

Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

Meets second Tuesday of the month at Rose City Park United Methodist Church, 5830 N.E. Alameda

Website: portlanddahlia.com

Editor: Mike Riordan (503)256-0425 Contacts: Teresa Bergman larryteresa@msn.com, Jeanette Benson (503) 649-4118

Next meeting Tuesday, August 10th, 2010 @ 7:30 PM

COOKIES FOR AUGUST

Cookie host for August is Helen Bair. Since we expect a good size group, let's see if a few other members can help out with a few extra treats.

PROGRAM FOR AUGUST

Our program for August will be a mini-show along with a judging demonstration. If you have an entry or two you can bring, this will give us something to work with and brighten up the meeting space. Also there will be a demonstration on how to stage entries. We will have an update on the local county fairs both past and upcoming. Listen carefully and learn the special techniques of successful exhibitors.

Also we will have a container exchange. Those that have extra containers are asked to bring them to the meeting to share the wealth with our newer exhibitor members.

ANNUAL SHOW

It's hard to believe but the culmination of all our activities is fast approaching. We have all worked very hard on fund raising so we could stage the biggest and best show ever. Mega thanks to all the volunteers who made this possible!

If someone is thinking of exhibiting for the first time, please have courage and take the plunge. There was a first time for all of us. I know you will be pleasantly surprised with how well you do! We will have show schedules available at the meeting. Please take a copy and familiarize yourself with the show rules. Speaking of which...all exhibitors are required to sign-in with their exhibitor numbers under their respective competition division. If this is your first time or you need help with this, please ask the person (s) that is working with classification. They will be happy to show you how to register as an exhibitor. Special note to PNCD members: PNCD exhibitor numbers no longer indicate competition

divisions. Check the 2010 PNDC Roster to find your number.

Those that have exhibited in the past are encouraged to bring lots of blooms, not just the best of the best. I never was able to tell with any certainty which ones would be my big winners before the fact. The exhibit hall sure looks great when the tables are brimming with eye-candy entries.

If you would like to find out more about how dahlias are judged, helping out the judging teams as a clerk is a great way to observe and learn. This requires a small time commitment Saturday morning. Please contact Jeanette Benson at 503-649-4118 to participate.

Some advanced planning and preparation makes it a lot easier to get that winning entry from the garden to the head table. All exhibitors provide their own containers and filler. Most people use shredded florist foam for filler to support the flowers. The containers should be proportional to the size of the entry. Pompons and miniatures look good in a #303 can (14-15oz). The cans need to be painted with either dark green or black paint. Black is the required color for most shows in Washington State. Make sure you get your cans ready at least a few days in advance so the paint has a chance to dry thoroughly before use. Cans from last season may be cleaned or re-painted. After repeated use, some cans begin to rust from the inside soiling the filler and reducing the flower's keeping quality. These are best discarded.

Entry tags will be available at the August meeting. Pick up some so you will have them to place on your entries at home. This saves a lot of last minute work and frustration at the exhibit hall. The tags are color coded for competition category as follows: Juniors-yellow, Novice-pink, Amateur-blue, Open and Special Entry-white.

When is the best time to cut my blooms for show or other uses? I cut mostly early (that's with dew) Friday morning. Sometimes I'll cut Thursday morning if the bloom needs an extra day away from the sun. Blooms need to be "set" so they will keep and show well. When cutting the blooms cut the stems at a 45 degree angle

placing them in buckets containing two inches of hot water. As the water cools it gradually sets the blooms. Do not allow any foliage to touch the hot water or it will blacken. The buckets of cut blooms need to be placed indoors in a cool place out of drafts and direct sunlight. A basement is an ideal location to store the blooms and use as a work area to "put up" your entries.

CALL FOR AWARDS

Thanks to all who generously donated cash or other awards for our show. If by any chance you have not yet turned in your cash to Larry Sawyer, you may do so at the August meeting or alternatively mail to Larry at: 11015 SW Berkshire; Portland, OR 97225-4407. Sweepstakes winners from last year are asked to bring their revolving trophies to the August meeting or make other arrangements with Mike Riordan. Those sponsoring gift certificates, please send or get to Mike at the meeting or by mail.

ADS NEW MEMBERSHIP DEAL

The American Dahlia Society is offering a special promotion for *new* members from our society. Join in August and September and receive the June, September and December Bulletin absolutely free. That's right! You get June 2010 forward **and** all of the Bulletins for 2011 **plus** the 2011 Classification book for the low price of \$23 per individual or \$26 per family. Simply pay our Treasurer, Larry Sawyer at the meeting or mail to Larry at 11015 SW Berkshire; Portland, OR 97225-4407.

DAHLIA PHOTOS NEEDED

Shirley Bankston our recording secretary, also has taken on the task of maintaining a photo library for use on our sale tables during our annual tuber sales. She is looking for digital and/or print photos from film. If you have some varieties you know you will be donating (particularly the rarer ones), why not take a photo for your benefit and to help the society market your generous donations. Shirley's e-mail is

shirbur@earthlink.net

SHOW VOLUNTEERS

We will need a few volunteers to help set up the exhibit hall at the Clackamas County Fairgrounds on Thursday, September 2nd. We need help setting up the head table, covering the horticultural tables and setting the markers and labels for the entry classes.

TO SHADE OR NOT TO SHADE

by Ted J. Kennedy

If you visit the gardens of the top dahlia exhibitors you will probably find lots of umbrellas shading the show dahlias or the extensive use of shade cloth. These

exhibitors know that if dahlias flowers are shaded when maturing, the intense colors are preserved. In addition, if it should rain, the flowers will not get water marks.

If you are going to shade your show dahlias, you should wait until the plants are mature and have buds that are showing color. This is because the plants are still growing and need full sun to develop. Once you shade them with the umbrella or shade cloth, the plants will respond by growing taller than normal and this occurs even under umbrellas.

If you use shade cloth (typically 50% weave), you need to install it at least 10 feet above the ground. This is because dahlias that grow 5 to 6 feet tall in your garden will reach 8 to 9 feet tall under the shade cloth.

There are advantages of shade cloth over umbrellas and vice versa.

Shade cloth goes up and generally stays up for the entire season. Under the shade cloth there is more moisture and plants are a bit more susceptible to fungus diseases. Most people who use shade cloth trim back leaves and stalks to make sure that there is adequate air circulation. This is especially important at the base of the plants. Some dahlias varieties that tend to have longer stems have much longer stems under shade cloth.

Umbrellas are very versatile in that you can place them only where you need them and you can take them down with little effort. Of course, each umbrella needs a strong stake to hold it. Golf umbrellas are what most people use. Some people use larger umbrellas of the type that cover patio tables. One Washington exhibitor gets his umbrellas from a restaurant that replaces them each year. They have advertising on them and the restaurant probably pays very little for them. His garden is very colorful and the beer companies get more free advertising.

And most of you reading this article are thinking: "These dahlia show people are way over the top!" Dahlia blooms fade in the sun in July and early August but as late August arrives, there are many cloudy days and the sun does not set at 10PM anymore. It is on these cloudy days in late August and early September when our dahlias look their best. And that is without all the work of installing all those umbrellas or shade cloth.

Note: Those lucky people who grow dahlias on the Oregon Coast need no shading at all to get maximum color on their blooms.

ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR

Our annual garden tour is slated for the weekend of August 21st. Details are being worked on and we hope to have more information available at our August meeting.