Hi Dahlia Lovers,

Are you anxious to get started hoping this year’s blooms to be the most beautiful you have ever grown? The weather in the 50’s and 60’s at the end of February really had my fingers itching to get tubers out and started indoors. Actually, that’s what Mike was doing as he started the propagation process at Willoway Nursery the first of March. Don’t hesitate to donate some time to help. It’s a lot of fun actually and you learn a lot about taking cuttings.

This year’s Flower of the Year is CARL, an introduction by our Mahoning Valley DS friend as well as DSO member, Harriet Chandler. We will grow some for our May plant auction. It’s a beautiful single and great tuber producer.

We need to increase efforts in fulfilling our mission to get more people to grow dahlias and to get more people, especially young ones, to come to our meetings. The Board needs your help in suggesting programs that you would like to see and activities that you would like to do. I know that even for us who are retired (or kind of retired) time is precious but let’s try to devote a little of it more to DSO. How’s that for a belated New Year’s Resolution that we promise not to break!

Start the dahlia year off great by coming to the March 17 meeting and seeing a slide show of the New Introductions. We will also learn tips from some great dahlia growers on a panel. See you soon!

Jerry

Jerry

Moreno’s Memo

VOL. 2017 ISSUE 1
March 2017

DAHLIA DIGEST
DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO
Since 1930

Visit Your DSO Website
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster
www.dahliasocietyofohio.org

Slide Show of New Introductions

Panel of Dahlia Experts
Harriet Chandler
Jim Chuey
Tony Evangelista
Randy Foith
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Sharon Swaney, Webmaster............................330-562-3296

Refreshments for March

Kathy Foith
Sarah Thompson
Marilyn Weber

MEETING DATES for 2017
March 17  New Introductions;
Expert Dahlia Panel
April 21  Tuber auction
May 19   Plant auction
June 16  Speaker tbd
August 19 Picnic at Aurora Nature Center; Judging seminar afterwards at Ron’s (optional)
October 20 Speaker tbd; Dividing/storing-Dave
November 17 Photo contest; Speaker tbd
December 2 Holiday party, Burntwood Tavern, Solon

2017 DSO Flower of the Year
Carl
By Harriet Chandler

We will have some plants of CARL at the May plant auction

DAHLIAS of TODAY 2017

DOT is an annual publication by the Puget Sound Dahlia Society. It contains descriptions of new varieties from national and international growers as well as tips on growing better dahlias.

Orders will be taken at the March meeting. Cost is $12 + shipping
MIDWEST SHOW 2018

Keep in mind that DSO is hosting the Midwest Dahlia Conference Show, September 7-9, 2018. It will be held at the Holiday Inn, Strongsville

Boutique items are being made by Barbara Miner and others. MaryAnn Moreno is in charge of creating a recipe book. Stay tune for details. Send any other ideas to make our show a memorable one to Jerry. Thanks.

March Program—
Panel of Dahlia Experts
“Everything You Wanted to Know About Dahlias...but were afraid to ask”

Well now is your chance, dahlia lovers! Harriet, Jim, Tony, and Randy are four of the absolute best dahlia growers that we have in northeast Ohio. Come and pick their brains on what on Earth do they do to produce such first class blooms.

To Til or Not to Til? That is the question!

Each spring I can’t wait to fire up my Mantis Mini-Tiller and grind the soil in my 13’x8’ raised beds to fine granules so that I can reach my hand and arm several inches straight down pulling up a handful of soil that cascades from my fingers. Ah, what a wonderful feeling!

But then I’m reminded of Ron’s lasagna beds and of course I hear Tony yelling from several miles away, STOP! What’s sifting through your fingers are far more than virgin soil! You’re killing your soil! And then I see and read the following article A Farmer and His Super Soil by Miriam Horn, a writer for the EDF, that was discussed on the March 3rd Science Friday program on NPR.

www.sciencefriday.com/articles/a-farmer-and-his-super-soil/

Justin Knopf no longer tils. He lets the corn cobs and wheat remnants on the ground providing protection and a slow-food diet for the fungi and bacteria and earthworms below. He has developed a truly super soil.

So, perhaps I’ll let whatever critters there are in my beds do their thing this year without being chewed up by the whirling tines of my beloved Mantis.

