

From the PNDC President...

What a great year for our favorite flower! At our show in Portland, I noticed a marked increase in the number of members participating in the design section. Bringing dahlias indoor to amplify their beauty and appeal. A floral arrangement showcases the dahlias ability to convey a message along with the overall theme of the floral design. With the dahlia's rich diversity in color, size and form, they can speak volumes. Our ADS seedling bench evaluation had more than forty entries. Yes, that would be triple entries. With so many growers working to develop new cultivars, we have a bright future of stars of tomorrow.

Speaking of seedlings...Our conference members did very well with the ADS medals. Ted and Margaret Kennedy garnered three (3) Derrill Hart Medals for their Trail Ground Entries and Wayne Lobaugh won the Trial Garden Evie Gullikson Medal for his entries of Lo Red-eye. In the ADS seedling bench evaluations Mike and Kathy Iler and Ted and Margaret Kennedy each won a Lynn B. Dudley Medal for their high scoring entries. The Evie Gullikson Medal for seedling bench evaluation of all other types was won by the Lobaugh's entries of Lo-Purple. Please see your December ADS Bulletin for more information concerning all the national winning seedlings.

For many years our friend, Tom Ball, has worked long and hard for the benefit of our dahlia organization. Tom for many years served as Judge's Evaluation Chair. For the last few years Tom has worked as your PNDC secretary. Tom has decided to step down as Secretary. His many contributions and years of experience will be sorely missed. I will especially miss his broad smile and

upbeat personality. Thank you to Tom for all your contributions to the PNDC. I'd like to thank Cheryle Hawkins of Lane County for agreeing to serve as your new PNDC Secretary and Newsletter Editor.

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, April 5th** the date of our PNDC Spring meeting and Auction which will be again held in **Castle Rock, Washington**. We are again indebted to Teresa Bergman for making the arrangements.

The 2014 growing season will be highlight by yet another ADS National Show in our growing region. The show will be in Tacoma on Labor Day weekend. There is a link to the National Show website from the ADS website.

Our Victoria Society will be proudly hosting your 2014 PNDC show and banquet in mid -August. We very much look forward to seeing our Canadian Dahlia Growing Friends and taking in the sights and attractions Victoria has to offer.

Now is the time to start planning and strategizing your plan for this year's garden. Which winners do you grow better than most other growers? Which new introductions have the potential for you to get them to the head table?

Which size and form classes do you specialize in? Do you have the top winning varieties in your specialty? Most of the commercial grower's websites have been updated for the 2014 season. Some of the newer introductions may be in short supply and likely to sell out quickly. Please order early to avoid disappointment.

Best wishes to you all,
Mike Riordan, PNDC President

PNDC Spring Meeting, April 5th

The PNDC Spring meeting will be held at Parker's Restaurant in Castle Rock, WA on Saturday, April 5th. Parker's is located at 1300 Mt St Helens Way NE, Castle Rock, WA 98611. From I-5 going north, take exit 49, head east past the Shell Station and strip mall (about a quarter mile). Parker's Restaurant is on the right. Their phone number is 360-967-2263. A special lunch menu for our group is included with this newsletter.

Choose your lunch selection and e-mail Teresa Bergman with your lunch choice: (larryteresa@msn.com) . This helps out Parker's so they can plan for the right amount of provisions.

Everyone will pay individually for their meal.
Thanks Teresa for making these arrangements!

Dear PNDC Friends



Due to changes within the Seattle Dahlia Society I can no longer carry on as Secretary of the PNDC. Cheryle Hawkins has graciously stepped up to carry on as Secretary. I thank her for volunteering to take on this position.

I wish to thank the members of the PNDC for their help and cooperation while I was Secretary. I have made many friends within the PNDC during my years in the organization and I sincerely hope that these friendships will endure.

Respectfully,
Tom Ball

Bill Mishler Honored with Gold Medal

by Cheryle Hawkins

At the Fall PNDC meeting and banquet, held September 14th in Eugene, Oregon, the PNDC Gold Medal was awarded to Bill Mishler in recognition and appreciation of his dedication to establishing the Canby Dahlia Trial Garden.



Bill was the driving force behind the Canby Trial Garden from the very beginning - first with his gentle but firm persuasion to gain the support of the Portland Dahlia Society for this effort. Secondly, his passion for this project convinced Nick Gitts and family to provide the garden its home at Swan Island Dahlias. They agreed to donate the space and labor to water, weed and fertilize the garden which is adjacent to their show gardens. In 2013 the Canby Trial Garden celebrated 10 years of service with Bill at the helm as Trial Garden Director. His willingness to drive hundreds of miles a year to plant, maintain and judge seedling entries has provided a grand Oregon garden destination for many dahlia aficionados.

A good friend of Bill's describes him as "one of the most personable people you will meet at a dahlia function. He willingly gives advice, time, and is often a good tease to those he meets. I have been on the receiving end of those teases and the best part is that he takes as well as he gives, often with a devilish twinkle in his eye. Bill's charisma has endeared him to many".

Because of his poor health, Bill was unable to attend the banquet so Ted Kennedy accepted the award on Bill's behalf. Those attending the banquet also signed a card to Bill sending him their best wishes and warm regards.

