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

Program: TUBER AUCTION
Hi Gang,

Our tuber sales start at Petitti’s Oakwood from 9-3 this Saturday April 14. Please stop by and help (and buy some tubers while you’re at it!).

The following Friday, April 20, is our traditional tuber auction meeting. Please bring and donate whatever extra tubers you have. Make sure that they are clean and correctly marked as to variety. Thanks. Also, if you have clumps and are not sure on how to divide them, bring one to the meeting. We’ll show you what to do.

According to The Ohio State University Buckeye Turf, the last date for frost in Cleveland is May 18 (with a 10% chance of frost thereafter). This spring has been so mild that the ground should be warm enough by then. If you are starting your tubers indoors, start them around 5 weeks before you intend to plant. (I plant at end of May.)

Don’t forget to encourage the young folks in your family or neighbors to grow dahlias as we are having a special Youth section in our September Dahlia Show just for them. Also, there will be a special section for dahlias grown from Norm Zaworski’s tubers. Norm is no longer able to tend to his garden. Several of us spent a few hours last fall digging his dahlias. His tubers will be available at our April 20 meeting. Be sure to get some and enter the blooms at our September Dahlia Show in his honor.

Think Dahlias!  

Jerry

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Dahlia Shows in 2012

August 11-12   Cuyahoga County Fair
A wonderful opportunity to get involved in showing, especially for first-timers. Set-up Sat morn 8—10:30 am. Park in Flower Barn lot. Call Dave 440-888-5589 or Jerry for details.

August 18-19   Mahoning Valley DS
Call Randy Foith for details. 330-584-9002

August 31 set-up  Geauga County Fair
Must pre-register. See www.geaugafair.com

August 31-Sept 1  Midwest Show...Ann Arbor
August 31-Sept 2  National Show...Portland
Sept 7 set-up 9 pm  DSO  Parmatown Mall
Details provided in a future Digest.

Sept 15-16  Columbus DS
Sept 22  East Liverpool DS
TBA  Pittsburgh DS
October 6  DSO Member Show
Pettiti’s Oakwood
Answer: Members of the DSO shared several opinions on this topic. The Zone 5 accepted date after which frost was rare is May 30. The Zone 6 date is May 15. Last May 2011 was so wet that many growers did not plant until the first week of June to help prevent their tubers from rotting. Planting too early has the chance that one will be “bloomed out” before the shows start. A key to planting is that the soil needs to be warm; otherwise, plants will not respond. Time will tell whether we are truly Zone 5.

Program
1. The ADS DVD on New Introductions for 2012 was shown. Congratulations went to Ron Miner for his “Bryce Miner” and to Tony Evangelista for his bloom “Jackie Evangelista.”

2. Test and Prepare Your Soil
Randy Foith and Sharon Swaney reviewed their soil sample tests and experience in their presentation of “Test and Prepare Your Soil.” Sharon shared her soil sample test results from Spectrum Analytic Inc. 1087 Jamison Rd. NW, Washington Court House OH 43160. 800-321-1562. Spectrum provides recommendations on how to amend the soil based on the results and according to what is intended to be grown. The test cost $14. See www.spectrumanalytic.com

Randy emphasized several points. The first matter of concern with soil should always be the pH level. The ideal pH level range for growing dahlias is between 6.2 and 6.7. If the soil needs to be amended, the grower should concentrate on adjusting pH first. A second rule of soil amendment is to make adjustments to the soil at low increments. Drastic changes to soil are not recommended. The scale is logarithmic. Randy gave a couple handouts, one from Spectrum and one by Bill McKibben.

Refreshments
Thanks for Marilyn Weber, Linda Vuletich, and MaryAnn Moreno for this evening’s refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Halderman

OFFICERS-CHAIRS/PHONE NUMBERS

Jerry Moreno, President………………………440-543-5658
Mike Weber, Past President……………………440-647-3162
Your Name, First Vice President……………xxx-xxx-xxxx
Your Name, Second Vice President…………xxx-xxx-xxxx
Sharon Swaney, Treasurer and Webmaster……..330-562-3296
Emily Halderman, Recording Secretary……..330-697-7368
MaryAnn Moreno, Corresponding Secretary……440-543-5658
John and Joann Bendokaitis, Membership Chair...440-543-4515
Dave Cap, Show Chair………………………..440-888-5589
Barbara Hosta, Archives and Librarian…………216-524-2635
Jerry Moreno Digest Editor……………………..440-543-5658
Linda Vuletich, Sunshine Chair……………...…..330-547-8025
Jerry Moreno, ADS Representative…………..440-543-5658

