Hi Dahlia Lovers,

I started last month’s memo with “Are you tired of winter and want to get your fingers in soil again?” Man! Need to say it again, winter doesn’t want to leave NE Ohio, does it?

Our fingers aren’t quite in soil yet, but Mike and his crew have started to propagate dahlias at the Willoway Nursery that will be used for our sales. I’ll probably start mine indoors about the time of our meeting April 20. I use Pro Mix BX. How about you?

Please look through your supply of tubers and donate whatever you can to the tuber sale at Petitti’s Oakwood April 14, 9-3, or to our Auction April 20. Be sure that they are clean and well-marked with name of variety for sure and, if known, size, form, and color. Thanks.

We are moving along preparing for our hosting the 84th Midwest Dahlia Conference Show. Begin by submitting your favorite recipe of any sort to be included in the Cook Book for the Midwest Show. Also, if you sew, see details elsewhere in this Digest. Or find freebees for the Hospitality Bags. Thanks.

The Flower of the Year is Kenora Wildfire.
We will have plants from virus-free tested tubers available for sale in May.

This is our logo for the 84th Midwest Dahlia Conference Show. Thanks for your input and thanks to Lynsey Penny of Delaware, Ohio for creating it.

See you April 20. Jerry
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Refreshments for April

Kathy Foith
Ann Kandra

MEETING DATES for 2018

March 16 Edible Gardening; Rob Dzurec
New Introductions
April 20 Tuber auction
May 18 Plant auction
June 15 Speaker on Soils, Phyllis Mihalik
August xx Picnic at Aurora Nature Center; Judging seminar afterwards at Ron’s (optional)
October 19 Speaker tbd; Dividing/storing-Dave
November 16 Photo contest; Speaker tbd
December 1 Holiday party, Burntwood Tavern, Solon

Summary of March Meeting

- Barbara Hosta organized the March meeting that featured Rob Dzurec from the Cleveland Botanical who gave an interesting talk on Edible Gardening. Following that we viewed the slide show of New Introductions 2018.
- Sharon reported that we are in decent shape financially. She also said that we have 66 DSO members and 38 ADS.
- MaryAnn postal mailed 44 Digests.
- Barbara announced the Cleveland Botanical Affiliates Day, April 12, $8 for members.
- Mike said that propagation has started at Willoway. There are a few G1 and G2 tubers.
- Jerry showed four candidates for our Midwest Show logo. Those in attendance voted on which one they liked best.

April 14 Tuber Sale at Petitti’s Oakwood  9-3
April 20 DSO Tuber Auction 7:00 pm

Please donate tubers to the Tuber Sale at Petitti’s and/or our Tuber Auction. Be sure that the tubers are clean and marked with the correct name. It is helpful if you also include the size, form, and color. Thanks.

Midwest Dahlia Conference Annual Meeting/Plant Sale
Saturday June 2, 9-2:30
High Dive Pavilion  500 E. Beardsley  Elkhart, Indiana

Check the website for registration details.
Money from the plant sale goes to DSO to defray costs of hosting the Midwest Show.
http://www.midwestdahliaconference.org
Items of many different types are being made by Barbara Miner and others to sell at the Midwest Show Boutique. If you sew and would like to help, contact Barbara Miner, baronbarb@aol.com.

A Cook Book is being compiled to add to the Hospitality Bag for each registrant. If you cook/bake and would like to contribute entries of any edible favorite of yours—appetizer, entrée, salad, dessert, snack,... send to MaryAnn Moreno, maryannjerry@windstream.net.

Don’t sew or cook? Then help out by finding around 80 freebees for the Hospitality Bags. For example, we have 80 pens from Huntington Bank. Need trial sizes of anything, e.g., Osmocote, hand cream, other pens, tablets, etc. See Jerry.

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

Evaluation of Form in Fully Double Dahlias

Last month, we discussed most of the key attributes in evaluating Form in fully double dahlias. Four high priority characteristics that need to be considered in judging the quality of the Form of fully double dahlias are Symmetry, Contour, Development, and Trueness to Form. I ran out of time and space to discuss the last characteristic, Depth. We will cover that item this month.

The relative values of the elements of Form are found on page 40 in the ADS Guide for Judging Dahlias (GJD). In evaluating a seedling, the Symmetry, Contour, Development, and Trueness to Form are of equal value (5 points each). Depth, or size proportion, is of somewhat greater importance (8 points).

A brief review of those first four attributes is worthwhile. Which aspects of Form come into play when comparing these two Clearview Royal blooms? The differences in the shapes of the ray florets on the bloom on the far right is apparent as a result of the lighter color of the face of the ray florets. That is, the symmetry problem is made more apparent by the face color. In hindsight, however, the problematic appearance of the center of the bloom on the right could also be considered a Contour problem. In a discussion of Contour, our GJD, p. 18, says that “The ideal bloom will have … ray florets that appear to spiral in a regular formation” from the center of the bloom. Thus, if you disagreed with me on this example when you read last month’s column, you had a good point!

What Form characteristic comes to mind in comparing these Hollyhill Miss Whites? The bloom on the left provides a clear example of a sunken center. Take a look at page 17 in the GJD. The last sentence under Symmetry says “Possible faults of centers include centers … oblong, depressed, protruding or presenting a flat face.” It isn’t obvious to me why the depressed face would be Symmetry fault, but that is how the GJD lists it. The key point here is that the depressed center is a Form fault and the degree of the fault depends on the severity of the depression.

What Should I Be Doing Now?

- Check stored tubers. Discard rotten ones. If not too badly shriveled, try damp peat moss and warmth. Choose some to donate to DSO. Start propagation indoors mid-April to have plants ready in a month.

