Hi Dahlia Lovers,

It’s hard to believe that another dahlia season is quickly coming to a close. It seems like yesterday when we were unpacking the winter storage and getting tubers started indoors. And now we have only memories of last summer’s garden, cut blooms taken to shows or local places of business to showoff the fascinating dahlia. To put finishing touches on 2017 come to the October meeting where Dave and others will share their methods of storing tubers hoping to be able to save those Court entries to display again next year. Also, we will have our annual photo contest.—see elsewhere in Digest.

Kudos to Dave Cap who keeps on doing an amazing job in organizing the Cuyahoga, Summit Mall, and Petitti shows for us as well as the Rockefeller and Holden tuber and plant sales along with propagation from Mike and Doc. Thanks guys and to the many others who help set-up and tear-down the shows. This was a good year with lots of help to make the work load easier for all.

Harriet and Jim took a bunch of the very top honors at the ADS national show in Chicago joined on the Honor Table by Randy and Kathy, Ron and Barbara, Tony and Jackie, and Todd Imhoff. Thanks to all for representing northeast Ohio so well to the national viewers and growers.

And congratulations to Tony Evangelista who has become a member of the ADS Classification Committee. Thanks Tony.

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

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PHOTO CONTEST

STORING TUBERS by Dave et al
Bring a Clump or Two!

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Visit your DSO website
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster
www.dahliasocietyofohio.org
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Tony Evangelista, ADS Representative…………. 440-867-3711
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster……………………. 330-562-3296

REFRESHMENTS

Barbara Miner
MaryAnn Moreno
Joyce Southerland

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 3 Holiday party, Burntwood Tavern, Solon

PHOTO CONTEST RULES

Sarah

- Photos are to have been taken in 2017.
- Maximum size is 5x7. No frames.
- Up to 3 entries may be entered per category.
- No digital enhancements in any category.

4 Categories

A. Dahlia Portrait of a Single Bloom; Florets must be within picture edges.

B. Multiple blooms—only dahlias.

C. Dahlias and life forms.

D. Artistic Design.

Prizes for First, Second, and Third places in each category.
Giant Step Forward for Dahlia Research and Development!

A special announcement was added to the Seminar Agenda at the National Show on Saturday afternoon. Jim Chuey revealed another gigantic donation to Washington State University (WSU) to support their work on dahlias. This one, for $805,000 (!), will create two new things at WSU: first, an official “Chair” for dahlia research and development and, second, a Dahlia Resource Center dedicated to the transfer of the knowledge, developments, and the skills available from WSU to the ADS and the dahlia gardens of their members.

Creating the Carl F. and James J. Chuey Endowed Chair for Dahlia Research and Development basically changes the stature and the influence of Professor Pappu at WSU, thereby enhancing his dahlia research activities and the portion of his time that will be dedicated to dahlia research. A “Chair” at WSU depends on the accumulation of $1,500,000 in donations. The early donations include one for $125,000 by Evie Gullikson and a matching donation by the ADS. Jim’s 2014 donation of $350,000 plus the current one puts us over the top for that $1.5 million requirement. Professor Pappu has indicated that one of the consequences of the creation of the “Chair” will be a new initiative to study tissue culture approaches to the development of dahlias that are truly free of virus. That has been one of the items on the top of Jim’s set of development priorities.

Because Professor Pappu is already in position to take on the “Chair,” funds become available out of the $1.5 million for the creation of the Carl F. and James J. Chuey Dahlia Resource Center. The Resource Center promises to be the key in making the work at WSU useful to us in our dahlia gardens.

Brad Freeman and I visited WSU earlier this year to review the progress of virus research there and to discuss how best to make the research activity more effective. It became clear that there was a huge reservoir of knowledge at the University—not only from the work on virus by Professor Pappu but also the broad range of skills that evolve in agricultural sciences in a Land Grant University like WSU. The Resource Center will have a full time, advanced degree researcher whose basic responsibility will be to help translate that agricultural knowledge to useful information for growing our dahlias.

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

The National/Midwest Show in Chicago

I want to start with some comments on judging at the National Show that was hosted by the Central States DS in Chicago. I had the pleasure of judging several classes with Steve Kuiper (Elkhart DS) and Laura Oldenkamp (Portland DS). Glenn would have been proud of us. We had a great time and we all listened and learned from each other! Most of our choices were easy and unanimous but there were respectful differences of opinion on a number of entries. In all of those cases, the majority opinion prevailed and was adopted by the team. The bottom line is that I want to again encourage you all to attend regional and national shows when you are able to do so. They are fun and informative!

I also had the opportunity to join the judging of the head table. It turned out also to be an easy task. Do you remember my comments regarding the judging of the head table at the Long Island show two years ago? Our Tony Evangelista had a bloom of Kenora Wildfire among the candidates for Best-in-Show. It was sufficiently outstanding that we only discussed it very briefly. It simply dominated the competition.

The same situation developed in Chicago. The AC Casper, on the right, simply stood out as the Best-in-Show at the National. Again, almost no discussion was required! We did need to set it on the floor to be able to see into the center of the bloom; but, after that, it was clear that it was the best.

The exhibitors of that wonderful AC Casper are shown, with several other of their blooms, in the picture below. MVDS and DSO members, Jim Chuey and Harriet Chandler, dominated the entire head table with the Best-in-Show, the Largest Bloom in the Show, Most Perfect A, B, and BB Blooms in the Show, and the Most Perfect Triple BB Blooms in the Show! Amazing job, our friends! Congratulations.
Jim had a good weekend. See another article in this Digest on his new donation to dahlia research and development at WSU.