Refreshments:
Marilyn Weber
Barb Paulitzky
Anna Kandra
Emily Halderman

MEETING DATES for 2012
March 16 New Introductions; Test/Prep Your Soil
April 20 Tuber auction
May 18 Plant auction
June 15 Nancy and Russ Riopelle,
Beekeeping &Tasting Various Honey Types
August 5 Picnic at Linda and Stan Vuletich’s
Artistic Design demo; Judging Seminar
October 19 Digging and storing; Program tba.
November 16 Photo contest; Program tba.
December 1 Holiday get-together
MARK YOUR CALENDARS
Help DSO sell tubers and plants

April 14  9-3    Pettiti’s Oakwood
May 17-19  9-4    Rockefeller Garden
May 18-20 10-4    Holden Arboretum

DSO FLOWER OF THE YEAR 2012
Barbara Miner

Available at Meeting
DAHLIAS OF TODAY 2012
Puget Sound Dahlia Society
$10

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New Business
1. Doc Hemminger is retiring after this year as the senior dahlia judge at the Geauga County Fair. He is looking for a replacement. The Fair provides compensation for the judging services. If interested, let Doc or Jerry know.
2. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to compensate Tom Demaline of Willoway Nursery $1 per plant grown there. The total will be between 400 and 500 plants. Tom has often donated the money back to DSO. In addition to our usual letter of thanks, it was suggested and agreed that a plaque be given to him.
3. Hank Doll, past president of the Gardeners of Greater Cleveland club requested that DSO consider making a donation in support of their scholarship fund for students who are pursuing a degree in horticulture. Jerry moved and Randy seconded a motion to donate $500 for that purpose (preferably to someone who has a love for the dahlia). The motion passed without objection.

Dahlia Q&A
Question: Due to global warming, Ohio has recently been reclassified as a Zone 6 region. Does this have any impact on when individuals should plant their dahlias? Could dahlias be planted earlier in the year than they have been in the past?

Correctly labeled.
3. Individuals participating in the Geauga County Fair show on Saturday September 1st must pre-register. Form is on their website. Set-up is Friday August 31.
4. Ron Miner obtained anemone seeds from Bill Johnson, an excellent Australian hybridizer of anemones. We will try to start them at Willoway and have them available for sale in June. They will be the topic of the judging seminar at our Pettiti’s show in October.

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Minutes of the March 2012 Meeting

Call to Order/Welcome/Announcements
1. Jerry called the meeting to order at 7:30. 35 members were present.
2. Mike Weber, Dave Cap, and Doc Hemminger have started tubers at the Willoway Nursery Greenhouse, Avon Lake, to begin the taking cuttings process. If anyone is interested in helping or learning, contact Mike at mweber1@frontier.com
3. The 2012 Dahlias of Today publication by the Puget Sound Dahlia Society is available for $10.
4. Randy Foith of MVDS has excellent pruning shears for $6.
5. ParmaTown is available for our show this September. A new “Youth” category will be introduced for children of 18 years of age or younger. Also there will be a section based on Norm Zaworski’s tubers.
6. Bill Takacs distributed the E&M Produce Supplies catalog.

Treasurer’s Report
Treasurer Sharon Swaney presented a power point overview of our financial holdings. It was accepted.

Membership and Corresponding Secretary Report
MaryAnn Moreno reported that a postcard notice was put in the March mailing for those whose dues had not yet been paid. April’s Digest will be sent only to those who have paid their dues.

Website
Sharon reminded us to visit the DSO website www.dahliasocietyofohio.org. She encouraged the membership to send her their photos to post to the website.

Future Meeting Agendas
Suggestions are needed to fill the programs for October and November. Let Jerry know what topic you would like to hear about. Jerry also needs topics that you would like to read about in the Digest. Thanks.

