

# **DAHLIA DIGEST**

## ***DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO***

Since 1930

**VOL. 2007 ISSUE 1**

**FEBRUARY MEETING, 2007**



### **FEBRUARY 2 MEETING**

**7:30**

**Busch Community Room  
7501 Ridge Road, Parma  
Just south of Pleasant Valley Road**

#### **Program: DVD Presentations**

- **New 2007 Introductions**
- **Fabulous 50 Gallery**
- **DSO 2006 In Review**

Thanks for tonight's refreshments by Marilyn Weber,  
Joann Bendokaitis, and Barbara Hosta, and table set-up  
by Don Sopko.



# President's Notes

Hope you all had a great holiday season and are getting ready for the best of new years. It looks as though our summer-like winter weather has come to an abrupt end. With daffodils poking their heads above ground, I guess good "old man winter" is reclaiming his title. In the meantime, catalogs and brochures from dahlia growers are arriving in the mail daily. New introductions are being featured along with the "old time favorites." Don't forget to periodically check your stored tubers to make sure they're enjoying their "dormant stage." Before you know it, we'll be starting to plant!

Don't forget to utilize our DSO web site. A lot of good information and links have been made available by our webmaster, Sharon Swaney. Thanks Sharon!

On a sad note, Luther Havens, 73, of the Columbus Dahlia Society and a frequenter of some of our shows passed away on December 29<sup>th</sup>. Our condolences to his family.

On a positive note, congratulations to Bill Scholes as the recipient of the 2006 J. C. "Bud" Moore Medal. Well done, Bill, and thanks for all that you do for DSO.

PLEASE BRING TUBERS to our February and March meetings as donations to DSO's PLANT PROPAGATION PROJECT! We need your help so that we can grow plants for our DSO sales this spring. THANKS!

Mike



**VISIT OUR DSO WEBSITE  
SHARON SWANEY, WEBMASTER**

**[WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFOHIO.ORG](http://WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFOHIO.ORG)**

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## PROGRAMS/SHOWS FOR 2007

**Feb 2 DVD's on New Introductions; Feb 50; and  
DSO 2006 In Review**

**March 2 A program on Seedlings and Cuttings**

**April 6 Speaker tba**

**May 4 DSO Annual Tuber Auction**

**June 1 DSO Annual Tuber and Plant Auction**

**July Picnic...Site and date tba**

**August 11 Cuyahoga County Fair Dahlia Show**

**August Bus Trip to Local Dahlia Gardens and the  
Mahoning Trial Garden**

**Sept 6-9 National and Midwest Show St. Charles Illinois**

**Sept 14-16 77th DSO Show Parmatown**

**November 2 Photo Contest; Speaker tba**

**December 7 Holiday Dinner Meeting**

## Judging Corner

### THE OTHER HALF



In many judging seminars - and all of mine – I use the “Other Half” to refer to the combination of all of the other judging attributes besides form and color. I hope that this description of substance, stem, foliage, bloom position, uniformity or floriferousness, and distinction helps to reinforce the fact that form and color are by far the most important characteristics on which to judge an entry. A serious form or color fault is far more important than bloom position, for example, even though bloom position can be far more easily recognized. The key message in “The Other Half” is to take care in penalizing an entry for a subtle defect in any of these seven characteristics in comparison to defects in form or color.

In keen competition, of course, subtle defects in these seven characteristics can very well make the difference between a grand champion and a bloom that stays in its color class. Thus, while it is very important to keep their values in perspective, it is also very important to understand these attributes and the characteristics that comprise serious and subtle faults. We will discuss substance, stem, and foliage this month and the others next month.

**Substance** is that characteristic of a bloom that describes the extent to which it is stiff, rigid, and full of water. We’ve all seen blooms on Sunday afternoon that have lost virtually all their substance. The florets and even the stems are limp,

perhaps even on the show table. On Saturday morning, however, it is important to be able to detect more subtle variations in substance. Loss of substance can often be detected on the oldest of the florets in the back of the bloom. If they are wilted and hanging loosely on the back of the bloom, it is a serious fault. If the florets are uniformly turgid from front to back, the substance is excellent. Be aware that this characteristic can be substantially influenced by show conditions. On a hot, sunny morning at Petitti's, even the best of blooms will probably show substance faults.

Some **stem** faults are relatively easy to detect. Stems that are very short or very crooked are serious faults. Stems should be strong, erect, and in good proportion to the bloom. For large blooms the stem should be at least as long as the diameter of the bloom. For smaller blooms, the stem length can be (and usually is) longer than the bloom diameter. The stem should be round and not oval, rough, or ridged.

