DAHLIA DIGEST
DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO
Since 1930

VOL. 2012 ISSUE 3
May 2012

Friday, May 18 Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Busch Community Room
7501 Ridge Road, Parma
Just south of Pleasant Valley Road

Program:
PLANT
AUCTION
Hi Gang,

What a busy extended weekend May 17-20 will be with dahlia plant sales at Rockefeller Greenhouse Th 17—Sat 19; Holden Arboretum F 18 (members) - Sun 20; and our own Plant Auction, Friday May 18! Please stop by and help at Rockefeller or Holden. It’s fun to talk to folks about our favorite flower. Thanks.

Don’t forget to plant our Flower of the Year, Barbara Miner, as well as some of Norm Zaworski’s tubers. Be sure to encourage any youngsters (18 or under) to grow and show Sept. 7 at ParmaTown and October 6 at Petitti’s, Oakwood. There will be show space just for them.

Did you do your homework on learning the new ADS four-digit coding system? See the second installment in this Digest. I need to spend more time on learning the color codes.

Thanks to Mike Weber and others for conducting last month’s meeting in my absence. I understand the tuber auction went well. Here’s hoping that this month’s plant auction will be equally successful.

The program on bees and honey for June will be really entertaining and educational. Hope you can make it. We need program suggestions for October and November. Let me know what topic you would like to learn about. We are out of ideas!

Think Dahlias!  

Jerry
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
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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:
   Lilian Coluccio
   Jackie Evangelista
   Marilyn Weber

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
DSO FLOWER OF THE YEAR 2012

Barbara Miner

Can’t wait to be outdoors—soon! Hope my owner has tested my future garden soil home for pH and nutrients so that I can really show off this year!

SEE YOU SOON
Help DSO sell tubers and plants

May 17-19 9-4 Rockefeller Garden
May 18-20 10-4 Holden Arboretum
Getting used to the new
ADS Dahlia Classification system

This month—the rest of the forms:

60 BA Ball
61 MB Min Ball
62 P PomPon
70 ST Stellar
73 WL Waterlily
76 NX Novelty Double
80 PE Peony
82 AN Anemone
86 NO Novelty Open
90 CP Collarette
92 O Orchid
96 S Single
97 MS Mignon Single

Recall that for FD, ID, SC, C, IC, and LC, 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.

For the “other” forms, there are also 4 digits but the left-two are for the form and the right-two are for color.

Example: 7302 classifies a Waterlily, Yellow such as Sandia Joy.

QUIZ—Match # with variety:
1) 9010 Hollyhill Spiderwoman
2) 8206 Rembrandt
3) 9707 Alpen Diamond
4) 6211 Alpen Fury
5) 7613 Honka
6) 9202 Real Gold
COLOR:
01 is W
02 is Y
03 is OR
04 is PK
05 is DP (dark pink)
06 is R
07 is DR (dark red)
08 is L (lavender)
09 is PR
10 is LB (light blend)
11 is BR (bronze)
12 is FL (flame)
13 is DB (dark blend)
14 is V (variegated)
15 is BI (bi-color)
The JUDGE’s Corner...Ron Miner  baronminer@aol.com

The “season” is starting!  Hooray!  My yard is about as dry as I’ve ever seen it in May, but the garden is still too wet to rototill.  I use an old farmer’s way to determine that.  Turn over a shovel-full of soil.  Compact a softball size clump of it from the end of the shovel and drop it on the ground.  If it falls apart, you’re ready to go.  If it stays as a clump, it’s too wet.  Anybody know a better approach?

I want you to meet a couple people.  Bill Johnson is an Australian dahlia hybridizer with a specialty.  He only grows anemones.  He calls them “pincushions.”  The other guy you need to know is Loney Kennedy.  Loney, from WA, visited Bill in AU and brought home some of Bill’s seeds.  Loney subsequently sent me a couple packets of those AN seeds.  As you can see in Loney’s picture, he grows big dahlias as well.  Bill graciously sent us more seeds to augment those that Loney provided.  These two guys are the foundation for our 2012 seedling project for the Petitti show.  Thank you, gentlemen, for your generosity!

Here are a few examples of the seedlings in Bill’s garden.  The domes on the cultivars in those on the left are very well developed and have a traditional AN appearance.  The seedling on the right has an unusual dome that looks like a cross between the disk florets of a single and the tubular florets of the anemones.  As best I can tell from close examination of the picture, the disc florets are tubular.  As usual, the pictures are a poor substitute for actually being able to look a the flower!  The ray florets in the seedling on the right are certainly striking!  Are they bi-color or an orange with a red eye zone?
These pictures from Bill’s garden show a wide range of (guess what) anemones. The yellow and pink cultivars in the first picture sure look good enough to introduce. Let’s hope that we find a lot like those in our seedlings!

