

# DAHLIA DIGEST

Dahlia Society of Ohio

Since 1930

2019 \* ISSUE 1 \* MARCH 2019

## Next Meeting:

Friday, March 15, 7 pm.

Busch Community Room  
7501 Ridge Road, Parma



## Program:

Nathan Rutz, Director of Soil,

Rust Belt Riders

Barbara Hosta showing slides of

2019 new dahlia introductions

**INSIDE:** Meet a Member—Sharon Swaney; Ron Miner on new growers, DSO judges and Flame Blends; and dahlia chosen as bulb of the year by NGB.

## MORENO'S MEMO

### Hi Dahlia Lovers,

Winter will no doubt linger, but just around the corner life will brighten as we begin to plan what dahlia varieties we want to grow in our gardens. Mike and crew have begun to propagate plants for DSO at Willoway Nursery (thanks to Tom Demaline) to auction at our May meeting and Midwest auction as well as sell at our Holden and Rockefeller sales.

Please look through your stock and donate tubers (especially any that have come from plants that were tested to be virus-free) that we will use to either propagate or sell at Pettiti's Oakwood on April 13 or at our April meeting auction. Please bring them to the March meeting, or let me know if you have any and I will pick them up. Please make sure that they are clean and clearly marked as to name, size, form, color, and if they have come from virus tested plants. Super thanks in advance for helping our DSO.

Update on the ADS Genome Project: In the fall of 2017, Dr. Virginia Walbot, Biologist at Stanford University, collected seed pods from species dahlias in the Queretaro area of Mexico. Through Ron Miner, DSO has about 40 of those seeds. Jim Thompson volunteered to create plants from them. Pressure's on Jim as they may not be easy to germinate. Depending on his success, we will be looking for growers. A key requirement is that you try to keep the species plants away from your plants to avoid cross pollination. Stay tuned. Let me know if you have an interest in the project.

Hope to see you on March 15. Barbara Hosta will show the New Introductions slide show and introduce our speaker Nathan Rutz from Rust Belt Riders, an interesting new Cleveland company working to keep food waste out of our landfills. (See story next page.)

DSO is fortunate to have an excellent set of officers and facilitators. Give them a pat on the back and don't hesitate to help them if they ask you to do something. Note that we are in need of a Recording Secretary to take notes during meetings. Thanks to all for giving their time and talents to DSO.

**Jerry**

## MARCH PROGRAM

In addition to showing the new dahlia introductions slide show, Barbara Hosta has invited **Nathan Rutz**, director of soil at Rust Belt Riders, to tell us about the innovative company's mission, operation and new products that members may want to use. The founders began in 2014 picking up food waste using a bicycle and trailer to ride from one business to another. In just five years they have acquired three different kinds of trucks that service 100 different locations.

As of December, 2018, they were collecting and diverting over 32,000 pounds of food scraps each week from landfills. This year they plan to introduce a residential composting service and a line of products called "Tilth," which includes a potting mix, compost, and mulch.

Nathan is responsible for compost production, quality and sales at Rust Belt Riders. He advocates for the many benefits of compost including drawing down CO2. He previously spent seven years working for environmental nonprofits and has a degree in philosophy from Wabash College.

Barbara has given him some dahlia roots, which he has started in pots. "We have an indoor growing area at our facility, and it would be fun to show the group what I'm talking about with regard to soil and dahlia health," Rutz said.



## MEET A MEMBER

After seven years of serving the DSO as treasurer and membership chair, **Sharon Swaney** recently turned over the positions with gratitude to Anna Kandra and Nancy Riopelle respectively. Thanks to Sharon for sharing her talents with the DSO for so long and to Anna and Nancy for stepping up to help. We are thankful that Sharon will continue as our capable webmaster. If you haven't looked at the attractive website she has created for us, please do so at: [dahliasocietyofohio.org](http://dahliasocietyofohio.org) and be on the lookout for a new, more modern design coming soon.

What led to Sharon's extensive involvement in the DSO? Her interest in our favorite flower began when she was a little girl in the late 50s watching her Dad grow dahlias. She says that after she and Ron married, a co-worker brought in some dahlia roots to her office and asked if anyone wanted to try them, and she eagerly took some home. Among them were Lula Patti and Jerry Hoek, she recalls. Rob was not impressed initially as he did not find the foliage attractive, and the flowers appeared late that year. But once he saw the blooms, his interest was piqued.