Officers for 2018

Please let us know if you are willing to help lead this wonderful DSO society. DSO NEEDS YOU! Let a current office know of your possible interest. Thanks.
MINUTES by Marilyn

◊ Executive Committee Meeting, 2./17/17 6:00—9:00 pm
◊ Site: Held at Busch Community room. Jerry presided.
◊ **Dahlias of Today 2017**: Randy will check shipping expenses. DSO and MVDS will submit an order together.
◊ **Midwest Dahlia Conference**: Randy mentioned that the Conference now has 501C3 status. There were thoughts to reproduce the excellent quarter-panel color foldout on how to grow dahlias. A copyright issue arose that prohibits making a new supply of handouts. The annual Elkhart Trial Garden open house event is August 12.
◊ **Treasurer’s Report**: Sharon gave a Financial Summary for 2016. DSO dues for 2017 have been paid to Botanical/Holden, Garden Club of OH, and Midwest Dahlia Conference. The e-postcard to IRS has been completed for tax purposes, and the ADS insurance has been paid. The 501C3 application has been submitted with a letter to be sent to the Garden Club stating that we are seeking our own 501C3 status. Issues for March meeting: possible donation to the Midwest/National Show in Chicago; continued support of the Gardeners of Greater Cleveland Scholarship.
◊ **Membership**: Sharon has been sending reminders for membership dues. There are currently 75 members for DSO and 44 of those are ADS members. MaryAnn mentioned that the last Digest of 2016 had 45 postal mailed and 42 emailed. Printing costs are very reasonable at JCU and will continue to be printed there.
◊ **Programs for 2017**: Sarah led a discussion on programs for 2017. A tentative list was compiled: March will show the New Introductions and have an expert panel on dahlias (Tony, Jim, Randy). April is the tuber auction. May is the plant auction. October - Photo Contest and a speaker tbd. November is tbd. The Holiday Party is the .

November will have a speaker tbd. The holiday get-together will be the same as last year, Burntwood Tavern in Solon, 12/2. The Picnic will be held at the Aurora Moebius Nature Center followed by a judging seminar at Ron’s. There will also be a judging seminar at the Petitti’s Show. Sarah has a list of four potential speakers to fill our needs for June, October, and November. Contract renewal for Busch meeting site is July. Kathy, Sarah, and Marilyn will provide refreshments for March. Rob will do beverages again this year. Marilyn mentioned that a new projection screen is needed. She will research the purchase of a new one.

◊ **Sales and Shows for 2017**: Jim Thompson reviewed show dates as: Cuyahoga Aug 12-13; MVDS Aug 25-27; Geauga Sept 1 set-up and 2 judging; Columbus Sept 1-3; Midwest/National Sept 8-10 in Glencoe IL; DSO Sept 15-17; Pittsburgh ?; East Liverpool Sept 22-23; Petitti’s Oct 7-8.

Dates for Sales are: Petitti’s April 8? Dave will confirm; DSO April 21 and May 19; Holden May 19-21; Rockefeller May 18-20; Elkhart June 3.

◊ **Plant Propagation**: Mike informed us that he has talked with Tom Demaline, Willoway Nurseries. All is set to start plants around March 1.

◊ **Flower of the Year**: This section of the DSO Show has not been well represented over recent years so there was some discussion on not having it. But it was decided that a good choice would be Carl, an introduction by Harriet. She and Jim Chuey have lots of tubers so Mike will get 20 or so plants started for the DSO auction in May.

◊ **By-Laws**: The DSO By-laws have not been reviewed for several years. A request for a committee will be made at the March meeting.

◊ **Midwest 2018 Report**: Jerry reminded us that DSO is hosting the Midwest Show in 2018 at the Holiday Inn in Strongsville. Thanks to Jim Chuey for $2000 to help cover expenses
for the show. Barb Miner is busy sewing for the boutique and other members have plans to make items also. MaryAnn is coordinating a recipe book. Members are requested to send recipes to her at maryannjerry@windstream.net The theme will be forthcoming.

- **American Dahlia Society:** Tony gave an update on the Genome project. As of January 24th, 50 donors from 24 states and Canada have given $34,569. An additional goal is being established that will enable the sequencing of Edna C in addition to the species dahlias in the original plan.