Trial Garden Update, by Larry Smith

Although Bill Mishler resigned as Trial Director, Portland Dahlia Society remains fully committed to maintaining sponsorship and operation of the Canby Trial Garden. Our plan for 2014 will be to manage it by committee and treat it as a clubwide project. Teresa Bergman will assume the title of interim Director and will be responsible for completing the required reports. Mark Oldenkamp has agreed to accept any tubers shipped as well as entry fees.

We have a good number of Senior Judges and others stepping up to manage the various tasks. Ted Kennedy and Linda Taylor have agreed to be our grooming coordinators and will notify judges when there are cultivars in prime condition to be judged. As part of our club's commitment, we will schedule club work parties on specific days and times to groom and prepare the garden for judging. Out of this process we hope to find a Senior Judge who is willing to come forward and take on the permanent job of Superintendent.

We thank Bill Mishler for not only his years of dedicated and faithful service, but also his commitment in the initial establishment of the Canby Trial Garden. Bill gave us the push in the beginning to get the garden up and running, we couldn't have done it without him.

From the Secretary/Editor

by Cheryle Hawkins, PNDC Secretary

You may notice the new name and new look of the PNDC newsletter. As your new editor, I decided to change the name so it would stand out from the ADS Bulletin. I invite each society to submit their society information to me for each Dahlia Times issue that will be sent in February, June, and November. I will always send a reminder in advance. I am interested in hearing suggestions for content as well. My wish for the Dahlia Times is to provide the pertinent news of each dahlia society, and articles written for the dahlia-interested. Also, I look forward to hearing from folks and developing new friendships..

As the PNDC Secretary, one of my duties is to gather the agenda items for each PNDC meeting. On that note, please send me your ideas for agenda items at our April 5th meeting to icehawk@q.com. You may also reach me at 541-461-8004.

The Lane County Dahlia Society is where I hail from and I've been involved since 2004 with my husband, Michael Canning. We grow about 220 dahlias using the lasagna bed method (see Wayne's article).

From The Treasurer, by Elva Sellens

If you haven't renewed your PNDC dues through your dahlia society, you may still do so by mailing them to Elva Sellens at: 2651 Loma Vista Drive; Roseburg, OR 97471. Pacific Northwest Dahlia Conference dues are \$10 per person or \$15 per family. The PNDC hosts 2 trial gardens: Canby Trial Garden in Canby, Oregon, and Victoria Trial Garden on Canada's Vancouver Island.

The PNDC provides training for judges, sponsors an annual conference show, and issues three newsletters a year. Note, if you participate as a show judge, you must also be a member of PNDC and ADS.

Seeking Gold Medal candidates

by Cheryle Hawkins

Each year the PNDC Executive Board seeks to recognize an individual or couple with the Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement. By way of example, this could be someone who has mentored newcomers to the world of dahlia exhibition and/or developed new dahlias and introduced them into commerce. An individual that has been instrumental in recruiting a number of new members for a society and tirelessly promotes the idea of sharing their own knowledge and experience with others would be very worthy. So where is our recipient for 2014? That, my fellow members is up to you.

Any PNDC member or society is invited to nominate someone who is not a member of their own society. A nomination should describe the candidate's achievements and contributions to the dahlia society, to the PNDC, or to dahlias as a whole. Please consider nominating someone for consideration at our April 5th spring meeting. Contact your PNDC delegates with your input and suggestions or submit your nomination by e-mail to the PNDC Secretary, Cheryle Hawkins, at icehawk.com. To view a list of past award recipients, visit the PNDC website at www.pndcdahlia.com.

The Dahlia Show in Review by Larry Smith, President, Portland Dahlia Society

From my perspective as a senior judge with over 20 years experience showing dahlias at ADS shows, 2013 was shaping up to be a stellar year. The Pacific Northwest was blessed with the best early growing conditions in recent memory and I was armed with several new-to-me varieties with great show potential. I got ready to clear space in my trophy case to make room for all of the anticipated loot that I would win at the shows.

Well, as they say, the best laid plans..... Just before our local Portland show on Labor Day weekend, we were surprised by unseasonable downpours. Looking upon the blooms in my patch, one word came to mind: compost!

Oh, well, must support our show, so I managed to wrangle about 85 entries. After judging was complete, I wasn't surprised to find a good many of my entry tags sporting checkmarks (signifying "you lose") and a good number of second place stickers. Even so, 25 or so had blue first place stickers. Four of those advanced to the head table, some receiving votes for "Best in Show," which I learned by eavesdropping on the final round of head table judging. Not too bad for "compost!" Good results are addictive and, being groggy after an all night session staging blooms, I made plans for the following week to go to the South Sound show with Adrienne Hale, an enthusiastic first time exhibitor/candidate judge. She had just been notified that she had won Novice Sweepstakes and was eager to attend more shows.

Having gone to South Sound show before, I knew it would be competitive. Growing conditions up north are superior and top notch growers/exhibitors from all around the Sound bring their best. Unfortunately, reports of torrential downpours and wind overnight on Thursday materialized, well over 1.5 inches of rain fell in Portland.

Instead of bounding out of bed at first light on Friday to begin the harvest, I covered with my head under the covers. There wouldn't be anything worth exhibiting anyway, my patch was walloped even worse than the week before. I might have opted to hoist the white flag and stay home had I not made plans to go with Adrienne, but what message would that send to a new exhibitor?

