

DAHLIA DIGEST

Dahlia Society of Ohio

Since 1930

2019 * ISSUE 2 * APRIL 2019

Next Meeting:
Friday, April 19, 7 PM
Busch Community Room
7501 Ridge Road, Parma



Program:
Annual Tuber Auction

INSIDE: Meet a Member — Jim Thompson and Sarah Luikart; Ron Miner on judging laciniated dahlias and virus update; and a summary of March program by Nathan Rutz of Rust Belt Riders about composting and organic dahlia growing.

MORENO'S MEMO

Hi Dahlia Lovers,

Spring is slowly but surely coming our way. Have you checked your tubers? Discard the ones that turned to mush. If they are shriveled or a little soft to the touch, try putting them in moist peat moss. They may recover well enough to eventually pot them. If you have extra tubers to donate, please bring them to Pettitt's Oakwood, April 13, 9-3, or to our auction meeting on April 19. Be sure they are clean and identified by name, size, form, and color. Also note if they came from a plant that was tested to be virus-free. Write on the tuber itself with an ink pencil or put tuber(s) in a baggie and mark the baggie. Thanks.

At the March meeting, as an affiliate of the Holden Forest & Gardens, DSO voted to participate in the GLOW Holiday Program held at the Cleveland Botanical Gardens 11/23/19-1/5/20 by decorating a wreath. This year's theme is "Tiny Treasures." So put on your creative thinking caps to suggest a sub-theme that in the spirit of "Tiny Treasures" would promote the dahlia. It was written in the theme definition that "gnomes, elves, angels, pollinators, insects, Alpine Gardens are all just springboard ideas that might be utilized or incorporated into an Affiliate Club's theme." Barbara Hosta is our Holden rep so when you think of a neat idea, send it her way at bjh074@gmail.com. She will collect them. I know that we have many creative members in DSO so get your imagination juices flowing to produce a wreath that shows the public how magical our favorite bloom is. Thanks.

Congratulations to Nancy Riopelle who won eight awards in the ADS Photo Contest of 2018. See her winning photographs at www.dahlia.org. Her first place entry of Misty Todd in the Dahlia Portraits category is absolutely stunning.

And thanks to the 25 or so members who attended the March meeting at which Nathan Rutz of Rust Belt Riders, a waste management service, gave an excellent presentation on encouraging us to join the fight against food waste by composting. Check out what they are doing at www.rustbelttriders.com. It is a very exciting company that deserves our support.

I know that our meeting is on Good Friday, but we were unable to change the date. Apologies. Hope to see you then.

Jerry

APRIL PROGRAM



Tuber Auction: Time to Stock Up

- Bring your clean, extra tubers for the society to auction.
- With indelible marker write the name, size, form and color plus whether they have been tested free of virus on the tuber or on a plastic baggie. Use the abbreviation "VF."
- Take stock of what your needs are and come prepared to bid your favorites up.
- Dave Cap and Mike Weber will serve as our auctioneers. Tubers will be laid out on long tables from AA to smallest.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuber Sale: Saturday, April 13, 9 - 3, Pettitt's Oakwood. Bring extra tubers to sell, buy tubers, help man the tables.

DSO Programs: Friday, May 17, Plant Auction; Friday, June 21, Nancy Riopelle on raising monarch butterflies; Summer picnic Saturday, Aug. 3, at the Moebius Nature Center, Aurora.

Public Dahlia Sales: May 17-19, Holden Arboretum, Friday Noon to 6, Saturday/Sunday 10-4; May 16-18, Rockefeller Greenhouse, 9-4. Need volunteers to man the tables at both locations.

MEET A MEMBER

Members who have been around awhile remember when **Jim Thompson** and **Sarah Luikart** transitioned from being active on the DSO board to becoming parents after bringing their new baby boy, Preston, to a few meetings. But it's hard to parent an infant and have a lot of other responsibilities so they understandably soon retired from their board positions.

From 2013 through 2017, Jim served as 2nd Vice President, which involved helping stage our annual show, while Sarah was Recording Secretary for two years and 1st Vice President for two more. It's no surprise that the latter post has been divided up. Here is the list of responsibilities when she served: setting up programs/speakers for the monthly meetings, organizing the summer picnic, putting on the annual Christmas luncheon, coordinating our use of the room at Busch Funeral Home, procuring the new introduction information, and coordinating the volunteers for meeting refreshments.

