Hi Dahlia Lovers,

As of this writing, a couple weeks ago, I had not yet cut down my plants—not because I was too lazy (although there is some truth to that) but because my garden had yet to suffer a killer frost. Unbelievable. Never, ever, have I had blooms in November. In fact, I remember a couple years in which there was a killer frost before our Petitti show the first Saturday in October!

Thanks to Tony, who with me gave a dahlia presentation to the Cuyahoga County Master Gardeners Conference held on November 1. He even brought some blooms to share. If any of you have given workshops or talks, let me know so we can keep a record of how we are fulfilling our mission. Thanks.

And thanks to Dave last month who entertained us with wit and humor as he demonstrated how to store dahlias. I never knew that dividing and wrapping up tubers could be so much fun!!

Your DSO needs YOU to step to the plate and become an officer. There are four positions open for next year. To date there are NO candidates for any of them: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Recording Secretary. All are vacant as of December 31. As you may know, the East Liverpool Dahlia Society is basically gone. Nor can we recycle DSO officers forever. Please don’t let DSO die as have Toledo and East Liverpool. Please help to keep DSO alive! Thanks.

Jerry

Hybridizing How you can introduce a new Dahlia with your chosen name on it!

Tony, Harriet, Jim, Randy
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..........216-524-2635
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

Jackie Evangelista
Anna Kandra
Marilyn Weber

MEETING DATES for 2017

March 17 New Introductions; Expert Dahlia Panel
April 21 Tuber auction
May 19 Plant auction
June 16 Plant nutrient deficiencies, Ron Miner
August 19 Picnic at Aurora Nature Center; Tour and Judging seminar at Ron’s afterwards (optional)
October 20 Photo contest; dividing/storing –Dave et al
November 17 Hybridizing
December 2 Holiday luncheon, Burntwood Tavern, Solon

HYBRIDIZING

Wouldn’t it be exciting to be the first person to ever see a brand new dahlia and have the privilege of naming it? We have several members in DSO who have had such an experience and are wanting to share it with us. So come and learn how to do it. Be a dahlia parent!!!
**DSO Holiday Party**

**DATE:** Saturday December 2, 2017  
**TIME:** 12noon-2:30pm  
**LOCATION:** Burntwood Tavern  
33675 Solon Road, Solon, OH 44139

We will have a private room and will order off a limited menu. Cost is $20 +. Pay individually on the day of the party. Door prizes!

---

**LOOKING for a HOLIDAY GIFT?**

Join the American Dahlia Society!  
**It’s easy to do and well worth the money.**  
Simply include dues for ADS with your DSO dues.

---

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

**Become an ADS/DSO Judge**

Many of you will recognize the bloom on the right as the spectacular AC Casper that was the Grand Champion at the National Show in Chicago in September. Jim Chuey and Harriet Chandler were the DSO members who grew, hauled, and exhibited that wonderful bloom in Chicago. The question that this column tries to address each month is ‘What are the characteristics of a dahlia bloom that make it a potential Grand Champion at a National Show - or at the local county fair?’ Those characteristics are treated in detail in the ADS publication, *Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD).* Supplemental and update information are presented in the annual publication of the ADS, *The Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD).* Finally, brief “reminders” of important judging criteria are found on the Seedling Score Sheets used to judge dahlias in Trial Gardens and in the Seedling Bench Evaluation process. Hopefully, the comments in these monthly columns provide useful reinforcement of the contents of each of the foregoing sources of judging information.

Glenn Ruth was the DSO’s Judging Chairman for many years. He greatly influenced the thinking and the experience of most of the DSO’s current Senior (SR) and Accredited (AC) judges. (The picture of Glenn, at right with Jerry Moreno, is one of my favorites.) Glenn’s key messages to DSO judges were 1) remember that this is just a hobby, 2) have fun in the judging process, and 3) learn something from your colleagues on the judging team. We continue to try to incorporate his wise counsel in current DSO judging!

Perhaps the best news in all of the discussion here is that it can lead you to greater enjoyment of our dahlias and all the activities that surround...
them. Even if your only plan for using the blooms in your garden is to put them on the dining room table, understanding the criteria that make a beautiful flower into a Grand Champion will help you to better appreciate that bouquet on your table.

I encourage all of you to join our team of DSO judges. Send me an email if you need help on the first, or the next, steps in that process. I also encourage our team of judges to spend a few evenings this winter with the judging manual!

Classification of Seedlings

A key step in the process of evaluating a seedling is determining its classification. Classification provides the basis for the new cultivar to be gathered into appropriate groups for competition. A useful analogy is a “form mountain.” The CHD provides the current ideal definition for the pinnacle of that mountain. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that we need to separate those natural creations into groups they may not exactly fit. The “elevation” of the seedling on that mountain, however, is only a small (5%) portion of its total evaluation.