I summoned the courage to slink out at 10:30 a.m. and pick anything that didn't look half dead, carefully shaking the water off, ending up with about 60 less-than-half-dead exhibits. To my surprise, they won more blue ribbons than at the Portland show and three of them made it to the head table. Adrienne pointed out that my Barberry Red Dwarf was gracing the top of the head table as Best Fully Double Bloom in Show...the first time one of my flowers had ever won that honor, and at a Washington show! Now I can die fulfilled, Fully Double BIS was on my bucket list! The rosette that came with it is very impressive, at least 30 inches long, colorful and glitzy, lacking only neon lights. I share this honor with my fellow Portland Dahlia Society members...as we support, encourage, and egg one another on throughout the year, I feel that any such honor bestowed upon one of us belongs to us all.

Lane County Show came the following week and I agreed to go there with another new novice exhibitor/candidate judge, Linda Taylor. These newbies have such glee about what they are learning, it sucks us

old timers right in and relights our fires! The days prior to this show featured hot, humid temperatures up to 20 degrees above normal and predicted strong east winds.

Fortunately, the winds did not materialize, but the bright sun had drained the vibrant colors out of many of the best varieties in my unprotected patch. Oh, well, the show must go, I managed to come up with about 60 entries, four which somehow advanced to the head table. Adrienne again won Novice Sweepstakes.

Looking back on this crazy show season, I am amazed that we weren't beset by locusts! All in all, the experience was fun and this old dog learned (and relearned) a few tricks. First, going in with limited expectations works well. Max Ollieu, one of our club's superior growers/exhibitors who turns out otherworldly blooms sets a goal of keeping from getting "skunked" (having no entries advance to the head table). Max never will be skunked and always seems surprised and happy with his results. I took a similar approach and it worked, I was delighted with my results this year, even as compared to my preseason dreams. Secondly, I learned that even if I am not 100% happy with a bloom, show it anyway. Whenever I prepare blooms for a show, I hear fellow PDS member Gary Murphy's voice echo with one of his favorite advisements: "Take what you have, let the judge decide." Linda Taylor reminded me that any bloom adds color to the show. Often, I find that some judge may be more impressed with it than I am and sometimes a bloom that I considered leaving at home ends up on the head table! Finally, this show season reaffirmed how satisfying it can be to exhibit blooms to the best of my ability, regardless of challenging conditions, and to encourage others who are interested in giving it a try. For those who have never shown a bloom, I highly recommend it. It is habit forming, as is the camaraderie of hobnobbing with fellow dahlia enthusiasts and helping one another achieve our dahlia nirvana.

My goal for next year is to find a way to keep blooms looking fresh longer. I want to stage them earlier in order to ensure that I am able to get at least a few hours of sleep on Friday nights during show season. I also plan to work on getting a flower on the head table at a National Show, the next one of which will be held just up the road from Portland, in Tacoma. That would be one more thing to cross off my bucket list!

ADS Image Library - by Claudia Biggs

The 2014 ADS New Introduction program is now ready and available for purchase. You can order online from the ADS web site or contact me directly at 509-326-1953 or dbiggs@mindspring.com There are two versions again this year. The automated program costs \$13 and the deluxe version, which includes a second disc of low resolution photos, is \$20.

<http://www.dahlia.org/index.php?page=ads-store-2>

News from Nanaimo.... by Marge Conn

Our society holds regular monthly meetings from February to October at the GR Paine Horticultural Training Center in Nanaimo. This center is run by Vancouver Island University. We keep a small display garden of dahlias there. In the fall we dig up the dahlia tubers and store them to sell at our annual tuber sale in the spring. As these are 'club' tubers, the proceeds go to the club. The process of planting the garden and digging up the tubers serves as a hands on learning experience for new members. Rubbing elbows is always a great way to get to know one another better.

We have 25-30 members in our club. Although we all work on attracting new members, our most effective draw is our tuber sale and our show (August 23-24), both held at the Country Club Centre in Nanaimo. Jim Gilchrist also brings in people that he meets when he sells his dahlias and glads at the Cedar Farmer's market.

Our meetings consist of a business meeting followed by an informative program. Our senior members share their experience with new members and we have some interesting guest speakers.

Our flowers of the year for 2014 for our annual show are Mon Cher'e introduced by Paul McKittrick of Victoria society and Hamari Accord. Our Nanaimo club includes gladiolas also at our show. The glad for this year is Hendrika.

One of our members, Connie has a commercial dahlia garden and a fantastic site on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Connies.Dahlias>. She posts photos of all of her dahlias as they come into bloom. She also posts informative photos of processes such as cutting and storing. She sells dahlia tubers. This is a wonderful opportunity for small growers who don't want to go through the expense of bringing tubers

through the US border.

As a relatively new member I really appreciate these opportunities to learn from others. Many years ago, I innocently bought my first dahlia, Park Princess which proved to be very prolific. My dahlia collection grew from there. I moved several times, each time praying that our move would be at a time which would allow me to bring my dahlias.

Now I live in a retirement bungalow with a small, low maintenance yard. I get quite a giggle when a young man knocks on the front door, offering to aerate our lawn. If he looked around he would see that we have no lawn, just gravel with an edging bed. Maybe he thinks there is a lawn in the back, but no...it is full of dahlias, squeezed in everywhere. There are five raised beds. They started out as perennial beds but every year another gets taken over by dahlias. They also jump into containers and the patio is gradually disappearing under tubs of dahlias.