Judging Undisseminated Seedlings

No doubt you all remember my comments on this topic in my March column, right? Maybe not every detail? Our colleagues on the West Coast use special classes for judging undisseminated seedlings. The classes are a standard part of their (standardized) show schedule. The procedures for judging the class are summarized on pages 41 and 42 in the Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD). Perhaps the key point is that originators use the class to help them to decide whether or not to keep a seedling.

I try to get to that decision based on the success of a seedling in open competition. The disadvantage of that approach is that success in open competition depends very basically on which cultivars happen to be in that particular class on that particular day. The undisseminated class, on the other hand, is based on all of the potential competitors in that classification.

We tried out the procedure at our judging seminar after the DSO picnic in August. We had three judging teams and three judging stations. Two of the stations involved judging seedlings in what could be considered a traditional Trial Garden setting. At those stations, we used the usual Trial Garden score sheets and procedures. The third station is in the picture on the right.

The assignment was to use the procedures described in the GJD to reach a score between 1 and 10 for each entry. We did not worry about getting the exact color chips for this exercise, but it is important to do so at a real show because the next step involves identifying the cultivars with which the entry will compete. That competition would change dramatically if the colors put it in a Dark Blend class as opposed to a Light Blend class.

The crux of the process is shown in the table at the right. After you determine the classification and thus the competition, you need to decide how well the seedling would do against that competition. If you feel it would most likely capture a Blue ribbon in its class, you would give the entry a 5. Your score is then averaged with those of the other two judges on your team to get the score for the seedling. Blue ribbons go to all the entries that achieve a score of 4, or more. The entry with the highest score goes to the Court of Honor as the Best Undisseminated Dahlia in Show.

The scores in our little class on the porch ranged from 4 to 9(!). The Best Undisseminated Dahlia in our Show was the Stellar seedling at the right. I wish it were as blue as the picture suggests; but it isn’t. It is a blend of purple and lavender. I don’t know how closely our scores would have matched those that would have been generated by our friends on the West coast; but I’m confident that the order of those sets of scores would be very similar or identical.

The participants, including me, agreed that the process was interesting and informative and probably more useful than we had thought before we went through the analysis. Please let me know whether or not you would be more inclined to enter seedlings in our shows if we were to have such a class. We don’t need more work for Dave for our shows(!) but if you were more likely to participate as a result of the availability of that undisseminated class, we should probably consider it. Even if we end up not using the class in a show, I will use it in my own seedling beds to help get a sense of the priorities among all those beautiful favorites out there.

The Petitti Show has already come and gone!

I look forward to the Petitti Show every year largely because the judging seminar has always been well attended and your participation in the discussions is just great.

At the time of this writing, the show is still ahead of us but will be another bit of DSO history when you get this Digest. I hope that the plan I had for the judging seminar worked out. In particular, the idea was to cover some of the basics of judging seedlings using the traditional SBE approach but we may have walked through an example of judging an “undisseminated” seedling as discussed above.

The downside of the Petitti show is that the show season is over! How did it get by us so fast??
Please take advantage of the “off” season to spend some time with the “Guide to Judging Dahlias.” Send me some comments and questions on your reading. Even better, write a guest column for me!!

**Dig and Divide Carefully!**

I hope that you have invested some time and effort in avoiding the transfer of virus among your plants. All of our work at WSU shows that you are virtually certain to have some plants with virus and some plants that are free of virus in your garden. It was that fact that led to the new piece of “standard equipment” in the Gatorade bottle pictured on the right. I carry that bottle of 10% bleach solution whenever I have my clippers in the garden! Tiny insects can transfer virus from one of our plants to the next. Just imagine what damage and transfer of fluids the “mouth” on that pair of clippers could do!

It is similarly important to be careful when you are digging and dividing your tubers. Use a sterilized knife or cutters to cut down your plants. I don’t know how to make it practical to sterilize a shovel. (Let me know if you do!) My suggestion to avoid transferring virus through the fluids transferred from plant to plant during digging is to trim the feeder roots and the occasional cut tubers within a day or two after digging. And, of course, you need to sterilize the clippers you use to do that trimming between each clump.

I have developed the habit of selecting the best plants of each cultivar to dig and divide at the end of the year. In the last couple years we have added another criterion to use in choosing those plants to save and use for next year: the appearance of the leaves. Let’s say you have two Barbara Miners (wow :-)); I mean the plants) with leaves like those on the right. Please be sure to keep the plant with the foliage B and discard the one with foliage A. The key is not so much the dark green foliage in B but rather the yellow veins in foliage A. Choose to save the plants that look like B wherever you can!

Ron

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**WANT TO CREATE A NEW DAHLIA?**

We were going to have a program on hybridizing this month but had to postpone it until November. Come to the meeting next month for details.

The resulting dahlia plants pollinated by insects and bees are unpredictable. Perhaps a “keeper” is found in 1 out of 500 or more seedlings. For better results, hybridizers select certain plants to cross and do the pollinating by hand.

When a seedling has been grown for 4 or more years, the hybridizer sends three tubers to each of several trial gardens to get scored. The alternative is to enter a three-bloom entry to an ADS seedling bench evaluation. Seedlings scoring 85 or above can be introduced and listed in the next ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias.

Save your seed pods. Details at November meeting.
DSO/ADS Membership Application
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