

DAHLIA DIGEST

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO

Since 1930

VOL. 2007 ISSUE 3

April MEETING, 2007



**APRIL 6
MEETING
7:30**

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

**Program:
NEIL EVANS
On Photographing Flowers
Intro to PHOTOSHOP**

President's Notes

Well we've had a brief break from "old man winter" enough at least to get us thinking about the Spring thaw. It's time to wake up those dahlia tubers in hopes of seeing some new sprouts from our dormant tubers.

On Saturday, March 11th, we potted approximately 160 tubers at Willoway Nursery. Thanks to Doc Hemminger, Jerry Moreno, Glenn Ruth and Greg Blank for volunteering their time for this project. Also, thanks to that group and Randy and Kathy Foith for donating the tubers to get this project started. Now it's up to Mother Nature to help us in achieving our final goal---plants for our upcoming sales.

Thanks also to Barb Hosta and Jerry Moreno for volunteering their time at Sunnbrook Farms to spread the word on dahlias and to promote our society. The success of our society is dependent on its members, so if you can volunteer some time at some of our upcoming sales, it will benefit us all. We'll have sign up sheets at our April meeting for these projects, so please try to sign up for one of these activities. Thanks in advance for your co-operation.

Don't forget to bring any available tubers to April's meeting so they can be set aside for our sales in May and June. Make sure they are marked accurately. Soon we'll be "digging in the dirt"! See you at the April meeting.

Mike



**VISIT OUR DSO WEBSITE
SHARON SWANEY, WEBMASTER
WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFOHIO.ORG**

**Refreshments:
Kathy Foith
Sharon Swaney**



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PROGRAMS/SALES/SHOWS FOR 2007

Feb 2 DVD's on New Introductions and more
March 2 A program on Seedlings and Cuttings
March 3 Sunnybrook Nursery...Dahlia Information Table
April 6 Neil Evans on photography and more
April 21 Tuber Sale at Pettiti's Oakwood
April 22 Tuber Sale at Pettiti's Strongsville
April 28-29 Plant Sale at Holden Arboretum
May 4 DSO Annual Tuber Auction
May 18-20 Plant Sale Rockefeller Greenhouse
June 1 DSO Annual Tuber and Plant Auction
July 15 Picnic...Schoepfle Gardens
August 11,12 Cuyahoga County Fair Dahlia Show
August xx Bus Trip to Local Dahlia Gardens and the
Mahoning Trial Garden
August 24-26 Mahoning Valley Dahlia Show
Sept 1 Geauga County Fair Dahlia Show
Sept 6-9 National and Midwest Show St. Charles Illinois
Sept 14-16 77th DSO Show Parmatown
Sept 21-22 East Liverpool Dahlia Show
November 2 Photo Contest; Speaker tba
December 7 Holiday Dinner Meeting

Judging Corner

DISTINCTION



In the previous four Digests, we've discussed all of the dahlia judging criteria except Distinction. Recall that color and form comprise half the total value of the attributes of the entry while substance, stem, foliage, bloom position, uniformity or floriferousness, and Distinction comprise the "other half" of the total value. The penalties for severe faults in form and color exceed the total value of some of the attributes in the "other half," including Distinction. Thus, a serious form or color fault can be more important than the total value of some of the characteristics that comprise the "other half."

Distinction is primarily a consideration in the process of judging seedlings. It is seldom an issue in show judging, largely because it is an attribute of the cultivar, not the bloom or the entry. On the other hand, Distinction can be the "wow" factor that strikes your eye as a wonderful combination of characteristics you see in a particular entry but can't capture in any single attribute.

In judging seedlings, Distinction is the only attribute that inherently provides a comparison to other dahlia cultivars. Each of the other criteria could be considered without reference to the rest of the dahlias recognized by the ADS. Distinction, on the other hand, specifically asks you to assess the probability that a new cultivar will succeed in competition. The range in values (total of 5!) runs from a low of "unlikely to win" in its class (-5) through "frequent winner in its class" (-3) to "potential for higher awards" (-0).

Thus, once an entry is classified, it is necessary to check the Classification and Handbook of Dahlias to determine which cultivars are likely to be in the same class and the same section. Then, a judgment must be made about the potential for the new cultivar to win against other cultivars in its class and section. Note that the emphasis is on the potential for the cultivar, not the specific blooms you are examining, to win in competition.