Tuber/plant sales
1. Dave Cap is looking for volunteers for the Petitti’s tuber sale on April 14th form 9 to 3. If members would like to donate any tubers for the Petitti’s sale, please contact Dave. He is willing to pick them up. Be sure that they are clean and

Getting used to the new ADS Dahlia Classification system

This month:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Color</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FD</td>
<td>Formal Decorative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Informal Decorative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Semi-Cactus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Straight Cactus</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Incurved Cactus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Laciniated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Next month: the rest of the forms BA,MB,P,ST, WL, NX, PE, An, NO, Co, O, S, MS)

There are 4 digits to classify a dahlia variety. The left-most digit is SIZE. To its right is FORM. The right-most two digits identify COLOR.

Example: 2002 classifies a B size, Formal Dec form, Yellow dahlia, such as Edna C.

QUIZ:
1) 3202
2) 1108
3) 0107
4) 4010
5) 3011
6) 2201
7) 4312
8) 3415
The JUDGE’s Corner
Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com

We’ve been talking about Form and Color over several of the recent Digests. They deserve a lot of attention because, between them, they comprise half of the value in the seedling scorecard (28 and 22 points, respectively). It is, nevertheless, time to move on to other attributes. The other 50% is distributed over six additional attributes. Can you name them? Now would be a good time to go over to the computer, open up the ADS website, sign in to “members only” and print the new scoresheets. Go ahead, I’ll wait. www.dahlia.org

Scorecard Back—Description
Scorecard Back—Outline

Note that there are now two different “backs” to go with the scoresheets. One is a written description of the attributes and the various positives and negatives associated with them. It will be most useful for CN and AC judges (and at least once a year for the SR judges!) to read it carefully. The second back is an outline of the various positives and negatives for judging blooms and it will be useful as a handy reminder for everyone who has the basics from the first sheet well in hand.

Now, let’s look at Substance: at 15 points, it is the most valuable of the other attributes. The two backs you’ve just printed tell you to look for florets that are clean, crisp, and springy. Of course, if you see florets that have fallen onto the show table, you know that substance is less than perfect. Perhaps the best way to imagine poor substance is to think of the condition of many of our blooms at the end of Sunday after a hot weekend at Petitti’s. You will find a lot of substance faults there. You need, however, to be able to find substance faults a lot more subtle than the ones you would see at the end of a show.

The picture at the top of the next page is of Pennsgift, a cultivar known to easily reach 12” in diameter. Gigantic blooms like that tend to have difficulty in keeping good substance. Look at the differences in the bloom above and below the equator. The difference is more than bearding. The florets below the equator, particularly at the back of the bloom, are drooping.

Dahlia Q & A
Q: Some of my dahlias look like they have eyes but nothing is happening. Is there a way to “pop” the eyes?
A: If eyes are not evident, place the tubers in moist leaf mold, peat, or soilless mix. In a week or two the eyes should appear and produce shoots.

Q: Can I plant tubers directly in the ground without starting them indoors?
A: Yes, but your blooms will appear later in the season than if you had started them inside. First your soil should have a pH around 6.3—6.5, and that fertilizer has been worked into the bed. (Ten growers will probably give you 20 recommendations as to what NPK rating to use. Have your soil tested to determine what is best for your soil.) Basically prepare a hole about 8 inches deep. Work a half cup of fertilizer into the hole. Put an inch of soil over the mixture. Place the tuber horizontally in the hole with the eye facing up. Cover the tuber with a couple inches of soil. Do not water (unless it is extremely dry and then water only a very little). As the shoot appears in a couple weeks and grows, add soil so that in time the soil over the tuber is slightly mounded. Water once the growth appears.

Q: How much sun do dahlias need?
A: The more the better although morning is better than afternoon. A minimum amount is 5 hours. If you don’t have even 5 hours, try growing a dahlia in a large pot that can be moved around to be in the sun. Sounds like a lot of baby-sitting to do but it works if you have the time.

Q: How do I get information on the different types of dahlias?
A: Join the American Dahlia Society. ADS membership gives you the official ADS Classification Handbook that contains hundreds of ADS named varieties, their size, form, and color and how many blue ribbons they have won. You also get an excellent quarterly publication called the ADS Bulletin that contains first class articles.
No matter the container, the potting mix should be damp but definitely not wet as the tuber could rot in such. Although it is usual to put the container under lights (fluorescent not incandescent), that really isn’t necessary at this point. Once there is growth, then for sure they should be under lights ideally with the lights as close as possible, one inch, to the growth. As the plants grow, the lights should be moved up accordingly always keeping the lights close to the growth. Official grow lights are not needed but a minimum of 2000 lumens for 14 hours a day produces good growth. So check the fluorescents you are using for their rating.

