ANNUAL PLANT SALE

FRIDAY, MAY 16 MEETING
7:30 p.m.
BUSCH COMMUNITY ROOM
7501 RIDGE ROAD, PARMA
JUST SOUTH OF PLEASANT VALLEY ROAD

DAHLIA DIGEST
DAHLIA SOCIETY OF OHIO
SINCE 1930

VOL. 2014 ISSUE 3
MAY 2014

ANNUAL PLANT AUCTION
Hi Folks,

Looks as though Mother Nature continues to hold us hostage with the continuing damp and cold weather. Not conducive to getting our tubers in the ground. The silver lining to this is that it gives us a little more time to locate those “special tubers/plants” that will give our garden that extra flair.

That leads me to make everyone aware of our sales coming up on the weekend of May 15-17. With a good variety of plants at Willoway, especially “AA” & “A” sizes, there should be good selections for our 3 plant sale locations. Rockefeller Greenhouse’s sale runs from May 15-17, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Holden Arboretum’s sale is May 16-18, noon-5 p.m. on the 16th and 9:00-4:00 the remaining 2 days. Our own sale will be at our meeting on the 16th. A very busy span of 4 days! Please try to donate an hour or so at any of the sites, it would be appreciated. We also will have a good quantity available of the Flower of the Year - “Just Peachy.” This would be a good opportunity for those of you who have never shown at a show to get your feet wet!

At our May meeting, our Recommendation Committee will have a proposal regarding the subject of DSO possibly hosting the 2015 Midwest show. Your opinions regarding this subject are needed so please try to attend the meeting.

That’s it for now so let’s hope the weather cooperates and we’ll all soon be able to get those prized tubers/plants in the ground! Hopefully we’ll see you at our sales, both as customers and volunteers! Thanks in advance.

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
Emily Halderman, Alexandra Kermode

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  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
Just Peachy
2014 DSO Flower of the Year

Planting Notes

- Dahlias like slightly acidic soil, pH around 6.7. Neutral is 7. Sulfur decreases and lime increases pH level. Test your soil.
- We tend to get “ants in our pants” in getting our tubers/plants into the ground. Although the chance of frost for most of us is low after May 17, tubers/plants won’t really do much until the soil is warm (60F). Many of us wait until Memorial Day.
- For sure, if your soil is wet, you run the risk of tubers rotting. Wait until your soil is workable.
- If you are planting bare tubers in the ground, dig a hole 4-6” deep. One recommendation is to work a handful of bone meal into the soil then put the tuber horizontally in the bottom of the hole. If the tuber has a spindly growth, cut it back to an inch or so. Cover with loose soil. Do not water until growth appears.
- Be sure to stake your tuber at planting time.
- Slugs have been watching your hard work, so prevent them from making you miserable. Use your favorite method to deter/kill them.
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

PLEASE WORK AN HOUR OR TWO AT A SALE. THANKS! Call Dave if have questions.

JUDGING SEMINARS
• Picnic site August 23
• Petitti Show October 4
• Ron’s garden September 14
Some of you will remember a discussion at the DSO show last September where there was some disagreement on the relative importance of faults associated with foliage and stems. I hope you DSO judges out there are now thinking that the relative importance of those attributes is pretty obvious. Foliage and Stem are equally important and each is about half as important as Color and one-third as important as Form. That is because when you are judging a seedling, Stem and Foliage are each 10 points, while Color is 22 points and Form is 28 points. If that is what you are thinking, you are right!

The translation of those principles to an actual judging situation at a dahlia show, however, can lead to differing opinions. What should you do in that situation? The basic answer to that question is also pretty straightforward; you listen to and respect the opinions of the other judges on your team, present your views based on your understanding of Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD), and then adopt the majority view. The consequence for me of the discussion at the show was a nice conversation with our guest, Wayne Shantz, while we looked at some blooms on my deck the following Tuesday.

Here are a couple of the blooms we talked about. Ignore the blooms and the staging to the extent you can. :-) What do you think about the foliage of the two “entries?” You might want to have your CHD in your hand; we did. If you were looking at either one of the entries, you would probably say that the foliage is pretty uniform and balanced. It is clean and looks reasonably “luxuriant.” When you get to “good proportion,” you might wonder if the pair of leaves on the left were a little small and if the pair on the right were a little large for the length...
of the stem. Looking at the two of them side-by-side certainly emphasizes that difference between the two.