Like many others, I am addicted to dahlias. I grow 80 varieties in that small back yard. I don't compete yet as I am a fairly casual gardener growing for the love of dahlias and the luxury of having them in every room of the house. With grandchildren and pets out there, I am reluctant to do much in the way of chemical controls. Take a peek at the a photo of my grand daughter, Gabby.

In planning your next trip, why not consider coming to beautiful BC and Vancouver Island. For more information and contacts, visit our website at www.nainamo.org where you can also get information on where to purchase tubers, glad corms and information on the process of digging, splitting, and storing of dahlia tubers as well as how to take cuttings.

News from Seattle Dahlia Society by Nicki Tran

New Year Greetings! All for the love of dahlias! Mother Nature surprised us with an early freeze before Thanksgiving when some of us still had tubers in the ground. Uh oh! That got us moving things along a lot quicker. I personally was still digging up the last few in a mild hail storm. I vowed to start digging earlier next year.

Our November meeting was packed with info about digging, dividing and storing our beloved dahlias. It never ceases to amaze me that there are always new techniques to be learned. Last spring, member Dick Williams brought some seeds from his flowers to our meeting so we could try our hand at growing seedlings. At our November meeting we held our own seedling show. Dick selected a winning bloom and most challenged bloom. It was a lot of fun and gave us encouragement to try seedlings with our own flowers.

Thirty Three members attended our annual Christmas Potluck held in December. Once again, Doris Hansen

was our super event coordinator but we broke tradition this year and only let Tom Ball wear an apron for a short time. For years Tom has done more than his share of the prep work, cooking & cleaning and we thank him whole heartedly for that! Members enjoyed contributing dishes to share and pitching in wherever needed.

The SDS 2014 Election of Officers are::

Karen Lorentzen, President; Harvey Tatel, Vice President ; Kathy Ryan, Treasurer ; Becky Prokop, Recording Secretary ; Nicki Tran, Corresponding Sec.; Dave Blackmer, Ida Bonneywell, W.J. Taylor, Trustees.

Many thanks to Tom Ball for 20 plus years as an SDS officer! He has graciously supported our society in many ways. We will still be relying on his expertise with dahlias.

The Seattle Dahlia Society's 57th Annual Dahlia Show is September 6-7, held in the Lake City Community Center, Seattle. Our 2014 flower of the year is Verrone's Morning Star, a white novelty open. We welcome you to check out our website at www.seattledahliasociety.org

News from Victoria Dahlia Society by Teresa Thom

On July 29, Jean Vantreight a very active club member, had her 90th Birthday, she grows over 160 dahlias and puts many entries in our show. Club activities kept everyone busy in August, starting with judging a seedling bench. This was good practice for experienced and candidate judges, also for those who just want to learn more about what qualities make a good dahlia. Our August show went well, with over 640 entries. There were several new novices who entered this year, congratulations to Ryan and Paton who had several novice entries on the head table. Congrats to Connie Young-Davis who won the Best Triple in the show with "Clearview David", Best Single Flower of Show, "R Joan" won by Judy and Vern Stephens of Nanaimo. Many of our members also continued showing at Nanaimo, Vancouver, and at the local Saanich Fair.

September was our Parlour Show, with Jean Vantreight's entry, "Sno Ho Doris" winning the Hank Iverson plaque. This year many members grew seedlings, they were on display at the Parlour Show, we had a vote and Teresa Thom's pink collarette won the plaque for Best Seedling. This will be continued again next year, as there seemed lots of enthusiasm and interest for

those growing seedlings for the first time. Fall came, which included our annual tuber auction, which generated a nice amount to add to the bank account. The club Christmas dinner in December, a Chinese feast was enjoyed by the 35 who attended.

Our annual tuber sale will be on Saturday, April 12, at Knox Presbyterian Church, 2964 Richmond Rd, and Sunday, April 13th at West Shore Mall. We will have a busy season ahead hosting the P.N.D.C. Show, which is also the 68th year for the Victoria Dahlia Society. The dates are August 16th & 17th, waiting for confirmation from the West Shore Mall, where the show has been held for the past 2 years. Details of the show can be viewed closer to the date on our website: . The flowers of our 2014 show, will be for the single, "Hamari Accord", and triple, "Mon Cher-e ". The following weekend will be the Nanaimo Show, a 2 hour drive away from Victoria. We hope many of you will come to the show either enter some flowers or just come and have a look and tour around and see the sights, such as the renowned Butchart Gardens!!! Until then enjoy the short time left to relax before the next growing season begins. Visit us at: www.victoriadahliasociety.org

News from Lane County Dahlia Society by Michael Canning

Fellow Dahlia Nuts:

We watch the calendar turn from 2013 to 2014 and already the juices are beginning to flow for the first signs of Spring. The Lane County Dahlia Society wakes up on February 6th when we gather for the first meeting of the new year at the Campbell Senior Center in Eugene. We have a program-centered meeting the first Thursday of each month. If you are in our area, please drop in at our meeting - we'd love to see you.

In 2014 we look forward to hosting the Lane County Dahlia Show, September 13 -14. Our show flower is that amazingly bright bloom - Lakeview Glow. Keep this in mind as you begin planning what to grow in your dahlia garden.

