Greetings Dahlia Lovers,

Well, Dahlia Lovers, the 2019 growing season is coming to a close. It sure went fast, didn’t it? I hope that your gardens recovered from a very wet May and June so that you were able to grow flowers and vegetables this year and to share your beautiful dahlias with your neighbors and friends, local post office or library or nursing home or church. After all, that’s our mission, to promote the dahlia. In addition, some of us do so by entering shows. The national show at the Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, Michigan, last Labor Day weekend was spectacular, and it was visited by hundreds of people. It’s an absolutely stunning site!

Congratulations to all those who managed to get on a Court of Honor at the various shows we frequent. We’ll try to get the Courts on our website. Speaking of websites, in addition to our own, Sharon is the webmaster for ADS. She has been doing a marvelous job making the ADS site easy to navigate with a plethora of important and useful information. Check it out at [dahlia.org](http://dahlia.org). In particular, there is a picture of the national show and of our own Todd Imhoff whose Wyn’s Neon Dream was not only King of the Show but also Best of the Show. Congratulations Todd!

Those involved in DSO’s hosting of the combined National/Midwest/DSO show in 2021 have been hard at work already. One way that you can help is to get donation items for the hospitality bags given to all of the anticipated 130 or so registrants. Useful items such as pens, tablets, sticky notes, candy, plant tags, gift or discount cards from the many nurseries in our area are some suggestions. Let me know what you are able to get. Please help. Very much appreciated.

Keep in mind that DSO is in need of a President for next year. This is the last year of my current term and by our Constitution I cannot continue next year. We have many talented organizers in our Society. Please step to the plate and help to keep DSO the viable dahlia society that it is. Thanks.

Jerry
Oct. 18 Program: Beekeeping

Bees are so vital to the continuation of the plant kingdom but are under threat now. So member Karl Southerland thought we might like to learn more about the topic from an expert. He was able to schedule Gene McCune Jr., a commercial beekeeper, for our Friday, Oct. 18, program. Gene has been a commercial Beekeeper with 75-100 hives for more than thirty years. He is currently president of “The McCune Family Apiaries LLC” which is located in Geauga County, (30 miles east of Cleveland). Gene produces wholesale/retail products from the hives such as raw and unfiltered honey, comb honey, chunk honey, pollen, and beeswax products, which can be found in area stores, farm markets, and major restaurants in downtown Cleveland.

Gene attended Cleveland State University on a full wrestling athletic scholarship. He graduated in 1975 with a B.A. in Business Administration. He is a member of several local beekeepers associations as well as a member of the Ohio State Beekeepers Association. He is involved in the Masters Beekeeping Program. Since 1989, Gene has lectured to civic groups, schools, master gardeners, and now us. Gene has also been a mentor to many new beekeepers in Northeast Ohio.

When not beekeeping, Gene and his wife, Karen, spend as much time as possible with their five grandchildren.

COMING UP

How exciting that DSO Member Todd Imhoff won Best of Show and King of the Show awards at the American Dahlia Society's National Dahlia Show held in Grand Rapids, MI, over Labor Day weekend. His winning entry, Wyn's Neon Dream, is shown on the cover of this month’s Digest as well as in the photo below, taken from our website. It was simply enormous not to mention beautiful! Todd is also the site chair for the 2021 National Dahlia Show, which will be hosted by the DSO in Wooster at the Ohio Agriculture Research & Development Center.

MEET A MEMBER

Todd says he saw his first dahlia at the Wayne County Fair in 1985. He entered six dahlias the next year with “embarrassing results.” So he noted the names on the entry tag of a beautiful flower—Russ and Virginia Conrad—who were long time members of the DSO and residents of Wooster like Todd is. “I made a phone call, and Mrs. Conrad’s first advice was to never show dahlias in a pop bottle, and the rest is history.” He said the mentoring began with weekly visits to the Conrad’s garden.

Todd’s dahlia preference is any semi-cactus variety that is not the favorite of insects at the time. He especially enjoys the many friends and memories made over the years while growing our favorite flower. Not surprisingly, he said, “I also enjoy the competitiveness of trying to grow that perfect dahlia for show day.” Todd also enjoys being outside noting that “I like taking care of our one-acre vineyard, our water garden, and our perennial beds.”

Todd was born in Wooster, one of five boys, and met his wife, Connie, at Buehler’s Grocery Store, where he was store manager.
for 37 years. They live on five acres south of Wooster and have two children and four grandchildren. He is currently working for Troutman Vineyards & Winery and The Winery at Wolf Creek.

**JUDGE’S CORNER: THE CENTER**

by Ron Miner, baronminer@aol.com

The center of fully double blooms is one of the first points a judge should examine when critiquing a bloom in show or seedling competition. “The center of the bloom must be round and tight with the ray florets filling the center completely. The size of the center should be in pleasing proportion to the bloom itself so that it appears to center rather than dominate the bloom.” (Guide to Judging Dahlias [GKD], p. 17). Hollyhill Frodo from the MN Trial Garden, shown below left, illustrates a tight center with “pleasing proportion.

The second photo, which is Hollyhill Jitterbug, is an example of a center that is not as “pleasing” because it is an immature flower. Eventually, as the flower fully opens, it might become more “pleasing,” which illustrates how important timing is in the whole show process.

When the center is not fully closed leaving a small hole, as shown in the third photo the GJD says on page 17: “The ray florets of a maturing fully double bloom on occasion may not completely meet at the center of the bloom resulting in a small hole; this condition is a minor fault and should not be considered the same as a blown or green center.”

