the work of WSU could make an important contribution to the elimination of virus in our dahlia gardens and there is increasing evidence that he was correct!

Many thanks to Tony Evangelista for his active involvement and enthusiasm for this project; to Jerry Moreno and Randy Foith for their being a part of the project and their leadership in the DSO and Midwest; and, of course, to Jim Chuey for his support and contributions!

Requirements to Become a Judge and to Be a Judge

A huge majority of DSO members have the basic requirement to be a dahlia judge. That is to be an enthusiastic dahlia grower! The next step may be the toughest; you need to become a dahlia exhibitor. Getting over that hurdle can be a challenge. You may need to invest a little more time and effort in maintaining your plants. You need to get them to the show and you need to stage them when you get there. The benefits of investing that effort, however, are tremendous. The esprit de corps that exists around those setup and show tables is one of the best parts of growing dahlias! Try it; you’ll love it!

One key motivator in my enthusiasm for the Blossom Gulch seedlings was that it encouraged everybody to get those new cultivars to a dahlia show (photos, right). How could you keep that brand new and unique new cultivar hidden away? I know it worked for some of you; if you still have one of those new ‘treasures’ hidden away in your garden, you need to show it to the rest of us at a show this summer!

Once you are over that ‘exhibit hurdle,’ the ADS does appropriately prescribe a set of standards for experience and training of an official ADS judge. Those standards make it possible to expect similar results on similar entries of seedlings, for example, all across the ADS. Those specific requirements can be found both on the ADS and DSO websites. Please be sure to ask me if you have specific questions.

A number of us completed the Judges Examination in 2011 and will need to complete it again this year. (Two have already done that; thanks!) It is a straightforward set of questions covering the Guide to Judging Dahlias, the CHD, and the Seedling Evaluation Forms and it is
also available on the ADS website. Now is the time for the class of ’11 to invest some effort in the project before the season gets busier. Let me know if you have questions.

**Classification Challenge**

It is possible, I suppose, that some of you have forgotten the Classification Challenge that was included in the November Digest. :-) The bloom is at the right and I said it was about 3.5” in diameter. It is probably clear that the ray florets are fully involute over virtually their entire length. That puts it in the Ball / Miniature Ball / Pom form group. The size of the cultivar is borderline. It is either a large Miniature Ball or a small Ball.

The color is intriguing and is one of its most attractive attributes. The bases of the ray florets are a pink that nicely complements the ends of the ray florets that are purple. The question becomes whether or not to include that second color in the classification of the cultivar. The bottom line was a split decision. Two of the SBE and one of the TG results were DB. One of the SBE and three of the TG results were either PR or DR. The majority ruled MB PR24. A number of you probably purchased this one. It is Parshall’s Clearview Royal and it was the highest scoring cultivar among the BA, MBA and P entries in the TGs.

The classification challenge for you this month is to classify the cultivar pictured at the left. The challenge is more for the color than for the form. What do you think? Do you remember Glenn Ruth’s counsel on this issue?

**The Judging Challenge**

Your assignment from November was to make a (short!) list of the form defects you can see in the two BG seedlings pictured on the right.

From the big picture perspective, each entry had excellent form, so don’t be surprised if no faults leap out at you. The challenge involves the thought process more than the faults. My first step in the process, after being away from judging for four months, was to revisit page 40 of the Guide to Judging Dahlias to remind myself of the Form characteristics you need to consider on an open-centered cultivar. Another good approach would have been to get out the Score Sheet for open-centered cultivars to review what was important in considering Form. Your conclusion would have been that contour and depth don’t matter here, right?! (Right.) Symmetry, Trueness to Form, and Development (maturity) do. Ok, now with the CHD or the Score Sheet in hand, go back and look at those two entries again.