The 2014 slate of officers being offered to our membership is: President - Lexa Cookson; Vice President - Camille Noel; Second Vice President & Newsletter

Editor- Cheryle Hawkins; Treasurer & ADS Rep - Phyllis Shafer, Corresponding Secretary - Michael Canning, Recording Secretary - to be decided.

In 2014 LCDS is committed to the continued development of the next generation of dahlia society officers. Though the membership rolls swelled to over 100 in 2013, we need to lift the next set of leaders for our group. It is sometimes a long road from meeting attendee to meeting planner. We are also very grateful to our membership for the support they provide all season - from tuber sales to show operations and more.

To get a nice feel for our organization visit our website at: lanecountydahliasociety.blogspot.com Thankyou to our president, Lexa Cookson, for producing the website and updating it with her creative photos of our show winners. Here's to the best garden season ever in 2014!

Southern Oregon Dahlia Society by Paulette Woodward

As we ended the 2013 year, we shared the pleasure of the dahlia growing season with the excitement of exhibiting by holding a photo contest. The category winners were: a) Dahlia Events & Personality - Debbie Jean; b) Artistic - Debbie Jean; c) Dahlia Gardens - Debbie Jean; d) Dahlia Blooms - Connie Gorsch (Fidalgo Julie). Thanks to all for the eye and the patience to see the interesting. One of the best photographers that we are grateful for is Elva Sellens. The incredible photos that she has loaned us for use at our tuber sale is such an asset!

We have new officers for 2014: President: Dave Parmeter; Vice President: Gary Swan; Secretary: Donna Hymer; and Treasurer: Paulette Woodward. It is with great appreciation to all who accept the responsibility of

serving as an officer. We wouldn't be without them. Thank you!

Here is an idea for other societies to try. Last spring, one of our members, Shinon Barclay, organized an art show. We worked through the art museum, the community college, local art organizations and other art/craft forms.

It was a month-long art exhibit held at the Coos Bay Library. This was a great off-season project for creating public interest and the pure enjoyment just to see what can be done with the dahlia as a subject. We send a special thank you to Tom Ball for the years that he kept the PNDC informed through producing the newsletter. It is of great help to be able to feed off of other's ideas and expand on it.

Breeding Dahlias, The Evaluation Process By Ted Kennedy



When one evaluates a dahlia seedling there are many factors that come into play and some are obvious and many less obvious. Dahlias have lots of genetic variation and many wonderful colors and forms appear in the seedling garden. Some fit into

the narrow confines of the dahlia classification system very well and others do not. If you are more than just a casual breeder, you will find that there are way too many very nice dahlia seedlings and that you cannot keep them all and somehow you have to choose among them. And that is the subject of this essay.

The first issue to consider is that you will evaluate your seedlings using your personal preferences. Your evaluation of a seedling will depend on your background and values. If you are a show person, you will be biased towards flowers that fit into the ADS Classifications and would have chance to win at the shows. If you are a cut flower seller or a florist you will favor flowers that would look good in a bouquet and would only use the ADS forms as a rough guide to describe the flower. And there are more personal preference biases than these two classic ones. I like flowers that have colors I like. I like flowers of a particular form and less so of other forms. And I like flowers that grow tall. All of these 'likes' affect how I evaluate a flower.

If you are breeding dahlias for yourself, none of what I said above makes much difference. Keep the ones you like. But if you are breeding dahlias for others or for their commercial value, you need to be aware of what other people want in a dahlia.

The easiest way to find out what other people like is

to have other people evaluate your seedlings. My wife and I both evaluate the same seedlings every year. We have noticed that we save flowers into three categories: He likes it. She likes it. And we both like it. Our best introductions have come from all three categories but of course the "both like it" has had a distinct edge. I should illustrate this with examples. Hollyhill Spiderwoman was strictly a "she likes it". Hollyhill Goldrush that won a medal was a "he likes it".

And if you can, have several people look at your seedlings. You may be very surprised by what they like.

We have a friend who is a senior judge come by and look at the seedlings. We now have another category of seedlings that we keep: "Senior judge likes".

And of course, the selection process above makes an assumption that if you or someone else likes a seedling that you will have the room to grow some of the flowers the next year to further evaluate them. If that is not the case, you will find that the person who likes it so much may well grow it the next year. Do not be shy about sharing your nice seedlings with others - especially those that are not your own personal favorites.

And some guidance for casual breeders:

- (1) if you have Giant Dahlia in your seedling patch, it is an automatic winner and should be grown a second year for evaluation.
- (2) If you have a ball dahlia, give it an extra chance.
- (3) If you have a dahlia in a form and color classification where there is no competition, keep it another year.
- (4) If the flower is just pretty and makes a nice cut flower, give it another chance or at least give it to cut flower person for evaluation.
- (5) If you like a flower, you can continue to grow it as long as you want no matter what anyone else thinks.

News from Wild Rivers Dahlia Society by Bob Chibante

Wild Rivers Dahlia Society made it through our first year! We would like to thank the PNDC and to all of you who attended our show, to those who sponsored and the volunteers who helped in our success. For many who attended, this was their first exposure to a formal dahlia show. We were even able to educate floral judges on what we look for in show-quality dahlias. Congratulations to those who won prizes in our raffle, including the grand prize - winners of a 2 night vacation rental on the beach. They were exhibitors from the valley. Education is the main reason we started this society. This offers the opportunity to those who want another venue to show blooms. After all, dahlias will show up early sometimes and leave us wishing "if I only had a show this week".