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**ADS Show: DSO members excel**

Todd Imhoff also won Middle Grower Best A with Clearview Edie, above. Jim Chuey and Harriet Chandler won Queen of the Show with Clearview Edie, left, and Largest Bloom of the Show with Aggie White, right. Tony Evangelista won Best Small Grower BB with Embrace, left, and Ron Miner won Best 3 Mignon Singles with OJ’s Sunspot, above.

Randi Foith, president, Midwest Dahlia Conference, right, addresses convention attendees at the banquet with a backdrop of beautiful dahlias.
Local shows spread our dahlia love

Our DSO Show featured 495 entries with 100 of them on the Honor Table. The Jim Chuey and Harriet Chandler won King of the Show with Bryn Terfel (AA size red flower on the left), which was also the largest bloom of the show, and Queen of the Show with Clearview Del Sol (a yellow steller to the right of Bryn Terfel). They also won Large Grower Best B with Peach Delight, at right. Other blooms at the DSO Show shown below left.

At the Pettiti’s Show Karen Colini’s entry, “Falling Leaves,” middle right, was judged the best arrangement. Randy and Kathy Foith’s Elma Elizabeth, above left, won Grand Champion and their Mary’s Jomanda, a miniature ball, was Reserve Champion. See the DSO website for lists of all DSO and Pettiti’s show winners.

HOW TO DIG AND DIVIDE DAHLIAS

by Tony Evangelista, tony.evangelista@icloud.com

New growers may wonder when the best time is to dig and divide dahlias. That would be any time between mid-September and when the ground freezes and when you have time to do it. The ideal time is about one week after a killing frost when the ground is relatively dry and the outside temperature is pleasant. That happens about once every 10 years for me! Conventional wisdom says that after the plant freezes, some of the nutrition goes back into the tubers and makes them stronger. Another reason for waiting a week after cutting them off or letting them freeze is to allow the “eyes” on the tubers to become more apparent, which makes it easier to know where to make the division cuts.

Please remember to disinfect between plants when cutting those stalks off so as to prevent spreading virus. I fill two five gallon buckets with about a gallon of water and add two cups of bleach to one and detergent to the other. I dip limb loppers into the bleach solution and then into the soapy water. Cut the stalk at least 6 inches above ground level to facilitate further handling. Attach your tag securely; do not just stick it into the clump as it will likely fall out.

I use a sharp #2 long handled shovel to go around the perimeter of each stalk about 1 to 1.5 feet from the stem depending on the variety. A 1.5 foot radius is usually safe. This cuts off the hair roots, which can easily spread 3 to 5 feet or more. If you skip this step, you greatly increase the risk of breaking tuber necks. I then use a potato fork to go around the stalk twice and then gently lift the clump from the ground. After I work as much soil off the clumps as possible with my hands, I use a screwdriver to remove remaining soil and sometimes gently tap the stalk with a piece of 2X4 lumber. The clumps are then ready to wash off and divide.

Divide clumps with a sharp knife and pruning shears making sure to have one eye with each division. If tubers are small and spindly, make fewer divisions. Again, disinfect as noted above when moving to a new clump. Never allow tubers to shrivel. If you dig more than you can quickly divide, keep clumps on moist newspaper and cover with damp towels. Concrete floors suck the moisture out so put a moisture proof tarp down first.
Nancy Riopelle’s talk at our June meeting ended up motivating our family to emulate her approach to saving the species. We had an existing stand of butterfly weed in a sunny area but had never noticed Monarch caterpillars on it until late August this year. We were so excited to find them! However, because of our trip to the ADS National Show, which occurred during the time that the caterpillars might turn into chrysalises, we decided to take a few of them down to our daughter and son-in-law’s home in Delaware, OH, as they had shown an interest in the topic as well. Amazingly, they subsequently found Monarch caterpillars on their swamp milkweed, which motivated them to get additional glass bowls to put them in and husband many caterpillars to butterfly stage.

As Nancy explained, this process ensures that the eggs or caterpillars don’t get eaten. She has a large stand of standard roadside milkweed, which is an attractive plant, and looks for eggs on hers. Bringing the eggs in and shepherding them through the caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly stages protects them even more. Our daughter and son-in-law’s last two chrysalises ended up at our house because they were away when the chrysalises were set to metamorphose into butterflies. We were also watching our granddaughter, Jackie Mae, for the week, and she got to see the Monarchs emerge twice more. Below she is watching one just emerged butterfly on New Zealand hybridizer Keith Hammett’s Mystic Illusion dahlia. I was able to record one metamorphosis and post it on Instagram.

NOTE: Some of the photos on the dahlia show pages were used with the permission of Harriet Chandler and Bob Leonelli. Our thanks to them.
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)

Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

For Year: 20 ___ Today’s Date: ____________________
Name(s): __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
____________________________________________________
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Choose one of the following membership offerings by checking the box before the offering.

[ ] DSO Individual $15
[ ] DSO Family $20
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For ADS “Snowbird” service add $6.
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☐ Check here if you want your Digest digital format only.

Please make checks payable to DSO.

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Valley City, OH 44280

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO
MaryAnn Moreno
MaryAnn Moreno
8232 Westhill Drive
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023

• 2020 dues may be paid anytime. View the DSO website at: www.dahliasocietyofohio.org. Show winners are posted.
• Follow the DSO Facebook Page at: https://www.facebook.com/dahliasocietyofohio.

4/2019