Jim began growing dahlias nearly 15 years ago. In 2013 he reached his peak of 200 plants so he would have enough flowers for arrangements at his and Sarah's wedding. Now that they have moved into a new home in Medina, his numbers have declined to make room for other plants and a vegetable garden for Preston. In addition to growing dahlias for fun and friendly competition, Jim enjoys judging at local shows. His favorite dahlia is Badger Twinkle, which he says always attracts a lot of attention from neighbors. He especially loves the flower's size and bi-color. What he enjoys most about dahlias in general is looking out the window and seeing a garden full of vibrant colors that can easily make a statement, even from a distance.

Sarah describes her involvement in the dahlia hobby as "the art of spectating." She says she enjoys assisting in the clerk role at local shows but is equally content to admire the beautiful flowers and easily overlooks any of their flaws. Sarah's favorite dahlia is Ova Jo. With its striking yellow petals and simple white tips, she thinks the flower is "reminiscent of a timeless Audrey Hepburn dress." "There are very few things more delightful than a vase full of dahlias on the kitchen table in late summer," she adds.

Of course, Sarah and Jim now prioritize spending time with Preston. As a family, they enjoy beach vacations, nightly bedtime stories, and playing fetch with their two dogs, Dewey and Herman. In fact, it was dogs that brought Sarah and Jim together. They met

while visiting the Lakewood Dog Park with their four-legged friends. Sarah says, "Not only did the mutts hit it off, but so did we!"

Other than dahlias, Jim grows carnivorous plants with a collection numbering in the thousands, some of which he brought to a DSO meeting a few years ago so members could see these exotic plants and hear a friend of his speak about them. He enjoys being outdoors, bird watching,



eating seafood at the coast and occasionally relaxing with a craft beer. Sarah enjoys listening to National Public Radio (NPR), thoroughly enjoys politics and children's literature and children's literature (Grandparent alert: her favorite authors include: Maurice Sendak, Beatrix Potter, Tomie dePaola and Todd Parr). And she is passionate about animal welfare and environmental causes.

Born and raised in Lakewood, Jim opted to remain there after graduation and lived only a block away from Sarah's apartment. However, the couple did not meet until years later. After graduation from Lakewood High School, Jim continued to carve out his talent in woodworking. His specialized skill of designing, building and installing custom spiral and circular staircases led him in a rewarding career of more than 20 years. In 2018, Jim hung up his carpenter belt to follow his passion for plants and took a position with Casa Verde Growers, the commercial arm of Pettiti Garden Centers.

Sarah grew up in Silver Lake, a small village in Summit County. After graduating in the first co-ed class at a former all boy's high school, Sarah went on to earn her BA in English from Ohio University. After teaching English courses for a handful of years at a local community college, Sarah followed in her father's footsteps and (begrudgingly) entered the insurance industry. She currently works in downtown Cleveland at American International Group (AIG) in commercial property underwriting, but longs for the days where she can consider a career in non-profit. We thank both Sarah and Jim for sharing their time with the DSO for so many years. (And thanks to Sarah for her help in composing this article.)

JUDGE'S CORNER

by Ron Miner, baronminer@aol.com

Virus Update

We in the DSO, along with the members of our neighbor dahlia society, the Mahoning Valley DS, have the great good fortune to be at the forefront of the clean dahlia movement. That benefit is a direct result of the ongoing support by Jim Chuey through his Scheetz-Chuey Foundation. Thanks again, Jim!

As you may recall, one of the elements of last summer's testing was free analyses of vendor's plants. A key question that several of them had at the end of the process was along the lines of "Okay, now that I know that I have lots of stock with virus, where do I get clean stock?!" Isn't that a great question?! You and I have an excellent answer to that question—but the great majority of our dahlia-growing friends around the country do not!