While the current score sheet calls only for an evaluation of the potential for the cultivar to succeed in show competition, earlier versions of the score sheets asked judges to reward striking or synergistic combinations of color or form or the other attributes. We in the DSO have had the benefit of the wisdom and counsel of our good friend, Glenn Ruth, in this regard. Whenever I have the opportunity to judge seedlings and I get to Distinction, I remember Glenn's encouragement to recognize unique or wonderful combinations of the attributes on the score sheet. The key lesson is that you will occasionally find that the total impression of the entry is greater than the sum of the attributes parts! In that rare circumstance, you should anticipate that the cultivar will do better than what its individual attributes would project and move it a bit up the Distinction scale!

DISTINCTION 5 points

[] -5 points -Unlikely to win [] - 4 points -Occasional winner in class

[] - 3 points -Frequent winner in its class [] -2 points - Potential Section winner

[] -1 point - Section winner, may win higher [] -0 points - Potential for higher awards

Ron Miner

TUBER SALES 2007

The DSO will have three tuber sales in April. This is an opportunity for us to spread the word about the Dahlia and share our experiences about growing them. All members are encouraged to sell or just visit. To keep the DSO going there is always a need for volunteers, be they "old" or NEW members.

The first sale is **April 21st** at Pettiti's Oakwood Garden Center, 24964 Broadway Ave., east of the I-271 and Broadway exit. The sale is from 9:00 to 4:00.

The second sale is the next day, **April 22nd**, 10:00 to 4:00, at Pettit's Strongsville Garden Center, 18941 Pearl Road (route 42). From Cleveland, take I-71 south to Royalton Road West exit, then about a mile to Pearl Road turn south (left), go about 4 miles, the Center will be on your left side.

The third sale is two days at Holden Arboretum, Saturday **April 28th** and Sunday the **29th**, 10:00—4:00.

Please contact Dave Cap at 440-888-5589 after 7:00 p.m.. We need help at all times for all shows! So, please volunteer to work a 2 or 4 hour block of time. THANKS!

Dave

DSO Minutes for March 2, 2007

I. Call to Order: President Mike Weber called the meeting to order at 7:35 in one of the main floor rooms of the Busch Funeral Home. Our regular room downstairs was being painted. There were 36 members in

attendance. DSO warmly welcomed new members Shannon Fee and Cindy Matusicky, both of Berea.

II. Minutes of the February 2nd meeting: These minutes were published in the Dahlia Digest Vol 2007 Issue 2. Without comments, additions or corrections, the minutes were accepted as published.

III Treasurer's Report: Joann Bendokaitis reported February 28 balances: Charter One Bank checking \$1954.78; Charter One Money Market \$6606.41; Ohio Savings CD \$6163.10; Memorial Fund \$1669.83; Petty Cash \$45. The report was accepted subject to annual audit.

IV. Membership Report: John Bendokaitis reminded us that dues for DSO and the American Dahlia Society (ADS) are due now. A registration form is included in the Digest (see last page). There are 168 paid DSO members and 87 paid ADS members. John sent postcards to remind those members who have not paid. Randy Foith and Jerry Moreno will call past members who have not renewed to determine their status.

V. Cleveland Botanical Garden Report: Mike Weber was very happy to announce that Marge Janki volunteered to be our DSO representative to the Botanical Garden. Thank you Marge! Marge reported

that Natalie Ronyne has been named Executive Director of the Cleveland Botanical Garden. The Garden is presenting “Orchid Mania—at home with orchids” from February 24th through March 25th. This is the fourth and most ambitious of the popular annual orchid shows. The Botanical Garden’s Flower Show 2007 is entitled “Rhythm & Hues.” It will be Memorial Day Weekend, May 24th through May 28th. This University Circle show in Cleveland’s cultural district is the largest outdoor flower show in the USA. More detailed information is available at the Cleveland Botanical Garden website, www.cb garden.org.

VI. First Vice President Barbara Hosta: On programs: April 6, possible video on container gardening (the planned speaker cancelled since this is Good Friday); May 4 and June 1, tuber and plant sales; July 15, picnic at The Schoepfle Gardens; August 18/19 or September 8/9, bus trip is being planned to gardens in the area; December 7, holiday party at some restaurant on the south or west side. Give Barbara any suggestions of your favorite restaurant site to check out.

VII. Second Vice President Dave Cap: Dave encouraged all of us to contribute a couple hours to our upcoming sales. There is a report in this Digest detailing the dates and locations for the April sales Pettiti’s and Holden. In addition to the April sales, Dave mentioned that Pettiti’s is opening a new store in Avon at I-90 and Rt 83; we may be able to sell there too. In May, we will be selling at the Rockefeller Greenhouse, May 18—20.