The upper left bloom in the Single, (top right), appears to have ray florets that are more cupped than the others. If that were the case, it would be a subtle form fault both from the point of view of the conformation to the ideal definition of the Single form and the uniformity of the form over the three blooms in the entry. If there are differences in maturity among the three blooms, they are more subtle
than I can detect in the picture. Based on what we can see here, the Form is certainly well above passing (85%). A deduction of 2 or 3 points leaves us with a score of the order of 90% for Form. Symmetry issues are more clear in the OT cultivar. Compare, for example, the gaps at 3 o’clock and 9 o’clock on the lower two blooms. The gaps are clearly different. Interesting, isn’t it, that the gaps stand out more clearly in the OT form than they do in the S form. The conformance to the OT definition looks good, but the petaloids are sure tough to see in the picture. The uniformity of form among the blooms looks good. Here again, the Form on this entry is above 85%. A deduction of 3 or 4 points puts us above 85% and below 90%. Your challenge for next month is to identify the Form faults you see in the bloom at the bottom of the previous page. It is a Pom.

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Board Meeting Notes
from Marilyn

Date, Time and Location
7:15 pm—9:45 pm February 19, 2016 at the Busch community meeting room

Attendees
Dave Cap, Jackie and Tony Evangelista, Kathy and Randy Foith, Barb Hosta, Jerry Moreno, Sharon and Rob Swaney, Sarah and Jim Thompson, Marilyn and Mike Weber

Treasurer's Report, Sharon
Presented 2015 financial summary, basically broke even
Plant and tuber sales exceeded costs of shows in 2015
Memorial Fund continued to be used for scholarships
E-postcard has been submitted for 2016
ADS insurance and Midwest dues ($35) paid
After discussion, agreed to have Botanical Affiliate dues ($60) and Garden Club dues ($15) paid
Continue to work toward gaining IRS 501C3 status

Membership
Paid Members (individuals): 34 ADS; 75 DSO
35 previous members not yet paid, reminders to be sent
In 2015, 45 Digests were postal-mailed; 34 emailed

To do/discussion Items for March meeting
Discuss request from Midwest President Randy Foith to DSO to host the Midwest Show 2018
Discuss if want to decorate a Christmas tree at the Botanical
Decide on DSO Flower of the Year
Take orders for Puget Sound Dahlia's of Today publication
Take orders for new ADS composite listing
First Vice President
- Sarah will renew contract with Busch in July for 2016-17
- Programs
  - March—New Introductions dvd; Getting started
  - April—Tuber auction
  - May—Plant auction
  - June—On carnivorous plants
  - October—Photo contest; Composting/organics
  - November—Mike checking on Miller Nature Center rep
  - December—Holiday party at Burntwood Tavern, Solon
- August—possible tour of gardens

Second Vice President and Show Chair
- Dave Cap reviewed dates for the 2016 shows and sales—see website and Digest for specifics
- Purchase of new vases was determined not to be necessary
- Sharon asked if bio-degradable Oasis could be purchased—Dave and Mike will find out cost and availability
- Floral Design categories
  1. America the Beautiful—Formal design
  2. Red, White, and Bloom—Informal design
  3. Support our Troops—Linear design

Judging Seminars
- Jerry talked with Ron who would like to have at least 2 judging seminars, one at his garden in a trial garden format, another at the Petitti’s show in October. A third could be at the picnic depending on availability of dahlias at picnic site

Other
- Barb Hosta will send a list of Library holdings
- Marilyn will update the bylaws regarding dues structure
- Mike wants to start plant propagation at Willoway the first week of March - he will send a note to Sharon for the email list requesting tubers.

Get to Know How Dahlias are Identified
A dahlia variety is identified by a 4 digit code.

Examples:
2308 is a Cactus Lavender dahlia.
4015 is a Miniature Formal Dec Bicolor dahlia
6109 is a Miniature Ball Purple dahlia
9405 is an Orchette Dark Pink dahlia

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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 (includes husband and wife) $10
[ ] DSO + ADS Individual Membership $34
[ ] DSO + ADS Family Membership $37

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