With the cooperation of Jim, Tony, and several other DSO members, we have been able to supply Gx (tested free of virus for the last x years) tubers both at our local auctions and the Midwest auctions. Mike, Rob and their DSO volunteers have propagated those tubers into great plants for the auctions. (Thanks again, here, to Tom Demaline for the use of their greenhouse resources!) We are going to try and share some of our local clean stock with the other Conferences for their auctions this spring. With the support of Professor Pappu and Jim, we also plan to provide each dahlia society with the opportunity to test plants at a subsidized rate. The plans will be finalized and presented in the June ADS Bulletin. The best news in the 2018 test results was that the combination of clean stock and rigorous disinfecting of tools produced a virus infection rate of just 17%.

Judging Laciniated Dahlias

The tips of the ray florets on laciniated dahlias are split. The ideal definition says that the "majority of ray florets will be uniformly arranged with a split, twist, or curl that conveys an overall fringed or frilled effect." Further, if the florets have a shallow notch and have little twisting, it "should not be classified as laciniated." Thus, in addition to the usual Form requirements (Symmetry, Contour, Development, Trueness to Form, and Depth), there are rather specific requirements for the shape of the ray florets in a laciniated

MARCH PROGRAM SUMMARY

Our March speaker, **Nathan Rutz**, shared the inspirational story of the innovative company he works for—Rust Belt Riders, along with voluminous detail about the hows and whys of making good compost to assist us in growing dahlias organically. At the conclusion, he complimented members for their attention noting with surprise that everyone was still awake. The detail he shared was, indeed, complex and mind stretching at times but was presented in a humorous, down-to-earth way that held our attention. Most of it, if applied, could lead not only to our growing better dahlias but also our contributing to reduced air pollution.

Five years ago, the owners of Rust Belt Riders, who were then working at a farm to table restaurant, noted that a large amount of food waste was going to the landfill. Meanwhile, Nathan was working for Ohio Citizen Action and had recently purchased a home in inner city Cleveland that had a high level of lead in the soil, which he set about trying to remedy. However, his efforts at composting resulted in bluish soil that smelled strange. Two years later he found Rust Belt Riders, who had a mission to turn kitchen food waste in the Cleveland area into usable compost. The company started picking up garbage on a bike with a trailer behind it that held garbage cans and then was able to buy trucks. They now pick up food waste from 100 organizations, which the owners estimate accounts for only one percent of the food waste available in the area.

Nathan has learned a lot about composting in the past several years that he is now applying as Director of Soil at Rust Belt Riders. Their process is to compost food scraps and branch chips in a 40/60 ratio with 50% de-chlorinated water, turn the pile with a Bobcat loader frequently, which results in hot compost (130 to 180 degrees) that goes to potting soil in three months, which they then sell. Nathan noted that potting soil is hard to find in central cities. They are able to make 50 cubic feet of soil in one month on their one acre of asphalt.

He sought advanced training from a Vermont top soil company where he learned that garbage in landfills produces methane, which contributes to global warming. He also learned about the concept of “regenerative agriculture,” which captures carbon in the soil and in above ground. We can stash carbon in plants grown on healthy soil. The process involves a series of conversions starting with soil bacteria pulling minerals out of rock. They then get eaten by protozoa, which then excrete a form

dahlia. Those requirements are probably best treated as an important element of the Trueness to Form portion in the determination of the quality of the Form of the cultivar. It doesn't fit in any of other categories. What is the value of “Trueness to Form”? Please check page 40 of the Guide to Judging Dahlias! This page deserves a sticky note.

Consider the 2017 Trial Garden seedlings on the left. What do you think of them? The dark red florets on the bloom at the top are dark enough that it is difficult to tell how deeply they are split. However, the color does make it pretty easy to see the gaps around the circumference of the bloom. Thus, even if the ray florets were to be deeply split and presented a fringed appearance, the Contour of the bloom would leave something to be desired.

The cross-sections of the pink and the white cultivars appear more uniform and round than the dark red one. What about the “split, twist, or curl that conveys an overall fringed or frilled effect” for those blooms? As usual, of course, we would want to be able to look at the backs and the sides of the blooms in order to make an informed decision. Nevertheless, I suggest that the pink bloom shows more twist and curl than the white bloom. Do you agree?

What about the light blend at the bottom? A fringed and frilled effect is readily evident, isn't it?! At the same time, Contour on that one is not perfect, right? The gaps at 1 and 11 are pretty obvious.

