Friday, June 20 Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Busch Community Room
7501 Ridge Road, Parma
Just south of Pleasant Valley Road

Companion Plants to Dahlias in Your Garden
Fran Blank

Also,
DVD on New Introductions
Hi Folks,

Looks like Mother Nature has given us a break to allow us to finally get our dahlia season started. Hope all are having success in getting your tubers/plants in the ground.

Sincere thanks to all those folks who volunteered at our recent plant sales. All three of the sales were highly successful and can be attributed to those of you who helped in various ways. Thanks again for your dedication to DSO and the dahlia. Now we can finally write some checks!

Also, a big thank you to Doc Hemminger who spearheaded our society’s project at Miller Nature Center in Avon. We planted 26 of our plants a couple of weeks ago and all seem to be doing well except for one Taratahi Ruby which had to be replaced. We’ll keep you posted on the website as things progress.

Thanks to Sharon Swaney for getting the pictures on our site.

Our upcoming June meeting will be our last until October so I hope you all can make it. Don’t forget the picnic in August at Brant and Carol’s and the accompanying judging seminars not only there but also at Ron Miners on September 21 (new date) and Petitti’s on October 4.

Good growing to all.

Mike
OFFICERS and CHAIRS

Mike Weber, President ........................................ 440-647-3162
Jerry Moreno, Past President ................................. 440-543-5658
Emily Halderman, Co-1st Vice President ............... 330-697-7368
Alexandra Kermode, Co-1st Vice President............ 440-543-8104
Jim Thompson, 2nd Vice President ....................... 216-926-7419
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Membership ............ 330-562-3296
Sarah Thompson, Recording Secretary ................. 216-926-7419
MaryAnn Moreno, Corresponding Secretary ......... 440-543-5658
Dave Cap, Show Chair ...................................... 440-888-5589
Barbara Hosta, Archives and Librarian ................. 216-524-2635
Jerry Moreno Digest Editor ................................. 440-543-5658
Marge Janki, Cleveland Botanical Rep ................. 440-729-9714
Nancy Riopelle, Sunshine Chair ......................... 330-483-3360
Jerry Moreno, ADS Representative ..................... 440-543-5658
Sharon Swaney, Webmaster ................................ 330-562-3296

REFRESHMENTS
Barbara Miner, Nancy Riopelle, Sarah Thompson

MEETING DATES for 2014

March 21  Ron Zayac Living Soil and Organic Fertilizer
          Waking up tubers; Starting from Seeds
April 18  Tuber auction
May 16    Plant auction
June 20   Fran Blank—Companion Plants for Dahlias;
          DVD on 2014 Dahlia Introductions
August 23 Picnic at Brant and Carol’s
October 17 Topic tbd
November 21 Photo contest; Topic tbd
December 6 Holiday get-together...Alexandra, Emily
From Emily and Alexandra…. 
This month’s speaker is Fran Blank who will give a very interesting presentation on *Companion Plants for Dahlias.* Fran, a good friend of the Webers, has been teaching about her passion, gardening, for the past 30 years. She has an extensive and amazing background in horticulture. She has appeared in gardening segments of local broadcasting media, published a local garden column and has taught at many local colleges and community events throughout Lorain, Medina, and Cuyahoga counties.

In addition to growing flowers, Fran is equally passionate about growing and preserving food locally and participates in blog: www.thekitchencousins.com. Presently she teaches gardening and food preservation classes at several sites including customers of Don Moulds Plantation (two garden centers) in Amherst and North Ridgeville, as well as the Western Reserve School of Cooking in Hudson, and others.

After Fran’s presentation, depending on time, we will show the DVD on New Introductions for 2014.
SHOWS for 2014

Aug 9—10  Cuyahoga County Fair
Aug 15-17  Greater Columbus DS
Aug 29  Geauga County Fair
Aug 28—Sept 1  National
Sept 5-7  DSO Summit Mall
Sept 5-7  Pittsburgh DS
Sept 12-14  Mahoning Valley DS/Midwest
Sept 19-20  East Liverpool DS
Oct 4-5  Petitti’s Oakwood

SALES

May 16-18  Holden Arboretum
May 15-17  Rockefeller Greenhouse
May 16  DSO meeting

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP IN MAKING ALL OF THE SALES SITES VERY SUCCESSFUL!