One of the benefits of being involved in the management of the ADS Trial Gardens (TGs) is that I get an early look at the new cultivars and their classification. Roger Walker has the responsibility for pulling together all the Seedling Bench Evaluation (SBE) results. He and I work together to reconcile the two sets of data. The decision is very easy for most of the new cultivars. Clearview Peachy is an example of such a cultivar. It scored a total of 6 times between the SBE and the TGs. It was classified as a ball 5 out of those 6 times. In the sixth case it was FD; but the choice for BA was clearly the majority pick. As you might anticipate, the finalization of the color of the cultivar was tougher. Most of the results favored a solid color over a blend and there were several pinks. The bottom line was PK10. Clearview Peachy also scored well enough in the TGs to win the Lynn Dudley Medal as the highest scoring BA, MB, and P.

For seedlings that lie well away from the peak of those form “mountains,” the final choice can be more difficult and sometimes more controversial. The cultivar pictured here on the right fell in that category. How would you classify Clearview Palser? It is even more important than usual that you get out your CHD and look at the current ideal definitions before you make that call. The choice is between ID and FD and the shape and the arrangement of the ray florets determine the choice; do you agree? The FD definition describes the ray florets as “generally flat, broad, and smooth in a regular arrangement that gradually recurve toward the stem.” The ID definition describes the ray florets as “twisted, curled, or wavy and of uniform size and irregular arrangement.”

You might even want to bring to memory (or get out your smart phone and look at!) some examples of ID and FD cultivars. The cultivars on the right were also in the Trial Gardens this year. Skipley Smiles won the Dudley Medal for the miniature dahlias and meets the FD definition pretty well. The ray florets on Allen’s High Voltage meet the definition for ID florets pretty well, too. Before you leap to the conclusion that Clearview Palser should be FD, check the picture on the lower left, below. That picture of Goldilocks will remind you that “wavy” ray florets can also lead to classification of ID.

The picture of Clearview Palser, above right, sure looks FD to me. Perhaps this is a good example of why you can’t judge a bloom on the basis of one tiny picture. Clearview Palser, was classified once as FD and twice as ID between the TGs and SBE and is, therefore, an ID, at least for the time being. It may be one of the cultivars that Tony and the rest of the Classification Committee will soon need to
re-evaluate! (Thanks, Tony for ageing to join that committee!) My personal view on the classification as ID reflects the extent to which our thinking about the FD form has been influenced by the myriad of FDs that lie along the “ridge” between the FD “mountain” and the BA “mountain.” Hollyhill Golden Boy, here on the right, is an example of a cultivar on that “ridge.” The lesson there is that it is important to continue to refer to the current ideal definitions in the CHD in order not to drift too far off course in our classification process.

**Petitti Show and Seminar**

I certainly enjoyed the Petitti Show and Judging Seminar again this year. We had a nice turnout of exhibitors and blooms for the show and a great group of folks stayed for lunch (thanks again, ladies) and the seminar. Thanks to you all for participating!

Jim and Harriet brought a humongous Bryn Terfel that readily captured the Grand Champion spot and there was a nice mix of recipients for the other awards. Congratulations to all.

One emphasis in the discussion before the hands-on portion of the seminar was on achieving “reasonable” results in the evaluation of seedlings on the bench. There is no substitute for experience in achieving that result. That, at least in part, is the reason that Candidate Judges spend several years observing and participating in judging teams at shows. One of the key starting points in evaluating a seedling is in the determination of whether or not a given attribute deserves a “passing” score. That experience of judging a show with a team of experienced judges will help put practical perspective on what characteristics constitute a passing score for each of the various attributes evaluated. That perspective will also provide a basis for adjusting up and down from that passing level of 85%.

There was some lively and informative discussion about some of the attributes of the hands-on examples at the seminar! :-)

Ron

---

**Trivia from the Dahlia Society of California**

Visit the San Francisco webpage for some very interesting trivia about dahlias. For example, “Name an instant beverage that has a coffee-like flavor made from the pressed juice of the dahlia tuber.”

www.sfdahlias.org/how.to.grow/trivia.htm

---

**Which of the following three numbers on fertilizers is the one that you would be interested in focusing on regarding the bloom (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium)?**

40-5-5  
5-40-5  
5-5-40

---

Let me know if you are in favor of having Baron Aunt Dorothy as our Flower of the Year for 2018, the Midwest Show that we are hosting.
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSO Individual</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSO Family</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSO Individual + ADS Individual</td>
<td>$39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSO Family + ADS Individual</td>
<td>$44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSO Family + ADS Family</td>
<td>$47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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