Next Meeting:
Friday, May 17, 7 PM
Busch Community Room
7501 Ridge Road, Parma

Program:
Annual Plant Auction

INSIDE: Meet a Member—Nancy Riopelle;
Ron Miner on the new Classification Guide
and judging stellars; Tony Evangelista
on planting dahlias.
Hi Dahlia Lovers,

We had a marvelous Tuber Auction at our April meeting that brought in $1,099, a nice addition to our treasury. Thanks to Mike Weber, Dave Cap, and Barbara Hosta for their enthusiastic auctioneering. I hope that you were able to get the varieties you wanted for your garden this season. Also exciting was the addition of a few new members to DSO. Every organization needs new faces and new ideas (to supplement some of our “older” faces)! I hope that we get a great turnout for our May Plant Auction also. Mike and others have been working hard at Willoway propagating many plants for our Auction as well as our sales at Rockefeller and Holden.

Please try to devote an hour or two of your time to our sales at the Rockefeller Greenhouse on May 16-18, 9-4 and at the Holden Arboretum May 17 from noon-6 for Holden members and May 18-19, 10-4, for the general public. In addition, both sites have many different types of plants for you to look at and purchase. Congratulations to Nancy Riopelle and Tom Sopzcak, who passed the appropriate judging exam and are now Accredited Judges. I encourage you to go through the process of becoming a judge if for no other reason than to improve your growing of our most loved flower. Knowing what it is that judges look for when evaluating a bloom will increase in your dahlia culture knowledge and your ability to produce even more beautiful flowers. To sign up, contact Ron Miner at baronminer@aol.com.

DSO and the Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society are considering whether to host the 2021 Midwest and possibly National Dahlia Show. Member Todd Imhoff of Wooster suggested using the Ohio State University Wooster Campus Conference Center and invited a group of members to preview it recently. Stay tuned as information becomes available. If Wooster doesn’t work out, then we might try Holiday Inn Strongsville again.

Hope to see you May 17 or at one of our sales.

Jerry

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**MORENO’S MEMO**

**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.

- [ ] DSO Individual  $15
- [ ] DSO Family  $20
- [ ] DSO Individual + ADS Individual  $39
- [ ] DSO Family + ADS Individual  $44
- [ ] 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
MAY REFRESHMENTS
Pat Sadataki, Chair
Barb Miner and Kathleen Higgins.
If you are able to bring refreshments in May, please
e-mail Pat at: sadataki@aol.com

2019 OFFICERS, CHAIRS & FACILITATORS
President Jerry Moreno ................. 440-543-5658
Treasurer Anna Kandra ................. 440-724-2944
Membership Chair Nancy Riopelle. .... 330-483-3360
Recording Secretary ........... Open—Need a Volunteer
Corresponding Secretary MaryAnn Moreno. 440-543-5658
Webmaster Sharon Swaney ........... 330-562-3298
Digest Editor & Publicity Jackie Evangelista 440-352-8378
Refreshments Chair Pat Sadataki. .... 219-314-3880
Sunshine Chair Joann Bendokaitis .... 440-221-6447
Shows Chair Dave Cap ................. 440-888-5589
Judging Chair Ron Miner ............... 440-543-1516
Propagation Chair Mike Weber ........ 440-647-3162
Archives & Librarian Barbara Hosta ... 216-729-9714
Cleveland Botanical Rep Barbara Hosta ... 216-729-9714
ADS Representative Tony Evangelista .... 440-867-3711
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!

MAY 17 MEETING: Fill in your dahlia garden with these ready-to-go plants lovingly raised by Mike Weber and DSO volunteers including Dave Cap, Bob Leonelli, Mark Mazurek, Rob Swaney, Jerry Moreno and Tony Evangelista at Willoway Nurseries in Avon Lake. About 80 of the 500 plus plants they produced will be auctioned off at the May 17 meeting. Thanks to Tom Demaline for letting us use his greenhouse space once again.


UPCOMING DSO PROGRAMS: Friday, June 21, Nancy Riopelle on raising monarch butterflies; Summer picnic, Saturday, Aug. 3, Moebius Nature Center, Aurora. Mark your calendars!
Our new membership chair, Nancy Riopelle, became interested in growing dahlias after attending a fall talk at a nearby garden club meeting given by none other than our own Mike Weber and Dave Cap. They brought a bucket of beautiful flowers, and she was hooked. She now grows about 40 plants in two raised beds and has experimented with various methods of storing the roots. Nancy says that the easy method of wrapping them in Saran wrap, putting them in a box, and storing in her basement has worked best for her. Nancy recently passed the test to become a dahlia judge and was awarded the DSO show at Petitti’s in 2011 at the last meeting by Ron Miner. Her favorite dahlias are Elma Elizabeth and Baron Jeff. She now grows about 40 plants in two raised beds and has experimented with various methods of storing the roots. Nancy says that the easy method of wrapping them in Saran wrap, putting them in a box, and storing in her basement has worked best for her. Nancy recently passed the test to become a dahlia judge and was awarded the DSO show at Petitti’s in 2011 at the last meeting by Ron Miner. Her favorite dahlias are Elma Elizabeth and Baron Jeff.

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interesting “patio gardeners” to join the ADS and participate in our shows, we might substantially broaden our membership base.

We may be called upon to judge a micro class this summer. Don’t panic. Just follow exactly the same criteria you use for evaluating any other size class. You definitely want to reward diminutiveness [Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD), p. 32]. Size may come to be a critical question in the process. There are only about 20 micros listed in the 2019 CHD, so you are likely to have a mixture of those micros plus new cultivars plus small cultivars classified as Miniatures or one of the Open-Centered forms. Those Miniatures or Open-Centered entries should be set back or moved to the right class if they are larger than 2”. Seedlings should probably be given the benefit of the doubt up to perhaps 2.5”. They might, in the long run, be classified as micros.