After a 2 month hiatus, our club will meet again in February. We are looking into the logistics of starting our own judging school. More information if it works out. Any input is greatly appreciated.

The effort now is on for our 2014 show to be held at the Event Center On The Beach, August 23rd & 24th.

Dahlia of the year will be River's Novelty, available from one of our sponsors, River's Dahlias. You can contact them at www.riversdahlias.com or 541-913-4400. If you are interested in being a show sponsor, please contact Bob at dahlias@charter.net.

Hope you have great success in storing tubers and getting ready for the next season. While you complain about digging and dividing, just remember, soon you will be digging and planting. Enjoy.

News from Douglas County Dahlia Society by Mark Nay

Our society had a nice year with each of us showing and winning awards. As of this date our show will be held September 20-21 however that date could change. We have not selected our flower of the year yet. We have a couple of new members who are very eager to learn and just might be showing this year too.

Organic Strategies By Wayne Shantz

In recent years, organic gardening has graduated from the outside into the mainstream. No longer does the agricultural community look askance at this changing mindset, and in many respects, it has become much more accepting of these good horticultural ideas and practices. On the home front, the LCDS recognizes that differing views of what it means to grow organic exist. Some growers hold strict views, avoiding any semblance of environmental disturbance, while other growers continue to employ some acceptable cultural techniques of years past, but at the same time, lean toward organic practices.



When one sees a good quantity of earthworms in the lasagna bed, one has accomplished one of the major goals for soil health. After employing layering, even with compacted soil, one will find that stakes can be pounded into the ground with ease. Earthworms will loosen the soil, tunnel in it, and may even go down a number of feet in search of food. In short, they build soil by relying on the soil food web for sustenance. When they have ample organic material at their disposal, they thrive and leave castings, which provide a valuable soil amendment.

No-till gardening: Tilling the ground, exposes weed seeds to sunlight and moisture, allowing them to germinate and grow. Tilling also creates a hard pan below the surface of the tilled ground, thereby creating water accumulation rather than deep soil nutrient penetration. If growers do not till, they can more readily control weeds. To till also reduces the amount of organic material at the soil's surface. Science has begun to turn a corner, and now emphasizes the important synergy of the soil food web. It recognizes that no-till gardening promotes an exceptional growing environment where the plant rooting area can use the work of microbes that employ fungi, bacteria, protozoa and earthworms more readily.

The first two years are the most difficult for gardening the no-till way. Clearing the ground of weeds and debris protects soil contamination and accommodates amending the soil by nutrient-rich compost and organic mulches. Some organic methods do exist, though, for deterring weeds before they go to seed, such as corn gluten. After getting the weeds under control and adding organic material, growers can then maintain their garden with much less effort. The no-till method activates the soil web to the extent that one will need to add few nutrients with the exception of some mineral and trace elements. A number of LCDS members have begun using a lasagna growing technique, also known as layering.

Lasagna gardening: When they lay thin sheets of organic materials on their chosen gardening location, they do not have to till first. What lasagna gardening visually suggests is a thin layer of organic materials similar to the lasagna procedures used in cooking where one encounters layers of meat, tomato sauce, cheese and pasta. To layer a lasagna bed properly, a grower adds a balance of nitrogen and carbon, both organic mediums. A good rule of thumb is 1 part high-nitrogen, such as freshly cut chemical-free lawn grass, to 3 or 4 parts high-carbon, such as shredded leaves. No magic formula exists for what they include for a layer in the established plot, but they must make sure that they do not make their layers too thick, four to six inches being ample.

Guidelines for a lasagna garden include:

1. Start your garden by laying down a thick, wetted newspaper overlapping carpet, which will deter weed growth and also protect the earthworm, which enjoys a dark, moist environment that protects from severe temperatures.
2. Use straw or hay as a second layer and then water well.
3. For a third layer, select a bale or two of peat moss, a relatively neutral ingredient.
4. After the peat moss (2 inches), apply a layer of grass clippings or like source of nitrogen. Composted manure also works, but do be careful when using manure.
5. Add chopped leaves to the mix and cover with mulch, such as a mint blend, composed of composted mint straw, chicken manure, and other ingredients that you buy from a local gardening supply company.
6. Before planting dahlia plants, you might also include several handfuls of alfalfa pellets. Some growers provide each plant with a can full of worm castings, while others add a composted steer manure.
7. To offset the order, you may add another layer of peat moss, leaves, grass clippings, or even add alfalfa hay. Use what you can easily find in your area.
8. Near the top, some growers add blood meal, making sure the layers have an ample supply of nitrogen in order to create adequate heat.
9. Make sure to also water adequately after you have applied each layer.
10. Upon completing the layering, cover with a black plastic, using rocks or something heavy to hold the plastic securely, and cook the bed for approximately six weeks. (See Patricia Lanza, *Lasagna Gardening*, Rodale, 1998)

In a sense, growers have prepared their own raised bed without using any structure. After using this method for several seasons, they may want to plant a fall cover crop, such as annual alfalfa or buckwheat. In the spring, they will then cut down the crop, adding it to the prepared bed for spring planting. They always keep the garden covered with mulch. To discourage weeds only makes sense. Additionally, the LCDS does not recommend that you use bark mulch, which inhibits dahlia growth. It contains turpentine and usually takes several years to break down.

