# Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

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

Website: portlanddahlia.com

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Next meeting Tuesday, April 10th, 2012 @ 6:30 p.m.

## APRIL SALE AND AUCTION

Our April meeting is our annual tuber sale and auction. Doors will open to the **public** at 6:30PM. Pre-packaged tubers with color pictures attached will be available for sale. Premium pricing will be in effect for Waterlilies, AA's and some of the more plentiful newer desirable varieties that otherwise would be on the auction table. Please remind your gardening friends that the sale and auction is open to the public so anyone can participate. New members joining at the April meeting will receive a coupon good for \$7 toward the purchase of dahlias from the sale table or at auction. So the first year's dues are *free! This offer is for new and not renewing members*.

Bonus for current members paid up for 2012, and new members or renewing members - the doors to the sale tables will open at 6:00 PM. This will give members first choice over what is available for sale.

For those members volunteering to help, the hall will be available as early as 5:00PM. I know the coordinators could always use a few extra hands.

We are still welcoming tuber and plant donations. Just please be sure they are well marked and be willing to help sort the tubers to the sale tables or the auction table. If you are donating tubers/plants, please send a list to Aaron Ridling. Aaron's e-mail address is <a href="mailto:aaron@dahliasuppliers.com">aaron@dahliasuppliers.com</a> Last year we used our digital projector to display photos of the items being auctioned. This was a great help in selling varieties that were unfamiliar to some bidders. One digital image is worth more than a thousand words.

# **TUBER WORK PARTIES**

On Saturday, March 31st, our first work party was held at Swan Island Dahlias. Thanks to all who gave of their time, energy and resources to prepare the tubers for our sale and auction. Mega thanks to the Gitts family for their tuber donations, supplies, and use of their facility. We had a great turn out which included Gordon Jackman, Jeanette Benson, Tiffany Boatwright, Teresa Bergman, Daniel Compagna, John and Kathy Bates, Victoria Castro, Mark Oldenkamp, Shirley Bankston, Aaron Riddling, Dakota Riddling, Justin Riddling, Larry Smith, Shirley Shafer, Linda Taylor, Maxine Walker,

Doris Olsen, Nona Thielen, Bob Patterson, Jerry Rasmussen, Debbie Thomas and Phil Mingus.

A second work party will be held at Swan Island on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:00 AM. This one will be to prepare tubers for our Clackamas County Master Gardener's Spring Sale. Please consider helping us prepare for this event. The last two seasons this sale has been our largest revenue source. We will again share lunch "pot luck" at the work party.

## **COOKIES FOR APRIL**

Treats will be provided by the membership. Since we expect a large crowd for the Auction, let's show the public our cookie prowess and generosity.

#### APRIL CHECKLIST

For those members receiving their Bulletin by US mail, please check your address label for your paid dues status. If there is a year other than 2012, your dues are not showing as current. Your last mailing will be the May Bulletin if you don't renew.

Now is a great time to start preparing your dahlia growing area for this year's crop. If there are weeds or grasses growing, now is a good time to knock them down. Remember the old adage that one year's weeds means ten years of weed seeds. Moreover, this time of year they are much easier dislodged and in many instances permanently discouraged, due to their small size.

Slugs are the most persistent and insidious enemy of the young dahlia plants. Why not eradicate them now, rather than wait until there are dahlias to munch on? Baits have improved over the years. Those with a "Meta" base have added a bittering agent to make them less appealing to pets. There is a new class of baits that work differently. One brand name is "Slug go". The mollusks will ingest and then go back to where ever they came from to die a quiet, less messy death.

The soil is much too wet now to work mechanically. However, one can still hand spade. Soil amendments can now be spread. Composts and manures can be left on top of the soil to leach nutrients in until the ground is dry

enough to till. Beside local newspapers, your local Feed Store is a good source for where manures can be obtained locally. Just check the postings on their bulletin boards. For those with computer access, search Craig's List Portland under lawn and garden and put manure in the search field. Some postings are free-you-haul! Organic amendments benefit the soil two ways. Added nutrients and improving the soil texture and its moisture retention capacity. Remember that dahlias are *gross feeders*, putting their nutrient requirements in the same category as tuberous begonias and fuchsias.