JUDGING SEMINARS

- Picnic site August 23
- Petitti’s Oakwood October 4
- Ron’s garden September 21
Isn’t it just great to have the season underway! I’m almost completely planted as of this writing and all of those dahlias in the garden are promising to be perfect! :-) There is only one major issue now; the slugs would love to be working on those tender little shoots. If I didn’t have the ground around them covered with slug bait, a lot of them would have disappeared by now. I think it is interesting that only certain plants and areas have slugs, many others don’t show any evidence of slime. Why is that?

I received some questions about last month’s column, largely related to being able to see, in the pictures, the foliage and stem faults I was talking about. Perhaps the example of foliage on the right was reasonably clear. It shows a “pair” of leaves. The leaves are compound; they are very similar in size and shape; and they set opposite one another on the stem. That is, they are a good example of a pair of leaves. The questions arose more from the pictures of foliage faults.

The schematics in the Judging Manual (p. 29 and 30) might have been more effective. The example on the right illustrates a couple relatively minor faults: an unbalanced pair of malformed leaves and a pair of leaves that do not lie opposite one another on the stem. I don’t remember ever penalizing leaves for being malformed. That condition, in any case, comprises a minor fault. As always, however, the degree of the fault depends on its severity and extent. Check the Manual for other examples.
In summary, the Judging Manual provides the following key comments on foliage.

- Pairs of leaves should be opposite and balanced and the first pair should frame the bloom.
- Leaves should convey health and vitality.
- Distortion of the foliage can be a major fault.
- In show competition, ideal foliage will be free of insect injury, spotting, mildew, and mechanical damage.
- Scars from disbudding and disbranching should be minimal.
- Missing and trimmed foliage are major faults.
- The diameter of the bloom, the length of the stem, and the size of the foliage should be in pleasing proportion.
- An entry must have at least one pair of leaves.
- While stair-stepping leaves are a major fault, a pair of leaves attached to the stem up to an inch apart is a minor fault (!).

This last point is certainly not intuitive (to me, at least) and reflects the importance of actually reading the Judges Manual. It says, in effect, that judges need to be lenient in the requirement for a pair of leaves. In that context, I want to revisit a statement I made in my last column about a 10 point penalty on an entry that lacked a pair of leaves. It is included again here, on the right. I was, no doubt, too harsh. The penalty should be substantial, but not 10 points.

While the Manual also talks about eliminating an exhibit from competition based on obvious signs of disease, our current knowledge of virus makes it clear that it can only really be diagnosed by detailed scientific evaluation. My counsel is to employ the “health and vitality” criteria but do not “eliminate” an entry based on suspected virus.

It is, no doubt, clear that the evaluation of Stem and Foliage are closely interrelated. The Manual frequently discusses
them together. The key characteristics of a good stem include:

- The stem should be strong and erect and possess good form and proportion.
- For large blooms, the stem should be as long as the diameter of the bloom; it can be longer for smaller blooms.
- The stem should be round and smooth.
- The diameter of the bloom, the length of the stem, and the size of the foliage should be in pleasing proportion.

Following are some examples of foliage and stem issues from recent shows.

What foliage and stem faults do you see regarding the nice entry on the right? (We might as well start with a good example!) As I see it, the unpaired leaf (pig ear, in the Midwest) would be better if it were behind the stem/bloom instead of on the side. Otherwise, the stem is straight and strong; the pair of leaves are equal and close to opposite; and the bloom, stem, and foliage are in good proportion. This entry probably deserves 19 or 19.5 out of the 20 points for stem and foliage.

You probably wouldn’t say the same thing about the entry on the left; neither would I. Perhaps the first thing you notice is that the stem is not straight. While it is hard to distinguish the individual leaves, it is clear that there are not nice individual pairs of leaves framing the bloom. In addition, the sets of leaves do not form a nice triangle leading up to the bloom. Rather, they appear more like a block or cylinder of leaves below the bloom. I would say that the combination of scores for Stem and Foliage would be below passing for this entry; i.e., well less than 17.