Organic Strategies continued



Actively Aerated Compost Tea (AACT): Gardeners can easily become overwhelmed when they decide to study the underlying principles of actively aerated compost tea. They can use compost either as a fertilizer or preventative for plant disease. For growers, they must decide what their purpose is. When applied, AACT inoculates microbial organisms into the soil and onto the leaves of plants. As a liquid, it leaches extractable ingredients in the form of nutrients and organisms that make up the food web. A good tea will consist of all groups in the food web: decomposers include bacteria and fungi, and predators include protozoa, nematodes and microarthropods. They will want to make sure that their compost tea contains only beneficial organisms.

If they desire to improve plant growth, they will protect plant surfaces from the many air born pollutants. Regular AACT applications can prevent disease and destructive organisms from affecting the plant. The application can also add nutrients to the soil that will allow plant roots to grow more vigorously without synthetic fertilizers. Good soil builds a desirable soil structure that allows increases in the uptake of nutrients in the leaves. The soil will also retain water more efficiently and thereby decrease the amount of water used to maintain a healthy dahlia plant.

Using a compost tea requires some experimenting and research. Growers will need to understand the relationship between the temperature of the soil and leaves and the temperature of their tea. They will need to determine the type of tea: bacterial or fungal. Much more research is necessary if they choose to provide the ingredients for their own tea brew. They must make sure that the tea maker they use can keep a higher rate of oxygen than what the fungi and bacteria demand. If they spray with a fungicide, insecticide, or herbicide in order to protect their plants, they disturb nature's balance and curtail active natural protection. (See E. Ingham, *The Compost Tea Brewing Manual*, 2005)

In the process of making aerated compost tea, brewers thoroughly steep their selected single layered mesh bag compost in aerated water. Before beginning, they must first purchase a brewer; a 5 gallon bucket functions well for the small dahlia grower that also includes a brewing kit with the necessary tube parts and motor. They then fill the bucket with water to the recommended filling point, making sure to rid the tap water of any chlorine by turning the motor on and aerating the water for at least an hour. Some LCDS members use the KIS machine. The Soil Foodweb states that this machine gets excellent "organism extraction and beneficial organisms in 12 hours," which they base on careful research. To select a viable brewer must be a top priority in order to gain a quality, aerated tea.

Plan to brew such a tea when the weather conditions look favorable and use within 4 to 6 hours of completing the brew. To avoid clogging, screen the deep brown AACT before applying to selected plants. It should

possess a pleasing earthy scent. One must avoid using a sprayer that contains traces of pesticides or other substances that kill compost tea organisms. After spraying, one must make sure to clean equipment promptly after use. Otherwise one also risks contaminating future mixes.

Earnest organic growers may use a pump sprayer or sprinkling can when applying the tea, and coat the foliage as evenly as possible. By applying regularly, they feed the plants, hindering potential diseases because they have foiled toxic pollutions that may exist in the air. Applying a tea every other week can greatly enhance the health of a garden.

In addition to increasing a safer habitat for both humans and animals, other benefits abound for the correct use of aerated compost tea. The tea increases root system growth, the number of organisms to combat disease and pests, water retention, and it reduces soil impaction in addition to the expensive use of pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals. Field-testing indicates that it suppresses the following diseases: black spot, mildew, aphids, verticillium wilt among others.

Messenger: Some growers argue that Messenger has no effect on their plants while others believe that it increases the strength and vigor of both the plant and its roots. The Eden Bioscience Corporation asserts that its product, Messenger, "stimulates a plant's defense and growth mechanisms, boosts overall growth, vigor and production, aids in management of disease, and improves the plant's ability to grow and protect itself from stresses caused by adverse environmental conditions." In respect to dahlias, some LCDS growers believe that an early drenching of plants about six inches in height and then later, two or three sprayings of the plants does contribute to a healthier bush habit and root system. They further aver that tubers keep better when they have applied Messenger after employing the above process.

Corn Gluten Meal: Accidentally, Nick Christians of Iowa University discovered that corn gluten functioned as a natural herbicide. It inhibits seed germination, is not toxic, and dries out seeds as they crack open to sprout. It also augments soil, providing plant food, becoming a "weed-n-feed" product. This natural "pre-emergent" contains a N-P-K ratio of 9-1-0. equal to 10% nitrogen by weight.

One can buy corn gluten meal in three forms. 1. unprocessed – (very fine) Broadcast on bare ground. It cannot work its way through either grass or mulch. 2. granulated – Apply using a spreader or mix into a watery paste. For dahlias, after the plants have grown to approximately a foot in height apply locally to each plant and suppress weeds. Meanwhile, it also acts as a natural fertilizer. 3. Pelletized – Broadcast by hand. Pellets spread on a lawn in both spring and fall will thwart new weeds. After applying corn gluten, one needs to wet it down with a fine mist since it will not activate until wetted.

