Hi Dahlia Lovers,

Are you tired of winter and want to get your fingers in soil again? There are still several weeks before that will happen but we can check our tubers to see if they are surviving winter better than we have! Be sure to come to the March 16 meeting to see the annual slide show on New Introductions. Also to whet your appetite, so to speak, Rob Dzurec from the Botanical will tell us all about Edible Gardening. What a great information-filled program to start DSO’s year! Many thanks to Barbara Hosta who is facilitating the March meeting.

Mike Weber and his committee of dahlia enthusiasts have started to propagate dahlias at the Willoway Nursery for our plant sales in May. Thanks Mike et al.

This year’s Flower of the Year for our Midwest Show is Kenora Wildfire. We will grow some for our May plant auction. As you know, it’s a beautiful large red bloom and a proven show winner.

Thanks to all of you who stepped forward and volunteered to facilitate our meeting programs this year. Every meeting date including the picnic and holiday luncheon are covered. Our major task now is to increase our membership, especially young people, and encourage everyone to come to the meetings. A lot of effort goes into organizing them. Thanks for your help.

This is an exciting year for DSO as we are hosting the 88th Midwest Dahlia Conference Show. Details on how you can help will be made available in coming months. Begin by submitting your favorite recipe to be included in the Cook Book for the Midwest Show. Also, if you sew, see details elsewhere in this Digest.

See you at the March 16 meeting!

Jerry
OFFICERS and CHAIRS

Jerry Moreno, President........................... 440-543-5658
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Membership......330-562-3296
1st Vice President.........................................................
2nd Vice President.........................................................
Recording Secretary....................................................... MaryAnn Moreno, Corresponding Secretary.....440-543-5658
Dave Cap, Show Chair....................................................
Mike Weber, Propagation Chair....................... 440-647-3162
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 for March

Barbara Hosta
MaryAnn Moreno
Sarah Thompson

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

2018 DSO Flower of the Year
KENORA WILDFIRE

We will have some plants of Kenora Wildfire at the May plant auction

DAHLIAS of TODAY 2018

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 incl shipping. Pay by cash or check when order.
March Program—
Facilitated by Barbara Hosta

Edible Gardening by Rob Dzurec

Rob Dzurec has been with the Cleveland Botanical garden since 2013 and oversees various gardens including the Gateway Garden, East Boulevard Garden, and Potager Garden. He earned his BS from Miami University and an associate degree in Horticulture from Kent State University.

Many food crops have ornamental value in addition to the practical foods they provide. This program focuses on incorporating edible plants into the residential landscape. The power point presentation will focus on plant selection, planning and practical considerations.

NEW INTRODUCTIONS

In addition we will see the traditional slide show of new dahlia introductions for 2018 produced by the American Dahlia Society. It is always interesting to see what the new kids on the block look like.

Please Donate Tubers at the March Meeting!

Be sure they are clean and labeled with respect to name, size, form, and color.

Do you know this insect?
More about it in later issues.

OFFICERS for 2018

Note that there are three vacant DSO positions. Please consider stepping forward to serve DSO and the dahlia community in one of these leadership capacities. Ask Jerry about what is involved in each of them.

Thanks.

First Vice President
Second Vice President
Recording Secretary

Help Dave!

We are also looking for an Assistant for Dave regarding the organization of our shows and sales. Dave does a terrific job but he needs help!!! Have you noticed that he is getting older and older and slower and slower??!

Well, maybe not but we should provide him with an Assistant Show Chair nonetheless. So let Jerry know that you are willing! Tks.
MIDWEST SHOW 2018

Keep in mind that DSO is hosting the Midwest Dahlia Conference Show, September 7-9, 2018, for the 18 societies that comprise the Midwest Dahlia Conference. It will be held at the Holiday Inn, Strongsville.

Boutique items are being made by Barbara Miner and others.

If you sew and would like to help, contact Barbara Miner, baronbarb@aol.com.

If you cook/bake and would like to contribute entries to the Cook Book, contact MaryAnn Moreno maryannjerry@windstream.net. Any edible favorite of yours—appetizer, entrée, salad, dessert, snack...

WHAT ON EARTH IS N-P-K?

N-P-K is a fertilizer’s ratio of the nutrients: Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K). Actually, Phosphorus occurs in fertilizer as the compound Phosphate (P₂O₅) as does Potassium, namely Potash (K₂CO₃).