What do you think about the stems and foliage on the triple entry on the top of the next page? Certainly the leaves on that center bloom leave something to be desired. Recall from above that a “pair” of leaves can be displaced by as much as an inch, so the entry does meet that ADS requirement. They are clearly not, however, equal and
opposite. The foliage on the other two blooms are better. The blooms themselves are small so the diameter of the stems is sufficient. They are, however, very long and they vary substantially in length. What would you conclude about the score for stem and foliage on this example? If each of the stems and foliage were like those on the bloom on the left, my score would be 10 for each. The foliage on the center bloom would lead me to a failing score for the entry on that attribute, perhaps –2. I would suggest passing the entry on Stem at, say, -1.

The two blooms on the right were entries in the Ball section at our DSO show last fall. The contrast in Foliage between the two entries is remarkable! It is clear that the leaves on the yellow entry are too small. They are not in proportion to the size of the bloom or the length of the stem. What about the bloom on the left? My immediate impression in looking at the picture was that the first pair of leaves are too big. However, if you pretend that the second, lower, pair of leaves were absent, are they really too big? Maybe a little. Here is a case, in my view, where that second set of leaves detracts from the entry. The first set of leaves is in reasonably good proportion to the stem and the bloom—but they’re sure too big for the second set of leaves.

Please change the target date for the judging seminar in my garden from September 14 to September 21. I hope to be able to set up both Seedling Bench Evaluations and Trial Garden simulation evaluations of open-centered cultivars that afternoon. Enjoy your gardens and those dahlias! Ron
JIM and SARAH THOMPSON

Having a passion for the outdoors from a very young age, Jim began maintaining gardens before he was even old enough to walk alone to the corner store. Over the years, he has begun to regularly grow vegetables and herbs, maintain an extensive collection of orchids, expand his collection and admiration for carnivorous and air plants, and generally, just continue to grow in his fascination for everything outdoors!

It wasn’t until the age of 24 that Jim’s interest in dahlias peaked. Enjoying both a challenge and the ability to learn of new plants, he was easily persuaded to plant a few dahlias for the first time. Shortly after his modest planting, Jim attended a midwest show. From then on, his passion has grown, as has the size of his dahlia garden. Still considered a small grower, Jim’s suburban gardens yield 150 plants.

A handful of years after buying his first plants, not only could Jim easily be considered “obsessed” with dahlias, but he has convinced his new bride to love them as well. Sarah and Jim’s wedding in September 2013 highlighted hundreds of dahlias that were grown in their yard, and the displays created by Jim continue to be talked about amongst attendees. Check the DSO website for wedding pictures.
Less than a year later, they each hold current positions within the DSO organization: Sarah is the Secretary, and Jim is the 2nd Vice President. Additionally, the couple belongs to the Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society and the American Dahlia Society.

Jim has taken an interest in growing seedlings as he loves being surprised when a new flower opens. While he believes that one day he may end up growing only seedlings, his current obstacle lies in trying to make room in the city for such an extensive garden. Last year, Jim took an interest in a 2010 Boley seedling that he hoped to name “Princess Sarah” but with much dismay, the bloom only scored 82 points upon judging. He will try his luck again this season in hopes to make his wife happy!

A custom wood worker by trade, Jim’s spiral staircases are admired by even the most talented carpenters. Sarah, who is Jim’s biggest fan, spends her days as an underwriter for commercial properties. While they haven’t started their own family yet, their love extends to their three rabbits, two dogs and a cat. The couple met at a local dog park and connected over their love of animals and desire for a more humane society. Free time for the couple is spent with their own animals and helping with fundraising efforts of local animal non-profits.
Notes of the May 16, 2014 Meeting by Sarah Thompson
See full minutes on our website.