- **Librarian and Botanical Gardens:** Barbara H mentioned that many transitions are occurring at Holden and the Botanical. Both organizations are experiencing a change administratively. The Orchid Mania is going on at the Botanical in February. This summer there will be giant Legos on display. A list of DSO Library holdings will be put on our website. Barb brings items with her to all meetings.

- **Membership:** The need to get young people to grow dahlias and join DSO was discussed. Several ideas were given. This is a project for this year. Please submit ideas to Jerry.

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**Eva Botkin-Kowacki asks:**

*Should pollinating drones take over for honeybees?*

See her article:

http://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2017/0209/Should-pollinating-drones-take-over-for-honeybees

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**The JUDGE’s Corner**

Ron Miner - baronmineral@aol.com

**The Virus Project**

There will be an article in the March ADS Bulletin regarding the results of last season’s testing of dahlias for virus. Participation in the project exceeded our expectations. Samples from 722 dahlia plants were shipped to Professor Pappu from over 40 individual dahlia gardens across the US. From the “big picture” point of view, the results supported the original premise that grew out of the results of the tests in our Northeast Ohio gardens in 2015: **If in doubt, throw it out!**

As you will find in the Bulletin article, however, the extent of virus and the scatter in the results was far larger than we had anticipated from the 2015 tests. About 1/4 of the samples tested in 2015 had virus; about 1/2 of the samples tested in 2016 had virus! Most tests on plants with clean foliage showed them to be free of virus. Most tests on “G1” plants showed them to be free of virus. There were, however, over 40% of plants with either clean foliage or from G1 tubers that did exhibit virus—a disappointing result. The plant pictured below exhibited fairly subtle chlorosis along the veins of the leaves and tested positive for Tobacco Streak Virus.

We are in the process of working out the best strategy for testing in the 2017 season. Jim Chuey, through the Scheetz-Chuey foundation is planning on supporting the testing program again this year. (Thanks, Jim!!)

**Virus in a Dahlia Show**

One key message for judging in our 2017 shows is that we need to continue to penalize entries that show signs of virus. It is inappropriate to reward plants and entries with virus.

There are two things to look for when you think an entry shows virus: chlorosis (yellowing) of the veins and a blotchy or mosaic pattern in the leaves. Those two characteristics differentiate virus from nutritional problems in dahlia leaves. Nutritional deficiencies cause a
much more uniform chlorosis across the leaves and often leave the veins dark green. The left pictured on the left exhibits general yellowing between the relatively dark green veins. This plant, from my garden, was almost certainly suffering from nitrogen deficiency. For a lot of good information on the effects of nutritional deficiencies on the appearance of leaves, please see an excellent Youtube video based on a NC State Master’s Thesis at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPVb7XnUMX4&sns=em. If the leaves on your entry look like the one above, you should penalize the foliage as less than ideal but it should not be set back as having virus.

On the other hand, if your suspicious entry has mottled leaves (subtle oak leaf pattern in the picture on the right) and/or yellowed veins (obvious in the picture on the left, it should be set back as having virus.

If you are in doubt about the presence of virus, please ask your judging team leader or the judging chair about your concern. Please also remember that the DSO and MVDS judges may have more experience regarding the appearance of virus on our plants than those from other clubs. As usual, you will need to be respectful of the opinions and perspective of all the members of your judging team, particularly when you are judging in a show outside our immediate area.

Judging Status

I haven’t heard anything from our AC judges or CN judges on how best to move up to the next level. I encourage you all to consider moving up. The requirements are probably most easily accessible on the ADS website. Many of you will find that the only item required is to complete the test for AC or SR judges. Let me know if you have questions. Now is the time to get on with it!

Another winter/spring judging activity you will find worthwhile is watching one or more of the judging videos that are available on the ADS website. I watched the series produced by the Burtons some time ago. They are very worthwhile; please watch them if you haven’t already done so.