Exhibitors in North America use **foliage** to frame the bloom. In the Midwest, two or even three pairs of leaves are commonly displayed. In the Northwest, exhibitors seldom show more than one pair of leaves. In Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, no foliage is used! Most shows require one pair of leaves. Ideally, that pair of leaves will be located directly opposite one another and they will be identical. They will also be perpendicular to and in proportion to the bloom. Serious faults are foliage that is way too large or too small,

diseased, and crinkled or folded. If the leaves have different formation; e.g., a single leaf versus a compound leaf, it is a fault.

In summary, substance, stem, and foliage comprise 35% of the value of an entry. Even subtle faults in any of these characteristics can make the critical difference in winning entries. On the other hand, form and color faults demand attention first in any judging situation.

Ron Miner

**Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet**  
**Horticulture and Crop Science**  
**2021 Coffey Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43210-1086**

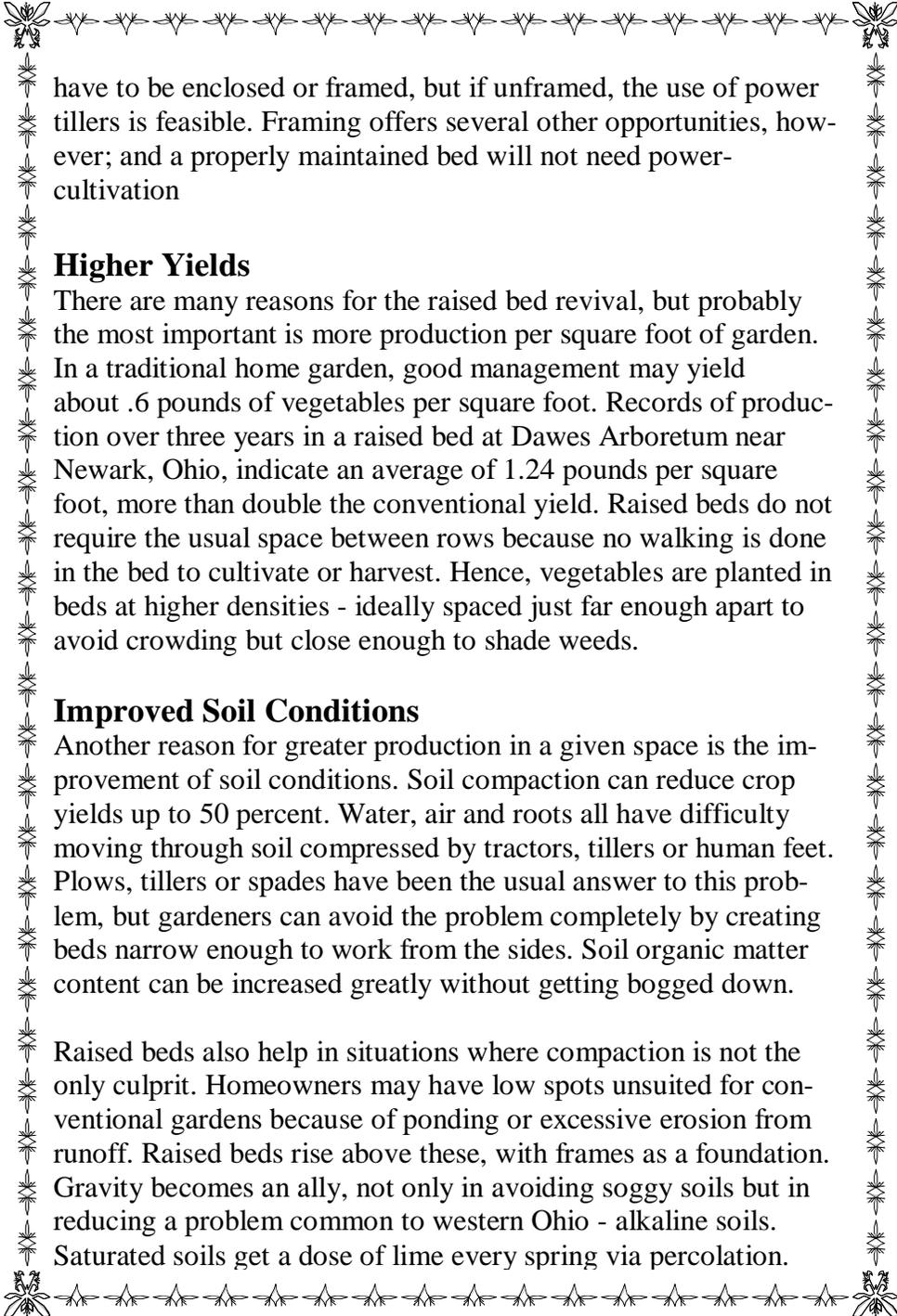


**Raised Bed Gardening by Pete Lane**  
**HYG-1641-92**

Gardening in raised beds, a common practice before colonial times, is enjoying a resurgence of popularity among home vegetable growers. In parts of the world with greater population densities or less tillable land, gardening in beds is still the norm.