Regarding shows, Dave updated the dates as shown in the schedule at the beginning of this Digest. He pointed out that the national show is being hosted by the Central States Dahlia Society and promises to be an outstanding event. Try to attend.

VIII. ADS Representative Jerry Moreno: Jerry received 100 of the new ADS “Welcome to the Wonderful World of Dahlias” poster. ADS produced this excellent publication and distributed them to its societies, gratis, so that they could hand them out to encourage new members to ADS and to the local society. Jerry distributed them to those present at the meeting as well. John Bendokaitis moved that we buy another 200 of them; the cost is \$50 plus postage (\$8.10). Sharon Swaney seconded and the motion carried without objection. They will be handed out to interested people at our sales and any presentation we may give. Jerry thanked the ADS for their increased efforts to help societies spread the work—very greatly appreciated.

IX. DSO Webmaster Sharon Swaney: The DSO website is regularly updated. A dahlia photo album by Neil Evans has been posted. Mike thanked Sharon for the wonderful job she is doing to maintain our site. Sharon invited everyone to participate in Hank Doll’s survey which has been posted.

X. Dahlia Digest Co-editors Barbara Hosta and MaryAnn Moreno: Mike thanked them for the fine job they are doing on our Digest. They reminded us that any article you want to have published needs to be

submitted to them by the 15th of the month.

XI. Old Business: Mike Weber

Dahlia Plant Program: Doc Hemminger noted that the Willoway Nursery has moved about 95% of its operations to Huron. However, there remains a greenhouse that owner Tom Demaline will let us use to start our plants for our sales. Mike, Doc and others will start planting tubers there on March 10. Glenn, Dave and Jerry volunteered to help.

Member of the year award update: As discussed at the February meeting, Mike researched vase designs and prices for the award. After considerable discussion on what this award was about, since Doc Hemminger had suggested the award at a previous meeting, he said that he would make his ideas clearer and present them at the April meeting for the membership to discuss and vote on.

Toledo Dahlia Society (TDS): The TDS called a special meeting in February to discuss their future. They decided to disband the society due to the lack of active members. Mike said that he would obtain a list of their members and invite them to join the DSO.

XII. New Business: Mike Weber

Glenn Ruth questioned how the Memorial Funds are to be handled since it was clear to him that the bylaws said anything about it. Jerry was sure the topic was covered somewhere. He, John Bendokaitis and Glenn offered to review the topic and report back at the next meeting.

XIII. Adjournment: The business meeting adjourned at 8:50.

XIV. Refreshments: Our many thanks to Greg Blank, MaryANN Moreno and Marge Janki for the delicious refreshments. As always, thanks to Don Sopko for setting up the meeting room, refreshment, coffee and beverages.

XV. Program: Glenn Ruth and Doc Hemminger presented a very informative program on propagating dahlias. They had a hands-on demonstration on taking a cutting and starting the plant.

Chuck Janki

IS BOTTOM HEAT A MYTH?

The Puget Sound Dahlia Association's Dahlias of Today 2007 has an interesting article by Jim Stout. Jim did an experiment to determine if bottom heat or cooler temperatures encouraged root growth in dahlia cuttings. His statistical design consisted of 372 matched pairs of cuttings with respect to height and diameter. He placed a heat mat for seedlings two inches under 372 of them (70-75 deg.) with no bottom heat under the other group of 372 plants (60-65 deg.) He concluded that dahlia cuttings kept at the lower temperature rooted quicker than those at the higher temperature. I don't believe that he applied a statistical analysis to his data. I have asked him for the data to give to my students to analyze completely.

Jerry Moreno

SOME BASIC NOTES ON pH

- **How do I know if I am using the right amount or right composition of fertilizer?**

The best answer is to have your soil tested by a lab for pH, phosphorous (P), and potassium (K). The other “big 3” macronutrient is nitrate (N) but it is not tested as it is affected by a number of things—temperature, moisture, pH, soil type. Micronutrients should also be tested: magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), sulfur (S), boron (B), manganese (Mn), and zinc (Zn). A list of labs compiled by the Ohio State University Extension will be handed out at the April DSO meeting. (Also, pH only testing kits are available at good garden centers.)