Okay, how about the red bloom on the right here. I hope you agree that its Form comes closest to that ideal definition outlined above.



that plants can absorb. Soil fungi play into this process beneficially because they send out a mass of filaments and digest food on the outside of their “bodies.” “We wouldn’t be here without this process,” Nathan said. In earlier times, we got coal through this process because the fungi didn’t exist then. Now they help produce our food. These micorrhizal fungi can trade nutrients directly with plant roots thus giving the plant something it needs in exchange for sugar in a symbiotic relationship that also results in improved soil quality.



Nathan Rutz shows dahlias he grew over the past few months from tubers in compost he created at Rust Belt Riders. Barbara Hosta, who set up the program, gave him the tubers. Sharon Swaney and Anna Kandra showed him how to pinch

“candy foods.” He said that fungal soils produce ammonium, which is easier for plants to use. Because the dahlias we grow originated in mountain savannas, Nathan suspects our dahlias prefer more fungal than bacterial soil. He advises adding things to our soil that feed the fungi such as composted leaves, aged wood chips and radial chips (three inches or smaller). Add compost in the fall, and let it sit. Finally, he suggested counting microorganisms rather than getting soil tests.

Fertilizing with phosphorus prevents this process, impacts the plant negatively and then attracts unhealthy organisms. A plant that absorbs too much urea can’t make protein. Insects can smell this situation and attack. “We want plants to be photosynthesizing at maximum capacity,” Nathan said. “Then they can give beneficial soil organisms lots of sugar and can get minerals back.” When the plant instead puts sugar in the soil, the fungi make glomalin, a damaging polysaccharide “glue” that sticks around for decades.

Good soil needs to be crumbly, which is not promoted by tilling, compaction and chemicals. Tilling chops up fungi and kills all but the bacteria. Covering soil will reduce compaction. Chemicals are mostly salts, which damage plants. Nathan suggests using products less damaging such as fish hydrolysates, but not too much. Nathan called these

APRIL REFRESHMENTS

Pat Sadataki, Chair
Marilyn Weber and Jackie Evangelista

If you are able to bring April refreshments, please e-mail Pat at sadataki@aol.com



and/or sign up at the next meeting.

2019 OFFICERS, CHAIRS & FACILITATORS

President Jerry Moreno440-543-5658
Treasurer Anna Kandra440-724-2944
Membership Chair Nancy Riopelle. 330-483-3360
Recording Secretary Open— Need a Volunteer
Corresponding Secretary MaryAnn Moreno .440-543-5658
Webmaster Sharon Swaney330-562-3298
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Sunshine Chair Joann Bendokaitis440-221-6447
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Judging Chair Ron Miner440-543-1516
Propagation Chair Mike Weber440-647-3162
Archives & Librarian Barbara Hosta 216-729-9714
Cleveland Botanical Rep Barbara Hosta . . 216-729-9714
ADS Representative Tony Evangelista440-867-3711
Meeting Program Facilitators: Barbara Hosta, March; Nancy Riopelle, June; Karen Jeric and Debbie Findlay, August Picnic; Karl Southerland, October; Sarah and Jim Thompson, November; and Joyce Southerland and Joann Bendokaitis, December holiday luncheon.

THANKS TO ALL FOR HELPING THE DSO!

DSO/ADS Membership Application

(Memberships are calendar year.)

Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

For Year: 20__ Today's Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s) (land line): _____ Cell Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Choose one of the following membership offerings by checking the box before the offering.

Do not write in the gray boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	DSO Individual	\$15		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DSO Family	\$20		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DSO Individual + ADS Individual	\$39		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DSO Family + ADS Individual	\$44		
<input type="checkbox"/>	DSO Family + ADS Family	\$47		

For ADS "Snowbird" service add \$6.

Enter winter address here:

Check here if you want your Digest digital format only.

Please make checks payable to DSO.

Mail to: Nancy Riopelle
701 W. River Rd
Valley City, OH 44280

4/2019

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO

MaryAnn Moreno
8232 Westhill Drive
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023



- If you haven't done so yet, please pay your dues at the April meeting. Bring your check and filled-out membership form on page 11.
- Visit the DSO website at: www.dahliasocietyofohio.org
- Follow the DSO Facebook page.