Some growers cover whatever containers they are using with wax-paper or aluminum foil to act as a kind of terrarium. When sprouts emerge give the plant a little water and put the containers in your light system (if you haven’t already) or by a sunny window. As the plant grows, more water may be used, but remember never to soak the container.

Plant outdoors after the danger of frost is past, May 18 in our area. Before planting, harden or acclimate your plants to outdoor conditions for several days. Initially place them in a shady, protected location, then gradually expose them to longer periods of sun. Keep in mind that tubers like warm soil and do not like super wet soil. Be sure to place about a five foot stake next to the plant and put a label on the stake. Dahlias should not be closer than 2.5 feet from each other.

Slugs are the biggest problem at the time of planting. Be sure to protect your plants from them. Use your favorite method whether it’s a commercial product, crushed egg shells, old coffee grounds, salt, shallow bowls of beer, or hand-picking.

Jerry

Laciniated cultivars tend to have a similar tendency. The Lois V shown here may just have a big gap at 11 o’clock; but it also may be illustrating a tendency for those florets to droop, causing the gap.

How can you determine which is the case? My (quite controversial) answer is to gently touch a few of the florets with the eraser end of your pencil or your fingertip. That should let you separate droopy from springy florets. (Some very good judges insist that you should not touch a bloom—so do so with great care if you use my approach.)

Another useful approach in evaluating substance is to have a “standard” in mind. Which cultivars look freshly cut at the end of that weekend show? Cary Miner can exhibit that level of substance and, of course, I grow a lot of them. It is useful for me to compare an entry to that cultivar in my mind’s eye. The point is that you may want to study the cultivars in your own gardens. Are some of them virtually always limp? Do some...
of them feel a bit like a strawflower rather than a dahlia? Experience is an important part of judging substance and your own garden is a great place to develop some of that experience!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>85%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>75%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you remember this table? You can find the entire table at the bottom of the page on the “Outline” back you just printed. It is an important tool to help translate our observations of faults to a numerical penalty. A passing score of 85% depends on observing a few minor faults and no major faults. (Remember the table in the August column?) My sense is that the two blooms shown in this article would have major substance faults and deserve a penalty of 3 or more points (or a score, for substance, of 12 or fewer points). It is equally important to use the table to recognize that a penalty over 2 1/4 points amounts to a failing score for substance.

For you ADS judges out there, go back to the website and take a look at the new judges tests that are now available there. The changes are somewhat subtle and Bob plans on writing a new test fairly soon. But feel free to go ahead with this one if you want to fill a couple extra hours of what is left of our winter!

What Does Spring Bring?

It’s that exciting time of the year when the Tribe opens its new season and some of us are hopeful of seeing them in the World Series once again remembering the fun days of the mid ‘90’s; the Browns are a few short weeks away from drafting new players bound to take us to the Super Bowl! So what else does spring bring? Ah, yes, spring brings flowers (and pollen and pests, but let’s not dwell on them) and dreams of showing and giving the best dahlia blooms we have ever grown to shut-ins, the local post office or doctor’s office, church, friends, our workplace, and winning some prizes at the various shows this fall. But to make our dreams come true, we need to wake up our sleeping beauties and get them started indoors, now, about 4 to 6 weeks before planting outdoors. A tuber takes about 10-20 days to sprout and maybe another 3-4 weeks to get 18 inches tall.

To start the tubers, use pots big enough to accommodate the tuber or use flats. I use half-gallon milk or juice cartons. (Where do I get 50 cartons? The Civic Club I belong to puts on pancake breakfasts at which orange juice is served.) I cut out one side of the carton, punch holes in the opposite side, insert the cut side diagonally across the open space and plant one tuber on each side. If you use a flat, fill about 4 inches with soilless potting mix, plant tubers side by side. In whatever container you use, allow the crown to peek above the soil line. Oh, and don’t forget to provide a label for each tuber!

An eye is a little swelling, bump, in the crown. That is where the growth will come from and only from there. There could be more than one eye in the crown. As the eyes show growth, you can cut the shoots as they get a couple sets of leaves and start the cuttings in oasis cubes. Otherwise, keep the strongest of the lot and discard the rest. Not all tubers will have eyes but don’t give up on a tuber too soon as some varieties are notorious for taking forever to produce an eye.