So what does 10-20-5 mean? A 25 pound bag of 10-20-5 fertilizer contains 10% nitrogen (2.5 pounds of nitrogen), 20% phosphate (5 pounds of phosphate) and 5% potash (1.25 pounds of potash). The rest of the bag is filler, perhaps sand or granular limestone. The calculation is pretty simple for Jim as he often uses urea—that’s 46-0-0! That’s 46 pounds of nitrogen in a 100-pound bag and 54 pounds of filler. (How he keeps his dahlia plants from looking like elephant ears is beyond me—but he does!)

Have you ever heard of “up-down-all around?” Well, the “up” is nitrogen which spurs vigorous, leafy growth and rich green color. Common inorganic sources of nitrogen are urea, ura ammonium nitrate, and anhydrous ammonia. Common organic sources of nitrogen are manure, compost, blood meal, and feather meal.

“Down” is phosphorus which concentrates on root development and the promotion of blooming. The primary inorganic source of phosphorus is phosphate rock. Common organic sources of phosphorus are manure, compost, biosolids, blood mean, and bone meal.

“All around” is potassium which enhances overall growth basically keeping plants healthy and balanced. The primary inorganic source of potassium is potash. It is mined all over the world. Common organic sources of potassium are manure, compost, and wood ash.

NPK fertilizer is available in liquid, gaseous and granular form with granular the most common.

QUIZ: How many lbs. of NPK are in this bag?

Note: 4-10-7 12 lb. bag

Dahlia Trivia

SIMPLE: What is the official flower of Seattle, WA?

The dahlia

HARDER: When/where was the dahlia discovered?

The high plains of Mexico, end of 18th century

HARDEST: Who is the dahlia named after?

The 18th century Swedish botanist Anders Dahl
THINGS TO DO—MARCH

- Support DSO and volunteer to help sell tubers and plants at Rockefeller and Holden Arboretum. Let Dave know when you are available. See schedule on last page.

- Look at your stored tubers and discard the ones that rotted. The ones that are not too shriveled may come back to life with some tlc but I tend to discard them as well—unless of course I have only one of that variety and it happens to be my absolute favorite!

- Although Mike and helpers have already started to propagate in early March to have plants ready for our sales in May, I usually start my tubers inside around April 15 to have plants ready to harden over and plant by Memorial Day.

- Look through dahlia websites to find varieties that you would like to grow this year. Check with us to see if we will have those varieties to purchase at our April or May auctions. Otherwise purchase from reliable nurseries. Note that Clearview has stated that their tubers have been tested and should be virus-free—at least at the time of testing.

- Come to our March 16 meeting and enjoy seeing a power point of New Introductions for 2018 as well as a very interesting talk on edible gardening. Besides, rubbing shoulders with other dahlia nuts is a great way to start the growing season.

- Although fall tends to be a better season in which to test your soil, it can be done in spring as well. Once you find out what your soil needs are, particularly with regard to nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, you can put the previous page on NPK to use in determining the right ratio of nutrients to use.

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

Virus Analyses 2017

2017 was a watershed year in developing the knowledge that will allow us to begin to control virus in our dahlia gardens. Jim Chuey and the Scheetz-Chuey Foundation provided the wherewithal to create the Carl F. and James J. Chuey Chair for Dahlia Research and Development at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. Professor Hanu Pappu holds that Chair and has led the way again this year in identifying virus in samples sent to WSU for analysis. The Midwest Conference is clearly in a leadership role in the virus control offensive! Thanks, Jim!

There were a number of surprises in the ‘17 data. The chart on the right compares the incidence of the various viruses over the ‘15, ‘16, and ‘17 seasons. Perhaps most remarkable was the “arrival” of Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV) and the “departure” of Dahlia Mosaic Virus (DMV). We continue to work with Professor Pappu to understand the results.

A key objective in ‘17 was to study the performance of tubers from plants that were found to be free of virus in 2016 tests; they came to be known as G1 plants in 2017. We were, frankly, disappointed to find that ~38% of the G1 plants tested positive for virus. By comparison, however, 53% of the plants not previously tested had virus and virtually all plants from stock known to have virus in 2016 exhibited virus in 2017.

In the context of show judging, the columns at the far right in this chart illustrate a key point. Almost no plants
With poor foliage are free of virus. When we detect virus symptoms in dahlia foliage (D and F ratings), the entry is almost certainly virused. It still too early for each judging team to unequivocally and independently “eliminate” (Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD), p. 28) an entry with virus symptoms from competition. Nevertheless, your teams should discuss the observations and request guidance from the judging chair and/or the show chair on the proper handling of such an entry. While the GJD still says “Judges must exercise careful judgement since nutrient deficiencies may convey leaf appearances that resemble disease,” (GJD, p. 28) we are very much more knowledgeable about the appearance of virus now than we were in 2002, when the guide was published. While it is an oversimplification, chlorosis (yellowing) along the veins of foliage is generally caused by virus; interveinal chlorosis is generally associated with nutritional issues.