- Outdoors, time to pull weeds, fertilize according to soil test, at least test for pH if not full analysis. Add leaf mold, compost, manure to your soil. Review NPK from last month’s Digest. Be careful not to get too anxious if soil is really wet as you don’t want to compact it making it turn to concrete! That would be a disaster!
Perhaps the easiest Contour faults to identify are gaps. Both of the Anthony Armelines on the right show gaps. The gap at 9 o’clock in the bloom on the left, however, is worse than any of the gaps in the bloom on the right. The “irregular formation” of the ray florets around 6 o’clock in the bloom on the right should be considered a contour fault, too. “Judges must also examine more than the outline of the bloom; they must inspect the arrangement, placement, and uniformity of ray florets.” (GJD, p. 18.)

Have you ever been tempted to leap to the choice of a bright, colorful entry sitting on a bench without looking at the back of the entry? (Who hasn’t?!?) I hope that the pair of Hollyhill Jitterbugs on the right are sufficiently different that you would want to examine each closely, including the backs of the blooms, before leaping to a conclusion.

One of the many lessons I learned from Dick Westfall was to make sure that we follow the dictate in the GJD, p. 18, that “the mature bloom at the peak of development with some faults merits first choice over an immature “clean” bloom.” On a number of occasions, I asked Dick to confirm for me that we had not left the Best in Show out on the tables with a 2nd place ribbon. That was not normally the case, but the lesson to be learned is to make sure that we give fully mature blooms a break.

The two Crazy 4 Davids below are at different levels of maturity. The bloom on the right is still evolving toward its SC Form. The bloom on the left is more mature and shows its SC characteristics more clearly. Truth to Form can be an important issue in a show setting where there a lot of different cultivars in the same class. I’ve heard it argued in a judging team that “bloom is about as good as that cultivar gets.” That may be true, but if its competition is otherwise as good and has a Form that is higher on the “Form Mountain,” the entry with better inherent Form should get the nod.

**Depth**

Depth is the distance from the front of the bloom to the back of the bloom. Size Proportion is the ratio of the depth to diameter of the bloom. Size is frequently described as the product of the depth and the diameter—for determining the largest bloom in the show, for example. Our focus here will be on Size Proportion. That is the variable that is used to describe the merit of an entry’s Form.

The annual ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD) includes the ideal definitions of Form. You should always refer to the most recent CHD because the definitions evolve with time and you need to use the most recent publication. The 2018 CHD lists five forms that have an ideal “depth” that is three-quarters the diameter of the bloom and that should not exceed the diameter of the bloom: FD, ID, SC, C, and LC.

The depth of IC cultivars should be at least half the diameter of the bloom. The depth of WL dahlias should “never be more than one-half the diameter of the bloom.”

The depths of BA, MB, and P dahlias are not described in the CHD but the GJD describes them as “ball shaped,” so we can infer that the ideal depth would be equal to the diameter.

I see a disconnect between the foregoing official descriptions and the actual practice at shows. Blooms with depths greater than three-quarters are often perceived to better than blooms with three-quarters depth. That is, blooms deeper than the “ideal” depth are favored over those with “ideal” depth. I generally do not disagree with that perspective. However, my counsel would be to weigh the benefit of the extra depth, beyond the ideal, only very slightly.

On the other side of the ledger, depths that are lower than three-quarters of the diameter for the above list should be appropriately penalized. (Shallow blooms are often immature blooms.) For WL, depths greater than one-half should be penalized.

Ron
Summary of Virus in 2017 Samples
The figure below illustrates an overview of the virus results of all the 1665 virus tests performed by Professor Hanu Pappu at Washington State University in 2017.

The results are grouped on the basis of the condition of the parent plants in 2016. The set of bars on the left (Gx) show the percent of each of the viruses that were detected in samples from plants that were free of virus in 2016 (G1, G2 plants). The bars in the center (?) are from plants that weren’t tested in 2016. The bars on the right (V) are tests from plants that were found to have virus in 2016. It is clear that virus carries over from year to year and it is very important to avoid saving plants with virus! We are formulating plans for testing in 2018 that aim to help us do that.

The Midwest Conference and the MVDS and DSO clubs, in particular, are fortunate to be at the forefront of this effort. That position is a simple result of the commitment of Jim Chuey to the project and of the resources of the Scheetz-Chuey Foundation that Jim can bring to bear on the project. Thanks again, Jim!

Incidence of Virus in 2017

TSWV: Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus; TSV Tobacco Streak Virus; INSV: Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus; CMV: Cucumber Mosaic Virus

MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2018

April 14  Petitti’s Garden Center, Oakwood 9—3
  Tuber Sale
May 17-19 Rockefeller Park Greenhouse  9-4
  Plant and Tuber Sale
May 18-20 Holden Arboretum, Kirtland
  Fri Noon—6 (Holden members only)
  Sat-Sun  10-4 (Open to public) Plant Sale
August 11-12: Cuyahoga County Fair
  Staging after set-up  Saturday 7:30—11:00 am
  Teardown Sunday 8:30 pm
August 24-26: Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society
  Carnation City Mall, Alliance
August 31—September 1-2: Geauga County Fair
  Must register beforehand—registration form
  available from Jerry shortly
  Set-up Friday:  4:00—9:00 pm
September 7-9: DSO Midwest Dahlia Conference
  Holiday Inn Strongsville
  Staging: Friday 4:00 pm - Saturday 9:00 am
September 21-23: National Show
  Philadelphia PA
October 6-7: DSO Member Show  Petitti Oakwood
  Staging after set-up: Saturday 8:00—11:00

DUES for 2018
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Thanks.
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)
Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

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