Recall that the GJD tells us that the length of the stem should be about 1.5 times as long as the spread of the first pair of leaves. In that context, it is clear that the leaves on the entry on the right are way too big. Those on the entry on the left may be a little short. Back in the old days, before I watched Wayne and Eleanor’s Judging Seminar DVD, I told you (incorrectly) that the length of the stem should about 1.5 times the diameter of the bloom. That is what the old judging manual said. (The current manual also says that the length of the stem, for small blooms like these, can be longer than the diameter of the bloom.)

If the two blooms were competing head-to-head in a show and the only issue that mattered was the foliage, which would you pick as the winner? Wayne and I concluded it was a tie. Wayne would have penalized either 1.5 points (passing) for foliage as a three-bloom SBE entry; I would have penalized them 2 points (failing, but close).

The foliage on the bloom at the right is obviously not great. The leaves at the lovely bend in the stem are not a pair of leaves; they are on petiole (leaf stem) that comes off the bloom’s stem at the bend. They are not a pair of leaves. If you had that entry in your section at the show, what would you do with it? Once you conclude that it does not have a pair of leaves, you need to impose a heavy penalty. ADS requires a pair of leaves for exhibition. In that context, imposing a penalty of –10 would no be unreasonable. Remember to write the reason for the penalty on the show tag so the exhibitor understands the basis for the team’s decision.

Here’s a nice pair of leaves from the same plant (different entry) that meet the requirement.
The entry at the right has a pair of leaves, too, but “nice” is probably not the best adjective for at least one pair of them. Does “huge” come to mind? The bottom pair of leaves are actually fine; they’re balanced, composite, and perhaps on the large size. In fact, if the upper pair of leaves weren’t there, the foliage would be pretty good. The upper pair of leaves, however, are just way too big. The spur leaf, or pig ear is also way too big to be ignored. Wayne’s idea for a penalty on the foliage here was –2 or –3, i.e., well below passing. He also suggested that the foliage reflected an excess of nitrogen in the soil. It was cut from my lasagna bed and there could well have had a lot of nitrogen available in that compost!

Here are two pictures of the foliage on another entry. First, note that the size of the foliage is consistent with the length of the stem; that is, the spread of the foliage is about 1.5 times the length of the stem. Further, the stem is perhaps 1.5 to 2 times the diameter of the bloom. Thus, the proportions among bloom diameter, stem length, and the size of the foliage are pretty good. So does this guy deserve a 10? The answer is no. The lower picture makes it clear that the pig ear is too big. If it were small and more subtle it could be ignored. If it were smaller and the stem longer, it might actually improve the appearance of the entry. Here, however, it is just simply too big. In addition, take a look at the pair of
leaves in the lower picture. They are neither composite nor single. They are a bit of a cross between the two. On the other hand, the two halves are pretty similar and would be balanced if only they were directly opposite one-another on the stem. Note, however, that is not the case. OK, so the foliage isn’t perfect; how big is the penalty for all of those problems? Wayne and I agreed that the foliage “passes,” but not by much. That is, a penalty of about 1.5 points would be appropriate.

The bottom line is that foliage is an important part of the evaluation of an entry. It needs not only to meet its own basic requirements (clean, good color, equal and opposite, turgid) but it must also provide good proportion to the stem and the bloom in the entry.

In the Midwest, we tend to complicate the evaluation by using two or even three sets of leaves on an entry. There are no specific or additional ADS judging guidelines to use in that situation. My perspective on it is that the outline of the additional foliage should form a triangle with the bloom; that is, it should taper to the top of the entry like a Christmas tree would. The additional leaves should also appear at right angles to the top pair just as the top pair should be at right angles to the face of the bloom. Be sure, if you choose to use more than the minimum required pair of leaves, that the additional foliage contributes to the appearance of the entry and that it does not detract from the main event—the bloom.

As you work on laying out your garden for this summer, make sure to leave some space for those Blossom Gulch seedlings from last year. The second-year BG seedlings will be the basis for the Judging Seminar at Petitti’s in the fall.

We will have two additional seminars this season. Jerry Moreno and Dave Cap will manage the seminar at the picnic. The general plan for that seminar will be a Trial Garden simulation. The third seminar will be on the evaluation of open-centered cultivars and will be in my garden. September 14 is the target date for that “seedling bed” judging project. I hope to be able to set up both SBE and TG evaluations of the same cultivars. You can help me to figure out which of those wonderful Blossom Gulch children (oops, I mean seedlings) I can let go!

Ron
When we think of great DSO dahlia growers and mentors over the years, Russ and Virginia Conrad certainly come to mind. Russ was born on a dairy farm in Burlington, Kentucky, the fourth of eight children. They had a large vegetable garden in which his mother included a half-row of dahlias, the seed was thus planted, so to speak. Virginia and he were married in 1959. She was Director of Christian Ed at a church in Lexington. They have two daughters Jean (a middle school English teacher in Hilliard) and Janet (a Professor of Physics at MIT). Janet continues to grow dahlias having shown at DSO shows as a child. The Conrads have two granddaughters and a great-grandson.