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO Minutes of the March 15, 2019, Meeting

Introduction: 23 members attended. President Jerry Moreno welcomed all including a new member, Pat Spicuzza, his son-in-law. He provided free copies of several past Puget Sound *Dahlias of Today* publications while Randy and Kathy Foith took orders for the new 2019 DOT, price \$12. He also thanked Pat Sadataki, Sharon Swaney and Kathy Foith for providing refreshments. Jerry announced that the Board decided not to have a Flower of the Year at this year's local show as that section has not been well populated the past few years. Finally, Jerry congratulated Nancy Riopelle for winning eight of the 36 awards in the 2018 ADS Photo Contest: <https://dahlia.org/news/photo-contest/>.

Treasurer: Given that long time society treasurer, Sharon Swaney, wanted to retire, Rob Swaney nominated and Dave Cap seconded Anna Kandra for the position. Motion passed without objection. Anna reported that our checking account balance is \$7,340 with \$848 in the Memorial Fund, which is enough for us to give a scholarship. She reported that there is \$12,742 in the money market fund. At present we have 83 members, 43 also belonging to the ADS.

Membership: Chair Nancy Riopelle sent Jerry a report that DSO has 86 individual members.

Corresponding Secretary: MaryAnn Moreno told Jerry that 36 Digests were postal mailed in March.

Holden Flower & Garden Representative: Barbara Hosta reported that the Affiliates Day meeting is April 11 and will feature a program by Lisa Ward of Pot & Box about a fascinating Detroit project. Read more about it and register here if the bulletin arrives before April 11: <http://www.cb garden.org/support/affiliated-garden-clubs/affiliate-bulletin-board.aspx>. Barbara also mentioned that HB&G is asking its Affiliates to vote for one of four themes for their 2019 GLOW program. We chose option #3: Winter's Palette - Sights and Sounds of the Forest and Garden. Barbara will submit our vote. We hope to decorate a wreath for this year's GLOW.

Library: New members especially should be aware that the society has a library of books and DVDs that may help them in learning more about how to grow and show dahlias. She agreed to provide a list of library books and disks she has for members to borrow. She generally brings all the disks to meetings.

Refreshments: Let Pat Sadataki know if you will join Marilyn Weber in bringing refreshments for the April meeting.

Root Sales: Dave Cap reported that our first tuber sale will be from 9 to 3 on April 13 at Pettiti's Oakwood. Please let Dave or Jerry know if you have tubers to donate to the sale. Please make sure your tubers are clean, correctly identified by name, size, form, and color. They will pick them up from you if you are not able to make the sale.

Propagation: Mike Weber reported that about 200 tubers have been started at Willoway Nursery. A few have shown signs of growth. Cuttings will be taken. Jim Thompson was given seeds from species dahlias from Mexico to start as part of the Genome Project. He reported about half of the 40 or so seeds have germinated. He also mentioned that Angelo Pettiti has offered to have DSO tour his 27 acres of plants at the Columbia Station site. The membership expressed interest. Jim and Jerry will choose a date sometime in late April or early May. Jim also provided many plant tags to take.

Midwest Show: It is right for societies in the Midwest Conference to support whoever is hosting the Midwest Show. Jim Thompson moved that DSO donate \$300 to the West Michigan DS, host of this year's Midwest show. Mike Weber seconded. Motion passed without objection.

Virus Brochure: Randy Foith asked if DSO was interested in joining the Mahoning Valley DS and the Greater Columbus DS in printing color copies of the new virus brochure. The membership was in favor. Details will be worked out between Randy and Jerry. Estimated cost is \$180 for 500 copies.

Judging Seminar: Randy also mentioned that there will be a judging seminar at the Bonneville TG in Elkhart on August.

DSO Picnic: Debbie Findlay, who is coordinating the picnic, asked what date members would prefer for the picnic. She will contact the Moebius Nature Center to see what dates are available. (It was later decided that the picnic will be held on Saturday, Aug. 3, as reported in the *Digest*.)

New Introductions: Barbara Hosta showed the ADS New Introductions for 2019.