See the ADS March Bulletin for more information.

**Evaluation of Form in Fully Double Dahlias**

There are five characteristics that need to be considered in judging the quality of the Form of fully double dahlias: Symmetry, Contour, Development, Trueness to Form, and Depth. Those characteristics are largely independent of each other, although substantial faults in one can show up in the others. The GJD, p. 40, informs us that, in evaluating a seedling, the first four characteristics are of equal value (5 points each) and that Depth, or size proportion, is of somewhat greater importance (8 points).

**Symmetry**

In my view, symmetry can be easiest to evaluate in a ball or a formal decorative dahlia where the ray florets are tightly arranged around the diameter of the bloom. Good symmetry includes a circular outline of the tips of the ray florets, centering of the bloom over the stem, a round and tight center, and a center whose size is in good proportion to the size of the bloom. (See GJD, p.17, for more details.)

Which characteristics of symmetry would lead you to choose the bloom on the left, above, over the one on the right if you were to find them in a MB DB class at one of our shows? I generally start the evaluation of all entries in a class with a check on the quality of the centers. In this example, you would agree, I’m sure, that the center of the CV Royal on the left is a lot better than the one on the right. Since Form is so important in show judging, you can probably set the bloom on the right back on the table and move on to examine the other entries in that class.

The quality of the center of a dahlia is an important element of the evaluation of Symmetry. “A bloom ... where pollen bearing disc flowers are ... evident should be eliminated from further competition.” (GJD, p. 17) Another aspect of the center of a dahlia that can be controversial is the presence of a small hole in the center of the bloom where the ray florets do not quite meet. This condition should be considered a “minor fault,” not “the same as a blown or green center.” Other center faults include centers without color (hard and green), oblong, depressed, protruding, or presenting a flat face.” (GJD, p. 17.) The Hollyhill Miss Whites, right, illustrate the presence and absence of the depressed center fault.

**Contour**

I find Contour to be more difficult than Symmetry to describe and evaluate. Our GJD indicates that “the arrangement, placement, and uniformity of ray florets” are important in evaluating Contour. Faults include “gaps” in the arrangement of the ray florets, “an irregular placement,” or an “irregular formation” of the ray florets. (GJD, p. 17)

What Contour faults do you see in these two Anthony Armelins? It is a tougher question than the previous one, isn’t it. A key difference between the two “entries” is the gap at about 9 o’clock in the bloom on the left. There is another gap, or irregular placement of the florets at about 5 o’clock. On the other side of the coin, the “irregular formation” of the ray florets around 6 o’clock in the bloom on the right should be considered a contour fault, too. In this example, I suggest that all the other characteristics of the two entries (color, etc.) should determine the winner.

**Development**

An exhibitor’s objective is to get blooms onto the show table that are at their peak of development. The nature of the center of the bloom is one good indication of the state of maturity. An immature bloom tends to have a large center, out of proportion to the rest of the...
Bloom. It may have excellent color but is likely also to lack depth. Perhaps the most important comment on maturity in the GJD (p. 18) is that “the mature bloom at the peak of development with some faults merits first choice over an immature “clean” bloom.”

Take a look at the two Hollyhill Jitterbugs on the right here. Which is more mature? It is clear, I hope, that the bloom on the left is much closer to the peak of development than the bloom on the right. In a show, unless you were to find a very substantial fault in the ‘entry’ on the left, you should set back the ‘entry’ on the right.

Trueness to Form

The evaluation of Trueness to Form basically involves determining how high on the “Form mountain” a certain cultivar, or a certain entry, lies. How closely does the flower match the ideal definition provided in the ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD)? The definitions have evolved since the writing of the GJD; the CHD definitions are the correct, current ones to use. Please get out your CHD and check the SC definition. Then, please recall that Form is determined by the ray florets near the equator of the bloom. (GJD, p. 25)

Would you rate one of the two Crazy 4 Davids as higher up on the Form mountain? Probably not by much, but the bloom on the right seems to have more ID/FD florets near the center of the bloom. Right?

Now take another look at the H Jitterbugs above. That bloom on the right doesn’t look much like an SC at all? That observation tells us that the clean, immature bloom on the right really hasn’t gotten mature enough to properly exhibit its Form!

I didn’t get to Depth. Next month! “Read ahead” on p. 36 in the GJD, if you wish! :-)

Ron

**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**

Please renew your membership for 2018.  
Thanks.
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:

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