Today, Sharon and Rob are responsible for different aspects in their multiple dahlia garden areas at their Aurora home, which they share with three cats. They have planted 65-70 of their favorite dahlias closer to their home, 150 in a back garden and others in various beds. Rob does the heavy work of planting and digging while Sharon is in charge of pinching, dividing and storing. Asked what her favorite dahlia is, Sharon said, "That's like choosing a favorite child," but then admitted that the Baron dahlias from Ron Miner grow well for them. Sharon also enjoys creating dahlia arrangements, and frequently wins that category on the show table.

Early retirement in 2002 from Hewlett-Packard (HP) has allowed Sharon the time to volunteer in multiple capacities. Before HP she worked for BF Goodrich and after retirement part-time for Agilisys, a re-seller of HP and IBM products. Rob was able to retire early as well. Both are very active in the Moebius Nature Center in Aurora, where the DSO has held its summer picnic for years. Rob also helps take care of three Audubon sanctuaries that integrate with other parks and preserves to form a nearly contiguous green space through Aurora.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**DSO Programs:** April 19 (Good Friday) Tuber Auction; May 17, Plant Auction; June 21, Nancy Riopelle on raising monarch butterflies.

**Dahlia Sales:** April 13, Pettiti's, 9-3; May 17-19, Holden Arboretum, Friday Noon to 6, Saturday/Sunday 10-4; May 16-18, Rockefeller Greenhouse, 9-4.

At Moebius Sharon coordinates a wide variety of programs for children and adults with the goal of getting everyone out into, learning about and enjoying nature. Sharon also serves Moebius as webmaster. You can read more about the center at [mymnc.org](http://mymnc.org). Sharon also manages websites for the American Dahlia Society, the Cleveland Audubon Society, and a Christian school, and she likes to do stained glass, read books and sew doll clothes.



**Sharon is shown with her sister-in-law, Barb Swaney, who apropos for the season enjoys spreading joy as the Easter Bunny.**

Sharon also sings with the Parkside Church Christmas Choir. Several of their concerts were streamed world-wide this past December. She has sung at Severance Hall as well as the Palace and State Theaters in the backup choir for Keith and Kristen Getty, who are Christian recording artists.

Her computer skills were developed at The University of Akron where she earned a degree in math, a direction that was encouraged by a high school calculus teacher who advised her that “this computer stuff is going to stick.” Indeed, it did. At that time, a math degree was a good entree into the computer field. And she had a chance to thank that teacher 20 years later when his name showed up in the University of Akron Math Department Newsletter. She sent him a letter thanking him for encouraging her to go into computers. He was so excited to get the letter that he submitted it for printing in the same Math Department newsletter. We are grateful that Sharon continues to share her skills with the DSO.

## JUDGES CORNER

by **Ron Miner**, [baronminer@aol.com](mailto:baronminer@aol.com)

**Attention New Growers:** Dahlia shows and dahlia judges are a dahlia gardens' best friend!! Once you learn the basics of getting your dahlias staked and planted, what is the easiest way to get those plants to look their best? What is the easiest way to ensure that the blooms look spectacular? The answer, I believe, is to discuss your plants and blooms with your colleagues at our DSO or MVDS dahlia meetings. Better yet, bring some of your blooms to one of our dahlia shows. Ask your fellow exhibitors how they manage to get such a great stem or how they got that Pom to reflex all the way to the stem. Best of all, however, is to sign up to be a Candidate Judge. That will afford you the opportunity to learn the nuances of what makes a great dahlia—and how to get those features in your own blooms. To become a Candidate Judge, you only need to be a member of the American Dahlia Society.

The DSO has a long history of making the judging of our dahlias an enjoyable experience, one where each team member respects the views of his or her fellow judges. My predecessor, Glenn Ruth, made it clear that the objective of the judging process included not only identifying the best dahlias, but also enjoying the process and learning something in the process. I have done my best to make sure that Glenn's perspective continues to prevail in our dahlia shows. If you are a new grower, or if you are a highly experienced grower who wants to improve your expertise in growing great blooms, please let me know that you would like to join the DSO judging team!