- Mike Weber opened the meeting at 7:37.
- Minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed on the DSO website.
- Treasurer Sharon Swaney reported that DSO earned $0.52 in interest last month! The Money Market balance is $12,728. The bank account contains $3,172 including the Memorial Fund, $324 without the Memorial Fund. The account will increase once dahlia sales at Rockefeller, Holden, and our auction are completed.
- Second VP Jim Thompson and Show Chair Dave Cap asked for volunteers to sign up for plant and tuber sales at Rockefeller Greenhouse and the Holden Arboretum.
- Membership Chair Sharon Swaney reported that there are currently 131 paid DSO members, 55 of whom are also members of ADS. Corresponding Secretary Mary Ann Moreno reported that 65 Digests were mailed by postal mail; 16 members have agreed to receive the Digest by email to save on postage.
- Co-First VP Emily Halderman announced that because a majority vote on the Don’s Lighthouse location for the holiday meeting was not reached, she followed up on a suggestion by Jerry that she consider John Carroll University in University Heights. She visited JCU and found the Reading Room in the Dolan Science Center to fit our needs very well. The dinner will be catered. Details will come in the future.
- Regarding an Old Business item of the possibility of DSO hosting the 2015 Midwest Conference Show, Jerry reported that 10 DSO members met at the Moreno’s the morning of May 10. After considerable discussion of the pros and cons, it was decided to recommend to the membership that we not host the show. A
detailed report is available and will be attached to the minutes. The membership accepted the recommendation not to host the 2015 Midwest show primarily due to not having enough time to put on a show of quality, the cost involved, and the concern that the time proximity of attending both the national show in New York celebrating the 100th birthday of ADS and the Midwest show within a week would be problematic. Randy Foith, president of the Midwest Conference thanked DSO for their consideration and agreed with the reasons stated not to host in 2015.

MVDS sent us a letter of thanks for our $400 contribution to helping them host the 2014 Midwest Show.

Doc Hemminger updated the status of the dahlia garden at the Miller Nature Preserve in Avon. 27 plants have been planted. He thanked Willoway Nursery for the soil donation and suggested that we send Tom De-maline a formal DSO thank you. He also indicated that on Saturday May 24 (10:30-11:30 am) he and Mike will be giving a presentation on dahlias and all are welcomed to attend.

Ron’s judging seminar at his garden has been changed from September 14 to September 21.

Emily indicated that she will be meeting with Julia Ferguson of Green Corps on Tuesday and will be donating some dahlia plants to her from DSO.

Barbara Hosta attended the annual Scholarship Awards Presentation on May 12 sponsored by the Gardeners of Greater Cleveland. She reiterated that our annual donation to their scholarships is greatly appreciated and is a worthwhile investment to encourage students to pursue careers in horticulture areas.
BARBARA HOSTA
Our Archivist and Librarian

My first introduction to dahlias was in my early teen years when my family moved and the new yard had a dahlia that grew behind the front shrubs against the foundation of the house. The flower was a dark red informal decorative probably BB or B and it came up every year without any care. It would be another 20 years before I added dahlias into my own gardens and found out that the house with the sole and persistent dahlia was just a block away from Eugene Woznicki (DSO member who passed away a couple years ago).

I joined the DSO in 1995, but I had been buying the tubers from DSO members at the Cleveland Botanical Garden sales for many years before joining. My first large size dahlia was Papageno which I bought at one of the Botanical shows from Ric Matmuller and Glenn Ruth. I dabbled with showing dahlias, but dahlias are divas and at this time I do not give the dahlias the attention they require for showing. Picking a bucket for my co-workers is a show in itself. Each year I plan on growing no more than 30 but as the sales come around I end up with 60 or more. Anything variegated becomes my favorite. Once in a while, fertilizing, watering and weather all converge and I produce an AA size that is really an AA. I took on the archives and library of the DSO, produced the digest for a few years and was a vice president for 4 years.
DSO/ADS Membership Application
(Memberships are calendar year.)

Please fill out completely (even for renewals).

Date: _____________________
Name(s): ____________________________
Address: _______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
Phone: _____________ Alt Phone: _____________
Email(s): _______________________________________

PLEASE choose one of the following membership offerings:

[ ] DSO (includes husband and wife) $10
[ ] DSO + ADS Individual Membership $34
[ ] DSO + ADS Family Membership $37

Snowbirds: Add $6 and enter winter address here:
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

Would you like to receive your Digest in digital format only? (Be sure to include an email address above) Please circle:

Yes       No

Please make checks payable to DSO.

Mail to: Sharon Swaney
         340 Aurora-Hudson Rd.
         Aurora, OH 44202
DAHLIA SOCIETY of OHIO
MaryAnn Moreno
8232 Westhill Drive
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023