Our project will work like the previous seedling projects at Petitti’s. We’ll have a special section for the Johnson AN seedlings and we’ll pick the best and the worst anemones among those entries. We’ll also have sections for open-centered and fully double seedlings from previous projects and your own seedling beds. The evaluations for the best (and worst AN) seedling will be done in the context of a judging seminar. The seminars are fun—and you’ll learn some things about a dahlia form we don’t often grow and enjoy.

We will distribute the AN seedlings at the next DSO meeting, so be sure to be there! As usual, you will have the right to name and introduce as your own the new cultivars you get from the seeds. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a new cultivar to name after your spouse or your grandchild? I’ve certainly enjoyed doing that. Try it; you’ll like it!

Next month’s column will cover the criteria for classifying and for judging the form of anemone dahlias. Your assignments in the meantime are to get out your new Classification and Handbook of Dahlias and check out the definition of Anemone, get yourself to the next DSO meeting to collect the seedlings, and start thinking about the name you might want to give that new introduction you could get at the meeting.
Improving Your Soil

The first step to improving soil is to determine what it needs. Poor drainage is fairly obvious, but to detect a nutrient deficiency you should have your soil tested by a professional service. In our March meeting, Randy and Sharon mentioned that they use Spectrum Analytic Inc. in Washington Court House, Ohio. www.spectrumanalytic.com To test pH, meters and home kits are available at your local garden center.

Recall that pH is a measurement of the alkalinity or acidity of soil. Its scale is 1-14 with 7, neutral. pH below 7 is acidic; above 7 is alkaline. Technically, pH is a gauge of the hydrogen-ion concentration in the soil. Dahlias prefer pH levels from 6.5—7.0.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditioner</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>Nutrients depend on what materials were composted; improves soil texture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builder’s sand</td>
<td>Improves drainage and helps loosen soil, but do not use in clay soils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peat moss</td>
<td>Helps loosen heavy soils; improves ability of soil to hold moisture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composted manure</td>
<td>Rich in nitrogen; improves drainage and moisture retention in soil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limestone</td>
<td>Dolomite lime contains calcium and magnesium, helps lower soil acidity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground wood or sawdust</td>
<td>Improves soil texture, making it more airy, aids in soil drainage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaf mold</td>
<td>Contains nitrogen and potassium; nutrients are released slowly in soil</td>
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Dahlias Q&A

Q: When should I pinch out the middle growth?
A: As the dahlia plant grows, it produces pairs of leaves on either side of the stalk. The first pair of leaves are called “cotyledon” leaves and are to be ignored. Above the cotyledon leaves, count the number of leaf pairs. Pinch (top) the middle growth keeping the following number of leaf pairs on the stalk. A and AA 2-3; B 3-4; BB 4-5; M 4-6; Ball 5.

Q: Why should I pinch out or “top” the middle growth?
A: The basic reasons are to promote lateral growth, to encourage a bushier plant, and to produce blooms of the proper size.

Q: Should I mulch or not mulch around my dahlias?
A: The downside to mulching is that slugs find mulch to be a comfortable home. The upside is that a well-weathered organic mulch will benefit your plants. But don’t overdue it. Two to three inches is plenty.

Q: When I unpacked some of my stored tubers, they had long curvy white growths. What should I do?
A: Since we really want a nice straight dahlia plant, the “curvy” growth is less than desirable. Cut it off. The tuber should produce another growth. Next year, try to check your tubers earlier to catch them as eyes “pop.”

Q: How can I get rid of aphids?
A: A strong stream of water will knock them off your leaves and blooms, but be careful not do damage your buds and blooms by doing so. Another method is to spread a sudsy mixture of dish soap and water
on the stems of the plant. Try a little bit first to make sure the plant tolerates the soap. The soap leaves the stems sticky which is unappealing to aphids. There are insecticidal soaps and chemical pesticides available at garden centers. Try environmentally-friendly ones first.

Q: Where can I find pictures of various varieties of dahlias?
A: www.dahlias.net

Q: I’ve heard that being a member of the American Dahlia Society is a worthwhile thing to do.
A: Yes indeed, it is. The quarterly ADS Bulletin is packed with very interesting articles. It also contains advertisements and information on many dahlia suppliers. You get a copy of the Classification Book that lists pertinent information on hundreds of dahlias. And besides, it feels good to support the national professional organization that promotes our favorite bloom. Cost is $24 a year for ADS single and $27 for ADS family. Membership to our DSO is an additional $10.

Make check out to Dahlia Society of Ohio and mail to: John and Joann Bendokaitis, 17182 Eastview Drive, Chagrin Falls OH 44023.

Thanks for asking!

Q:
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
DAHLIA SOCIETY of OHIO
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