The picture at left shows four teams discussing the attributes of four seedling entries. The evaluations have been a big part of the judging seminar at Petitti's over the last several years. At the completion of the process, the conclusions of each to the teams were shared and discussed as



a group. For the most part, the teams' results were very similar. Differences in opinion and different perspectives provided the most interesting and informative conversations!

**Attention DSO Judges:** If you are already a DSO judge, you know all about the foregoing benefits of being a part of our judging team. Your focus needs now to be on meeting the requirements for maintaining your status and on moving up to the next level of expertise and responsibility. The key step is moving from being a Candidate Judge to an Accredited (AC) Judge. Nancy Riopelle is the most recent judge to accomplish that step. Thanks and congratulations, Nancy!

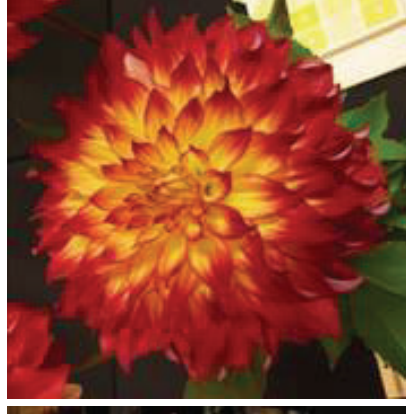
The requirements are listed both on our DSO website and the ADS website. They include experience in judging and exhibiting in shows, participating in judging seminars, judging seedlings, and satisfactorily completing a judges examination. A number of you have only to complete the examination to move up to AC status. Please get to work to do that while it is still too cold to work outside in the garden!! Let me know if you need help in finding or getting started on the test.

**Flame Blends:** In preparing for the Pettitt's Judging Seminar, I finally figured out that I was guilty of misunderstanding how to determine Flame Blends. The wording of the definition for Flame Blends has evolved in recent years. The definition in my head was the one from the 2017 Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD). It refers to "blends of high brilliance" and cites the color chips required for the cultivar to be a Flame Blend. One could infer from that wording that the judge could determine that the colors in a particular cultivar were not of high brilliance and that the color should be a Light or a Dark Blend. That was my understanding, and that perspective was and is incorrect. If the two colors you determine for a specific cultivar are both listed in the Flame Blend definition in the 2019 CHD, it is a Flame Blend. There is no judgement of brilliance involved. The 2018 definition appropriately leaves out the high brilliance comment. The 2019 definition adds this statement: "All blend cultivars possessing these color chips are Flame Blends." This last change reflects the exchange of opinions that occurred at the National Show during the Classification Committee meeting.

I may have influenced your understanding of Flame Blends. Please be aware that my previous perspective was incorrect! The  
(Continued on the next page)

bottom line is that if both colors on the cultivar are listed in the Flame Blend list, it is a Flame Blend. There is no judgement involved.

**Flame Blends at our Midwest Show:** There were lots of Flame Blends at our Midwest Show. I couldn't resist taking a closer look at some of them shown below.



Spanish Dancer, above left, and Rock Run James, above right, show the best combination of good contrast and a good balance of the two colors.



Baron Katie, above left, should probably be penalized in competition for the subtle nature of the yellow component of the blend. Hilltop Kemper, above center, has a similar problem and the cultivar might better be classified as a bicolor. AC Abby, above right, might have fallen in the category of fitting the old model of "low brilliance." Nevertheless, remember that brilliance doesn't matter, just the color chips as explained earlier.