**What are "raised beds"?**

The "raised" part means that the soil level in the bed is higher than the surrounding soil, and "bed" implies a size small enough to work without actually stepping onto the bed. A bed should be no wider than 4 feet, but length can be whatever suits the site or gardener's needs. Wider beds can be subdivided into sections accessible from planks or stepping stones. The bed does not



have to be enclosed or framed, but if unframed, the use of power tillers is feasible. Framing offers several other opportunities, however; and a properly maintained bed will not need power-cultivation

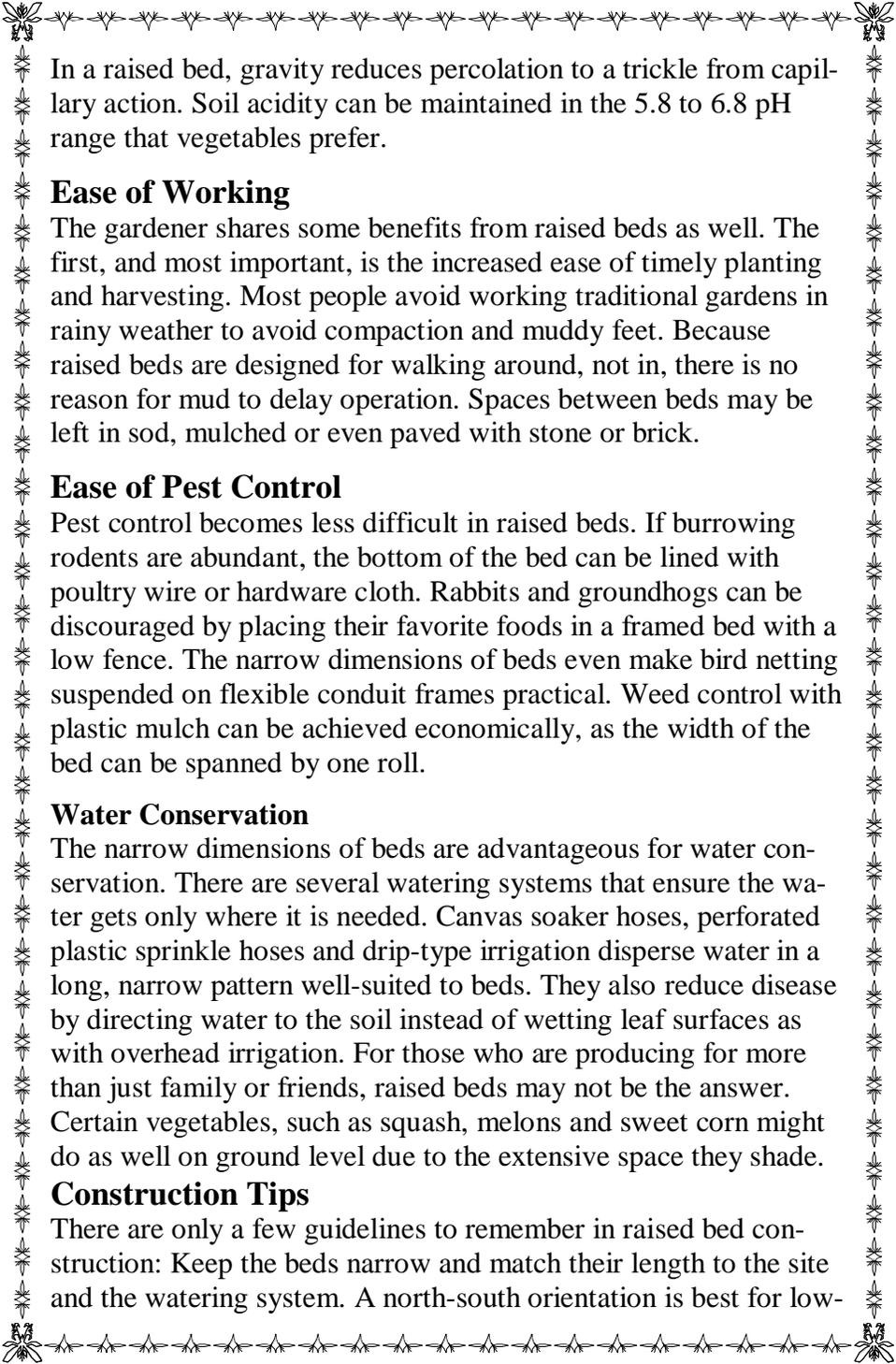
### **Higher Yields**

There are many reasons for the raised bed revival, but probably the most important is more production per square foot of garden. In a traditional home garden, good management may yield about .6 pounds of vegetables per square foot. Records of production over three years in a raised bed at Dawes Arboretum near Newark, Ohio, indicate an average of 1.24 pounds per square foot, more than double the conventional yield. Raised beds do not require the usual space between rows because no walking is done in the bed to cultivate or harvest. Hence, vegetables are planted in beds at higher densities - ideally spaced just far enough apart to avoid crowding but close enough to shade weeds.

### **Improved Soil Conditions**

Another reason for greater production in a given space is the improvement of soil conditions. Soil compaction can reduce crop yields up to 50 percent. Water, air and roots all have difficulty moving through soil compressed by tractors, tillers or human feet. Plows, tillers or spades have been the usual answer to this problem, but gardeners can avoid the problem completely by creating beds narrow enough to work from the sides. Soil organic matter content can be increased greatly without getting bogged down.

Raised beds also help in situations where compaction is not the only culprit. Homeowners may have low spots unsuited for conventional gardens because of ponding or excessive erosion from runoff. Raised beds rise above these, with frames as a foundation. Gravity becomes an ally, not only in avoiding soggy soils but in reducing a problem common to western Ohio - alkaline soils. Saturated soils get a dose of lime every spring via percolation.



In a raised bed, gravity reduces percolation to a trickle from capillary action. Soil acidity can be maintained in the 5.8 to 6.8 pH range that vegetables prefer.

### **Ease of Working**

The gardener shares some benefits from raised beds as well. The first, and most important, is the increased ease of timely planting and harvesting. Most people avoid working traditional gardens in rainy weather to avoid compaction and muddy feet. Because raised beds are designed for walking around, not in, there is no reason for mud to delay operation. Spaces between beds may be left in sod, mulched or even paved with stone or brick.