Judging Trueness to Form in Stellars
The ideal definition for the Stellar form includes several important characteristics: long, narrow, and pointed ray florets; space between the ray florets; a uniform regular arrangement; a partially involute U-shaped cross-section; and recurving toward the stem. Note, too, that the minimum depth for a ST is half the diameter, unlike most fully double cultivars that require 3/4 the diameter. Remember that, if you are judging a seedling, trueness to form comprises only 5 of the 28 Form points. On the show bench, however, the deviations from that ideal definition could determine the winner of the class. What are those associated Form faults? Answer: Just the opposite of the foregoing list including wide ray florets with a round tip a high petal count producing a very dense set of ray florets and, perhaps, great depth, an “informal” appearing distribution of florets, and flat rather than U-shaped florets.

Try to rank order these blooms on the basis of their “elevation” on Form mountain. Camano Pet, at right, is the cultivar that

example, the center recently took three birds to the Earth Day observance at the Medina County Park District. Nancy helps with preparing their food, feeding the birds and administering medicine and is now getting into learning how to handle them. She also enjoys painting watercolors, mostly of birds. Somehow she also finds time to volunteer at Playhouse Square as a Redcoat, seating people or scanning tickets.

Nancy grew up in Parma and graduated from Valley Forge High School after which she worked for the U. S. Treasury Dept. as a stenographer in the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division and worked her way up to become a Special Agent investigating tax fraud. After that she worked for 15 years at Contour Tool as an office manager and set up their ISO 9000 quality control program. She retired a few years ago.

She has been married for 40 years to Buzz, who is a retired firefighter/paramedic from North Olmsted Fire Dept. They also jointly raise bees and at present maintain 15 hives. He takes care of the hives and bottles honey while she makes beeswax candles, hand lotion and lip balm for sale at fairs such as the Pioneer Day Fallfest at Brecksville Metroparks. Nancy reports that a good friend and Editor of Bee Culture magazine uses their operation for his photos. Most recently he asked them to demonstrate how to make lip balm for a Japanese television show. Finally, in the winter, she and Buzz go to Colorado for the month of March to ski. They are certified ski instructors at Boston Mills. To say the least, this couple leads a varied and interesting life.

CORRECTION: March speaker Nathan Rutz says “glomalin is not damaging but very beneficial.” It coats and protects micorrhizal fungi underground much like bark coats trees above ground. For more information, see: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1144429.pdf.
by Tony Evangelista

For new growers, the process of establishing a dahlia garden starts with selecting the best possible location. Dahlias need at least six hours of sun but don’t do well in full sun. So you’ll need an area that gets some shade but isn’t riddled with tree roots. Or you can plant in full sun and devise a way to shade the plants such as overhead slats or shade cloth. Good drainage is also a must as dahlias do not like wet feet especially if they are started from tubers. Plants started from cuttings can better withstand rot due to overwatering or an unfortunate early rainy season. Finally, dahlias do best in fertile soil and thrive in good quality compost.

Stakes should be placed before planting at least three feet apart for large varieties and about two feet apart for smaller varieties and poms. Waiting to stake can result in spearing the tuber or disturbing plant roots. Some growers install suspended 4 inch square netting above the plants and allow them to grow through. Usually two layers are used at about 15 and 30 inches above the soil surface depending on how much shade your dahlias get.

Dahlias should be planted after all danger of frost has passed at about the same time as tomatoes, peppers and annuals. Tubers with eyes can be planted earlier since the soil will protect them, but they may not grow much until the soil has warmed. You can also start your tubers inside in flats or pots under lights to get them going and help them withstand early rain. How deep to plant depends on your soil characteristics and drainage. In sandy fast draining soil, tubers can be planted 3-4 inches deep. In heavier soils it is best to plant 2-3 inches deep. Leave some of the tuber and the eye visible. As the eye starts to grow, cover the tuber and eventually the sprout. In very heavy soil with minimal drainage, tubers can be planted on mounds. Also, consider the soil type if you are starting with plants. You can strip lower leaves to plant deeper in dry sandy soil or you can plant them at soil level or in hilled up mounds.

Since dahlias are heavy feeders, dig in soil amendments before planting such as compost, compost tea, worm castings and biochar. Some gardeners use NPK fertilizers. Water tubers sparingly early in the season since they are being nourished by the tuber that you don’t want to rot. Be sure to protect your plants against slugs and rabbits. And, finally, if you suspect the quality of your soil or find that your plants are not thriving, get a soil test.

by Ron Miner, baronminer@aol.com

Join the “Micro Experiment”

How many of you in the ADS have opened your 2019 ADS Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD) yet? This CHD is different! Take a look at page 14. My first reaction was what the heck are all those “M’s?!?” The answer is that they provide a new class number for every form (except two) in a “micro” size, less than 2” in diameter. The two exceptions are the two where a micro size already exists: balls (P) and singles (MS). You will find that pages 4 through 6 in the CHD provide the definitions for the various micro forms. They are the same as the normal forms but are limited to 2” in diameter.

The objective of this five-year experiment is to encourage the growth and the distribution of evolving tiny dahlias. At the end of that time, the Classification Committee will either adopt or drop the new classes. I suppose they might also extend the experiment in the Forms where the most new cultivars are being shown. The classes would likely be joined together like in Fully Double and Open-Centered classes.

Robert Walker [MC FD DB (5013)] at right, is one of very few micros in the CHD. It looks like a P from the front but the ray florets must flatten out near the equator and beyond—to make it FD.

The success of the experiment could have long-term effects on the future of the ADS. Like Mignon Single plants, the micro dahlias tend to be small plants that can readily be grown in pots. If we were to succeed in