- **What is pH anyway?**

pH measures the concentration of hydrogen ions in a substance, i.e., how much acid or alkali is present. The scale goes from 0 to 14; 0 to 6 indicates acidity, 7 is neutral, 8 to 14 indicates basic. For example, battery acid has pH = 0; your stomach lining, 1; lemon juice, 2; orange juice and soda, 3; tomato juice and acid rain, 4; black coffee, 5; urine and saliva, 6; “pure” water, 7; sea water, 8; baking soda, 9; milk of magnesia, 10; ammonia solution, 11; soapy water, 12; bleaches and oven cleaner, 13; liquid drain cleaner, 14. Few plants of any kind will survive in soil whose pH is lower than 4 or higher than 8.

Dahlias grow best in a soil whose pH is slightly acidic, 6.5—6.7. If soil is out of whack pH-wise, then it is difficult for the soil to release its nutrients, even if they are in the right amounts. Plants pick up nutrients that are dissolved in the soil water, and pH affects the degree to which nutrients will be dissolved in the soil water.

- **How do I adjust the pH of my soil?**

An important answer to this is CAREFULLY!

The pH scale is **geometric not linear**. For example, a pH=4 is 10 times more acidic than a pH=5; similarly, a pH=5 is 10 times more acidic than a pH=6; so, a pH=4 is 100 times more acidic than a pH=6. **So, follow the recommendations of the lab very carefully.**

To lower pH, sulfur is used. Over a period of 4 to 6 months in the soil, sulfur turns to sulfuric acid that lowers the pH. Aluminum sulfate is effective but expensive, so is best used for small plots, as are a number of commercially prepared soil acidifiers. There are dual function chemicals such as ammonium sulfate that releases both nitrogen and sulfur, but be careful since typically the amounts of each that you need are not the same. Sphagnum peat moss is acidic; about 75 pounds are needed per 1000 sq. feet to lower pH by 1. It also adds humus to the soil and uses up nitrogen as it decomposes.

To increase pH, add a form of lime. Lime is a compound of calcium or calcium and magnesium. It is usually applied in the form of ground agricultural limestone, or hydrated lime. The smaller the particle, the quicker the result. Hydrated lime is the quickest. But overall, allow 2-3 months to allow the lime to neutralize soil acidity.

The above was compiled from several sources. An outstanding one is: www.dahlias.net/dahwebpg/soil/ which is maintained by the Colorado Dahlia Society.

Jerry Moreno



**SPECIAL NOTICE FOR
MEMBERSHIPS
From John Bendokaitis**

**Please check the mailing label on this digest
for one of these statements:**

DUES ARE DUE or DUES ARE PAID

Please let me know if there is an error in my records.

**MAIL FORM on NEXT PAGE and PAYMENT TO:
DSO MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN
JOHN R. BENDOKAITIS
17182 EASTVIEW DR
CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO 44023**

NOTE!!

**If you are not a member of the American Dahlia Society,
consider joining NOW. It is truly worth it!
Why? What are the benefits?**

- **You will get the CLASSIFICATION HANDBOOK**
- **You will get the colorful and informative ADS BULLETIN**
- **You will also receive the AMERICAN DAHLIA GUIDE TO GROWING AND CARING FOR DAHLIAS.**
- **You will be entitled to vote in election of ADS officers,
and all other privileges of membership.**

**CHECK YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON THE OTHER SIDE
SUBMIT ANY CHANGES BELOW**

**TO MAKE RENEWAL EASIER, SIMPLY TEAR OFF
THIS PAGE, INITIAL AND MAIL WITH YOUR
CHECK TO JOHN BENDOKAITIS**

**PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO
DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO**

DATE _____

NAME _____

CHANGES _____

EMAIL _____

**PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING
MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS. Place an X in [].**

[] DSO Membership (includes husband and wife)\$10.00

[] DSO with ADS MEMBERSHIP (for one person only)..\$30.00

[] DSO with ADS FAMILY Membership.....\$33.00

[] DSO with ADS STUDENT Membership.....\$15.00
(18 YRS OLD OR YOUNGER)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

[] ADS First Class Mailing for December ADD \$ 3.00 TO ABOVE

[] DSO with ADS SNOWBIRD OPTION—INDIVIDUAL \$38.00##

[] DSO with ADS SNOWBIRD OPTION—FAMILY..... \$41.00##

**## INCLUDE WINTER ADDRESS FOR SNOW BIRD
MAILING _____**

DAHLIA SOCIETY of OHIO
BILL SCHOLES
9080 Richards Drive
Mentor, OH 44060