## 2019: YEAR OF THE DAHLIA

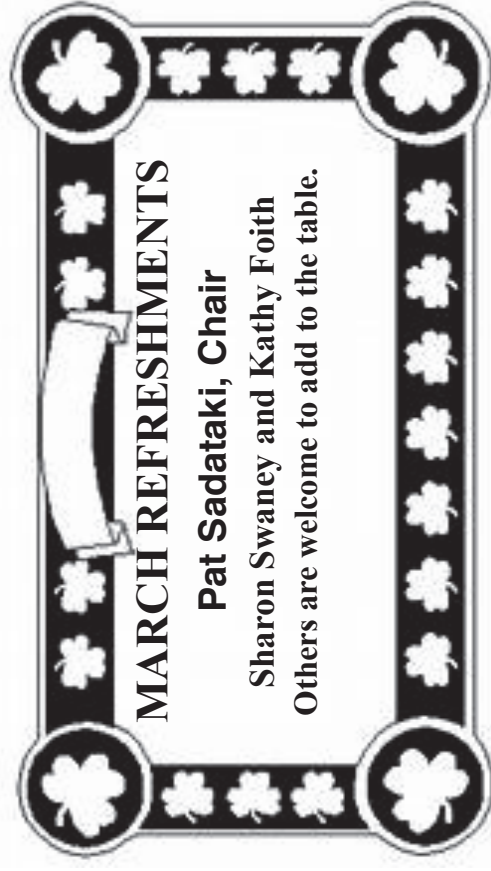
The National Garden Bureau (NGB) has chosen our favorite flower as its bulb crop of the year and is promoting 2019 as “The Year of the Dahlia.” The organization annually designates one annual, one perennial, one bulb crop and one edible as their “Year of” crops. According to its website, plants are chosen because they are popular, easy-to-grow, widely adaptable, genetically diverse and versatile. The other plants chosen include the snapdragon as the annual of the year, the *salvia nemorosa* as the perennial of the year and the pumpkin as the edible of the year.



The National Garden Bureau (NGB) is a non-profit organization that exists to educate, inspire, and motivate people to increase the use of plants in homes, gardens, and workplaces. NGB was created in 1920 as an inspiration of James H. Burdett, who saw a need after World War I for suburbanites to garden in their backyards. Later during WWII the federal government encouraged homeowners to grow Victory Gardens. The Bureau was instrumental in promoting seeds and gardening for American homes. NGB has continued its work by becoming involved in community beautification.

The NGB has developed a webpage for each of its selections. Read about the dahlia at: <https://ngb.org/year-of-the-dahlia/>. For those unfamiliar with the history of dahlias the following section of the article, headlined “Did you know that the dahlia is the national flower of Mexico?” might be of interest. Here is part of it.

“The native dahlias found in the mountains of Mexico and Guatemala are the genetic source for the modern hybrid dahlias we grow today. While busy conquering the Aztec nation, 16th-century Spanish conquistadors pursued numerous side explorations that led to the discovery of the New World plant life. Botanists accompanying the soldiers discovered what is sometimes referred to as the tree dahlia (*D. imperialis*). The hollow stems of these plants, some growing to over 20 feet, were often used for hauling water or as an actual source of water to traveling hunters. In fact, the Aztec name for “tree dahlias” was “*acocotli*” or “water-cane.” Read more at the link above.



## 2019 OFFICERS, CHAIRS & FACILITATORS

<b>President</b> Jerry Moreno	440-543-5658
<b>Treasurer</b> Anna Kandra	440-724-2944
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<b>Recording Secretary</b> . . . . . Open—Need a Volunteer	
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b> MaryAnn Moreno . . . . .	440-543-5658
<b>Webmaster</b> Sharon Swaney . . . . .	330-562-3298
<b>Digest Editor &amp; Publicity</b> Jackie Evangelista . . . . .	440-352-8378
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<b>Archives &amp; Librarian</b> Barbara Hosta . . . . .	216-729-9714
<b>Cleveland Botanical Rep</b> Barbara Hosta . . . . .	216-729-9714
<b>ADS Representative</b> Tony Evangelista . . . . .	440-867-3711

**Meeting Program Facilitators:** Barbara Hosta, March; Nancy Riopelle, June; Karen Jeric and Debbie Findlay, July/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): \_\_\_\_\_  
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Choose one of the following membership offerings by checking the box before the offering.

Do not write in the gray boxes.

[ ]	DSO Individual	\$15	
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[ ]	DSO Family + ADS Individual	\$44	
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Check here if you want your Digest in printed format.

Please make checks payable to DSO.

Mail to: Nancy Riopelle  
 701 W. River Rd  
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## DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO

MaryAnn Moreno  
 8232 Westhill Drive  
 Chagrin Falls, OH 44023



- If you haven't done so yet, pay your dues at the March meeting. Bring your check and filled-out membership form on page 11.
- Visit your DSO website at: [www.dahliaocietyofohio.org](http://www.dahliaocietyofohio.org).
- Follow the DSO Facebook page.