Sharon posted the new one by Art Chmura relatively recently and I watched it a few weeks ago. It lasts less than an hour and was recorded at a Meeting of the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers last fall. I enjoyed it thoroughly, perhaps in part because Art approached the presentation very differently from what I ordinarily do. That means that you will hear something quite different from what you’ve heard from me in recent years. His comments are thoroughly based on the Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD) and his focus is on “Situational Judging.” (Please just ignore the fact that Art calls the GJD “Cook’s Manual” in a lot of places in the video. He is just using old terminology, from when judging was based on the previous judging manual—Cook’s.)

“Situational Judging” basically boils down to how a judge needs to understand and implement the GJD principles depending on whether he or she is judging at a show, on the bench, or in a Trial Garden and on how different conditions in each of those situations affect their approach. We have discussed those differences in our judging seminars on a number of occasions; but I encourage you to take a look at Art’s video. I am confident you will learn a lot and enjoy the process. At about 27.5 minutes into the video, you will hear Art endorse one of my favorite themes. If you have only one entry in a class and it has a bloom and a pair of leaves, give it a first!!

The next section of this month’s column is based on Art’s comments at about 24 minutes in the video. You will hear him lament how poorly undisseminated seedling classes are judged in some shows outside the Northwest. In my experience, the point counting procedure he describes for ‘scoring’ first and second year seedlings is only used in the Northwest. It is, nevertheless, a very useful tool to help new growers and originators determine how their seedlings are likely to perform out there in the real world. Maybe we need to consider adding that class to our DSO shows!

Judging Undisseminated Seedlings

You will find, on page 41 in the GJD, a section that discusses an approach for quantitatively judging undisseminated seedlings. The manual refers to the section in terms of first and second year seedlings but it was written before we required seedlings to be raised for four years before they could be formally evaluated on the bench or in a trial garden. I imagine
The section would now include third year seedlings.

The section is an important and popular one in the Northwest where it could be one of the largest in the show. The class that Barbara is studying in the picture above could be the open-centered portion of the seedling section in the 2012 Puget Sound Dahlia Association Show. I say that because there are blue ribbons on entries that look like they should be competing against one another. More on that below. Note that it is a very large class.

The objective for an exhibitor in this section is to learn the judges’ opinion on the probability for a seedling to succeed in exhibition. (That, of course, is also why we tend to exhibit seedlings in open competition. The advantage of the separate class is that it specifically addresses the quality of the individual seedling.) The first step in the process of judging the class is for the team, as a group, to classify the entries just as they would for a TG or SBE evaluation. The second step is to look up the competition for the seedling in the Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD). The third step is for each judge to assess how well the seedling will do in a show against that competition.

Based on that assessment, a score between 1 and 10 is assigned to the entry according to the table on p. 42 in the GJD. For examples, a score of 10 would indicate that the seedling should be the “Best in Show;” a score of 5 indicates that it should get a Blue Ribbon; and a 1 indicates that it should get no award. Each seedling that gets an average score among the three judges of 4.0 or greater gets a Blue Ribbon. (Thus, the potential exists for a number of ribbons on very similar entries that look like they might be competing with one another.)

The best analogy from our DSO judge’s training and experience might be in determining the value for Distinction in a formal evaluation of a fourth year (or later) seedling. We have discussed Distinction in previous judging seminars in terms of a combination of merits associated with either 1) a highly striking and appealing appearance and 2) the level of success one might expect of the seedling in show competition. The approach used to judge undisseminated seedlings in the Northwest takes that latter element of Distinction as the basis for judging the section.

Take a look at pages 41 and 42 in the GJD. Do we want to add it to our DSO Show Schedule? My thought at the moment is to wait to do that until we try it in a judging seminar. With some experience with the approach, we can then consider the merit of adding it to our schedule. However, if you are heading out to the West Coast for a show, make sure you read about the class in the GJD! You might end up judging that class! It helps the hybridizers in that area sort out the best and the worst of their seedlings. I know that would be a very useful function for me in trying to optimize the space in my seedling-packed garden!

November Quiz

In November, I asked you to classify the new cultivar on the right. The Form for the cultivar is easy, right? But what about the color? I had planned on spending some time this month discussing the differences among bicolors, blends, and eye zones. I got so enthused about Art’s video that I’ve run out of space this month. We will get back to colors next month. In the meantime, this cultivar is Miss Molly; it is a single dark blend. It scored 86.8 in the North Central Trial Garden. Charles Krueger is the originator.

Ron
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)
Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

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