### **Ease of Pest Control**

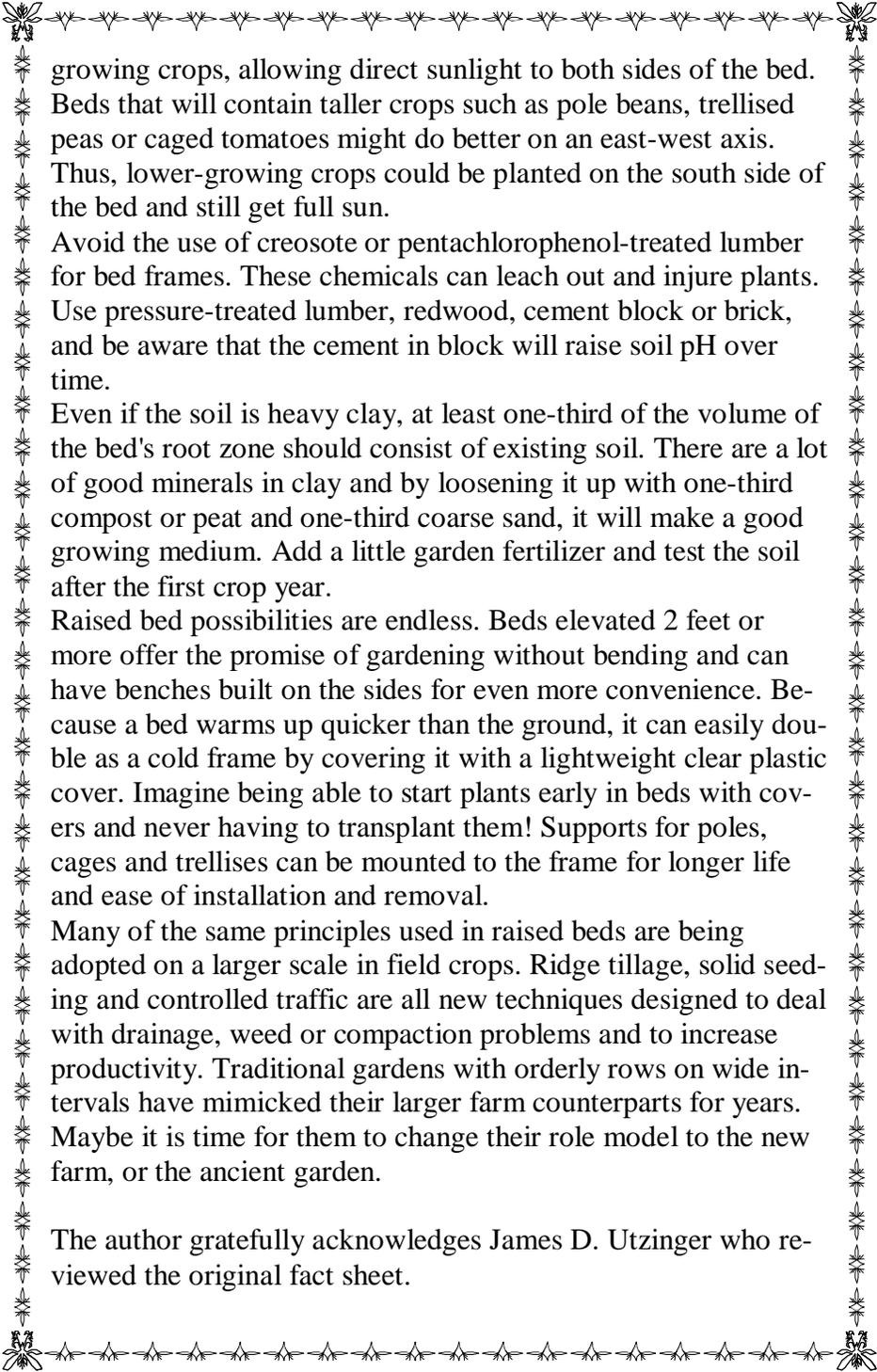
Pest control becomes less difficult in raised beds. If burrowing rodents are abundant, the bottom of the bed can be lined with poultry wire or hardware cloth. Rabbits and groundhogs can be discouraged by placing their favorite foods in a framed bed with a low fence. The narrow dimensions of beds even make bird netting suspended on flexible conduit frames practical. Weed control with plastic mulch can be achieved economically, as the width of the bed can be spanned by one roll.

### **Water Conservation**

The narrow dimensions of beds are advantageous for water conservation. There are several watering systems that ensure the water gets only where it is needed. Canvas soaker hoses, perforated plastic sprinkle hoses and drip-type irrigation disperse water in a long, narrow pattern well-suited to beds. They also reduce disease by directing water to the soil instead of wetting leaf surfaces as with overhead irrigation. For those who are producing for more than just family or friends, raised beds may not be the answer. Certain vegetables, such as squash, melons and sweet corn might do as well on ground level due to the extensive space they shade.

### **Construction Tips**

There are only a few guidelines to remember in raised bed construction: Keep the beds narrow and match their length to the site and the watering system. A north-south orientation is best for low-



growing crops, allowing direct sunlight to both sides of the bed. Beds that will contain taller crops such as pole beans, trellised peas or caged tomatoes might do better on an east-west axis. Thus, lower-growing crops could be planted on the south side of the bed and still get full sun.