After one year of college, Russ became a WWII draftee into the US Navy. Afterwards he earned a degree in Agriculture from the U of Kentucky along with an MS and PhD in 1952 from The Ohio State University. His 37 year career in academia began with a joint appointment at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station and OSU. (The Station is now named Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, OARDC.) On his way to gaining the rank of Full Professor, he published 160 scientific papers on dairy cattle nutrition and physiology and as many popular articles for farmers and the agricultural industry. In his last three years, he served as the Associate Director of the OARDC as administrator of the Wooster Facility and its 24 laboratories.

When asked how he got started in dahlias, he replied “The dahlia enterprise has been a joint family project for Virginia and me. I started with a couple varieties
from a colleague who was doing an experiment with E. J. Wind. I later purchased six more from Mr. Wind. Virginia decided we should show at the Wayne County Fair. I entered an excellent bloom named *Brides Bouquet*, and we won Best of Show.” Well, for those who know the Conrads, there were many, many shows thereafter for which they were on courts of honor. I recall all too well losing to them consistently with one of my favorites, *Mary Karen Z.*

Russ and Virginia visited the DSO show in 1971 and joined the society in 1973 and ADS later. They give a lot of credit to those who helped them show including Nick Kazopas, Glenn Ruth, Rudy Bredenbeck, and Frank Ilk.

Among their favorite varieties are *Billy, Mary Jo, Brookside Cheri,* and *Kenora Wildfire.* “When we were younger we grew 150 plants. Now we grow 32.” They store their tubers in polystyrene flower boxes and start their dahlias in a glass enclosed patio in April.

Virginia’s hobbies are reading and music. Russ’ is working mathematical equations, AH, I knew I liked Russ for more than one reason!
Notes of the April 18, 2014 Meeting by Sarah Thompson
See full minutes on our website.

- Mike Weber opened the meeting at 7:43. 40 were present.
- Mike announced the recent passing of Jim Chuey’s brother, Carl, who was a professor of biology at Youngstown State.
- Members were encouraged to complete the survey online regarding the December holiday meeting. A decision needs to be made soon regarding location.
- The meeting minutes of March 21 were approved. Sharon agreed to have the full versions posted on the website. Highlights will continue to be published in the Digest.
- Treasurer: Sharon mentioned that $494 was made at the Petitti’s tuber sale.
- Jim Thompson and Dave Cap asked for volunteers to sign up for the plant and tuber sales to be held at Rockefeller Greenhouse and the Holden Arboretum. They also confirmed that our September DSO show will be at Summit Mall in Fairlawn.
- MaryAnn Moreno reported that 61 Digests were mailed by postal mail; 14 members have agreed to receive the Digest by email to save on postage. Sharon mentioned that there are currently 130 paid members.
- Jerry Moreno encouraged membership in the American Dahlia Society. The ADS Bulletin, published quarterly, is filled with helpful articles on dahlia culture, along with advertising information from nurseries on new introductions and older varieties. Membership forms are at the end of the Digest.
- Mike announced that the work put forth by Dave, Doc, and himself at Willoway has resulted in 211 cuttings to date. If anyone has the desire to assist in the upcoming weeks with additional cuttings, a sign-up sheet was passed around.
• A motion was made by Jerry Moreno and seconded by Jim Thompson to donate $400 to the Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society for their hosting of the 2014 Midwest show. Motion passed without objection.
• Doc Hemminger reported that the dahlia garden project at the Miller Nature Preserve in Avon is moving along nicely. Soil from Willoway Nursery will be delivered soon. Sharon agreed to post progress pictures of the garden on the website.
• Mike said that he had received a call from an employee at the Home Depot in Cuyahoga Falls who requested that DSO hold a display in her store sometime in September. Mike, Dave, and Jim will explore the request, location, and options.
• Randy Foith is the new president of the Midwest Dahlia Conference. He discussed that for various reasons there is currently no host for the Midwest 2015 show. He asked if DSO would consider hosting the show. Initial reaction was that there was not enough time to plan it. A committee will be formed to pursue the possibility. It may happen that there will not be a Midwest show in 2015 noting that the national show is in New York Sept. 18-20.
• The annual tuber show was conducted mainly by Mike and Doc. Gross receipts were $854. Tubers not sold will be made available at the May sales or started in pots to produce plants.
NAME THESE DAHLIAS
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.

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