Organic Strategies continued



This by-product of cornstarch provides animal feed for livestock, fish, and some dogs. Because it destroys sprouting seeds, one can apply it around transplants as well as established plants. Growers need to make sure that the plants have a true set of leaves. Although it is safe around pets and children, the dust may cause an allergic reaction for a few users. Never should they use where a gardener desires annuals to reseed. Most likely, the Internet will be the best source for purchasing this product.



Centrist Gardening: Generally, most gardeners, including dahlia growers, recognize that the era of killing every bug with a chemical or applying solely chemical fertilizers are essentially over. Too much evidence exists to refute such practice. Gardeners cannot ignore any longer what has caused soil difficulties whether on a commercial scale or in the backyard. They all recognize that water contamination, salt buildups, soil compaction, and a host of other environmental issues exist. Consequently, many growers have turned somewhat to biological practices to overcome the obvious soil, water, and air deficiencies.

Today, three approaches to gardening exist, including the two extremes, those who are strictly organic in approach and those who spray everything and spread fertilizer on the ground to offset the lack of humus and underground army of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and earthworms. The third grouping represents the centrist gardeners who have decided to grow organically because they use composts, mulches, drip irrigation but do not abide by every tenet of organic growing.

Certainly, they continue to till their ground in the spring, but then do not till again during the entire growing season, except when they augment the soil by planting a cover crop that adds organic materials to the soil. They may also add a gradual release fertilizer, such as Osmocote, which Biorganics.com seems to validate its compatibility with the underground ecosystem. In lieu of spraying with a toxic chemical, they apply an aerated compost tea regularly, closely observing for any kind of plant stress. At that point, they may choose to use a chemical, but only as a last resort. On the next day they quickly administer an organic tea to offset the chemical hazards to the underground food chain and also feed the leaves. Using a fungicide to combat mildew does pose problems, especially if sprayed directly on the soil. Stylet white mineral oil provides a good alternative.

Plentiful fall leaves offer much to soil improvement. Leaves are rich in minerals and nutrients mined from the soil during the growth period of the tree. One can easily shred the leaves with a shredder or run a lawnmower over them and perform the same task. By taking a little time in the fall, one can preserve a thick blanket of leaf mold or gold for the soil. Either the strict organic grower or the centrist can contribute significantly

to soil improvement without endangering the ecosystem and the worms will love each kind thought.

To increase a positive soil environment, one can also amend the soil with other organic materials, such as composted steer, horse, or chicken manure. Trace elements including kelp work well, too. By going to a gardening store in the spring, growers can easily determine what is at their disposal. Finally, if they want to test their gardening techniques, they can observe the robins in their neighborhood. When gardeners see them scurrying around in the garden, they can rest assured that the worms are back and that the soil is somewhat healthy.

Organic Sprays: The era for organic sprays has arrived. Obviously, an economic motive exists for this new twist to gardening. Still, the question remains....when gardeners use an organic spray to destroy an unwanted pest, do they also destroy the beneficial pests? This question has several aspects to consider. First, these natural sprays do not have a long residual effect and usually are contact sprays. Thus, they do not have as large of an impact on the environment as do chemical systemic sprays. Second, they generally allow the gardener to enter the garden hours after spraying. Safety is an important component. These sprays will neither affect humans nor have an adverse effect on birds, pets, or children.

The Internet teems with organic solutions to pest problems. Before growers purchase any product, they need to ask for a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). This information will provide them with the hazardous ingredients, active ingredients, physical data, fire and explosion data, health effects data, emergency and first aid procedures, reactivity data, spill procedures and additional information, such as storage.

What does organic mean? After 10 years of work, the Organic Trade Association and a number of organizations determined guidelines for sustainable agriculture. The U. S. Dept. of Agriculture certified these recommended standards in 2002. Organic is no longer a catchall term. Many organic products contain the organic OMRI label, which assures that the product is suitable for organic production and handling. Since OMRI is an independent third-party, it provides objectivity for consumers. It also abides by the standards agreed upon by the USDA. The OMRI list now consists of over 800 products.

Currently, companies selling products, such as oils, granules and powders, state that they can take care of most pests common to the dahlia including: aphids, thrips, cucumber beetles, earwigs, leaf hoppers, and mites. Available products that combat fungi and mildew also exist. It behooves the grower, however, to tread slowly, making sure that the environment does not get shortchanged.

Welcome P N D C

Ale Battered Fish & Chips \$9.99

• hand dipped in our own beer batter, served with fries and tarter.

Parker's Original Burger \$5.99

• smaller version of the Big Boy, lettuce, tomato, onions & burger sauce. add .60 for cheese

Fried Prawns \$9.99

• Served with fries & cocktail sauce for dipping.

Deli Salad \$8.99

• Ham, turkey, cheddar cheese, swiss cheese, tomato & cucumber. served with your choice of dressing

Chicken Strips \$7.99

• Canola fried strips of breaded chicken. served with your choice of dipping sauce & fries

Chicken Fettuccini \$8.99

• Tender breast of chicken tossed with fettuccini pasta and creamy garlic Alfredo sauce.

Bay Shrimp Louie \$10.99

• bay shrimp atop garden greens, cucumber, tomato and hard boiled egg

*pricing does not include, dessert, beverages tax or gratuity
These will be added to your guest checks*

Above is the special lunch menu for the PNDC group. Please choose your lunch selection and e-mail Teresa Bergman (larryteresa@msn.com) to let her know your lunch choice.