Avoid the use of creosote or pentachlorophenol-treated lumber for bed frames. These chemicals can leach out and injure plants. Use pressure-treated lumber, redwood, cement block or brick, and be aware that the cement in block will raise soil pH over time.

Even if the soil is heavy clay, at least one-third of the volume of the bed's root zone should consist of existing soil. There are a lot of good minerals in clay and by loosening it up with one-third compost or peat and one-third coarse sand, it will make a good growing medium. Add a little garden fertilizer and test the soil after the first crop year.

Raised bed possibilities are endless. Beds elevated 2 feet or more offer the promise of gardening without bending and can have benches built on the sides for even more convenience. Because a bed warms up quicker than the ground, it can easily double as a cold frame by covering it with a lightweight clear plastic cover. Imagine being able to start plants early in beds with covers and never having to transplant them! Supports for poles, cages and trellises can be mounted to the frame for longer life and ease of installation and removal.

Many of the same principles used in raised beds are being adopted on a larger scale in field crops. Ridge tillage, solid seeding and controlled traffic are all new techniques designed to deal with drainage, weed or compaction problems and to increase productivity. Traditional gardens with orderly rows on wide intervals have mimicked their larger farm counterparts for years. Maybe it is time for them to change their role model to the new farm, or the ancient garden.

The author gratefully acknowledges James D. Utzinger who reviewed the original fact sheet.



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