An occasional application of lime is advisable to overcome the excessive soil acidity common to most soils west of the Cascades. Regular garden lime (Calcium Carbonate) is available as powdered or prilled (palletized) lime. Calcium is an element that is essential for the production of cellulose, the fibers that hold plants together. Better available Calcium means stronger stems and overall plant growth. Dolomite lime (ground limestone) can also be used. It too brings Calcium and the added benefit of Magnesium. A great local source for limes and natural soil amendments is Concentrates, Inc. They are located at 5505 SE International Way; Milwaukie, OR 97222 in the Gramark Business Park. Phone 503-234-7501. Peruse their offerings and pricing at http://www.concentratesnw.com . Concentrates generously offers a 10% discount to Portland Dahlia Society members on some items.

# PNDC SPRING MEETING

Mark your calendars!!! The Pacific Northwest Dahlia Conference will hold their spring meeting at Georgetown Realty, 1000 NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Portland, OR 97230 on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. The banquet facility is located on the lower level with elevator access. PNDC Delegates will meet in executive session at 10:30 AM. The luncheon and general meeting begin at noon.

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and network with the top originators, growers and exhibitors in the PNW and British Columbia. The most exciting part is the tuber and plant auction which begins at 1:00 PM. Many growers bring their newest and best introductions and/or imports. The bidding is spirited and entertaining! Membership in the PNDC is not required to attend any portion of this event.

The cost of the luncheon is \$15.00 per person, including gratuity. Please send your reservation check to Elva Sellens, 2651 NW Loma Vista Dr.; Roseburg, OR 97470. Make your check payable to PNDC.

## PORTLAND AUCTIONS TIPS

By Ted J. Kennedy

Note: Our 2012 Auction is on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM I attended my first Portland Society Auction in about 1990. My wife and I were fairly new to dahlias and had grown dahlias as one of many types of cut flowers to sell at our modest farm. We quickly noticed that dahlias were

"cut flower machines" in that they had more flowers and really better flowers than the 30 or so other types of flowers we grew. We had been bitten by the "dahlia bug" and wanted more varieties.

The tuber sale in those days was held in a church in the Lents district near 97<sup>th</sup> and SE Holgate. The tubers not sold in the auction were upstairs in a small room and it was wall to wall people nearly fighting over the selection of tubers on a few tables. We had bought quite a few tubers the year before and loaded our bag with lots of new ones. We decided to stay for the 7:00PM auction.

The auction was held in a larger room on the main floor and was attended by 50-60 people seated in folding chairs. We thought that there might be a few bargains at the auction and had our commercial grower's catalogues ready to look up the pictures of the flowers. Tuber after tuber was sold and we were introduced to "tuber auction fever." Some varieties went for as much as ten dollars! Who would ever pay that much for one tuber? We did buy a few tubers that day and have attended nearly every auction since then. We found out that there really are lots of bargains to be had at the auction.

#### Some auction tips:

- (1) Look at the tubers before the auction: The auction tubers are laid out on the tables near the stage. They are placed on the tables in size order from left to right. Giants (AA) are the first ones on your far left. The order is AA, A, B, BB, M, Balls, Min Balls, Poms, Waterlilies, Stellars, and then all other types. It really pays to look there before the auction to get an idea what will be sold.
- (2) **Sign up for a bidder's number:** We have gone to a system where you have a bidder's number and your winning bid is recorded each time you win. You will pay for your tubers at the end of the auction (or you can leave early too, as we keep a running total of your wins).
- (3) You may be able to buy a tuber if you are one of the bidders: Some varieties have more than one tuber available. In that case, we offer the winning bidder the opportunity to buy as many as he or she would like and the other tubers are available at that same price to losing bidders. Occasionally, even non-bidders may be able to buy a tuber at the auction price.
- (4) Prices Decline Near the End: Our goal is to finish the auction by 9:00PM. Quite a few people will have left after the first hour and the prices generally get lower as time goes by.

## **TUBER SALE FLYER**

Included in this mailing is a flyer for our sale and auction April 10<sup>th</sup>. If each of us could place (with permission) the flyer or copies thereof in our area stores, community bulletin boards, health clubs, garden centers, places of employment or any other place interested parties could take notice; this would help with the success of our sale.