

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, March 13th, 2011 @ 7:30 p.m.

CALLING ALL TUBERS

Please bring the tubers you plan to donate to our annual fundraisers to the March meeting. Please be sure each tuber is clean, free of rot and has a viable eye. You do not need to write on each tuber, as long as it is clearly marked in some way. More than one tuber of a variety may be put in a bag with the name written on the outside of the bag. In preparation for our annual sales, two workshops will be held at Swan Island Dahlias. The first will be on Saturday, March 31st, and the second on Saturday, April 21st. The second one will be to prepare tubers for the Master Gardener's Sale. Starting time for both workshops is 9:00 AM. Please help out at one or both if you can. We need your tubers and assistance. At the conclusion of the work parties we traditionally have a pot luck lunch. Please bring a dish you think the group will enjoy. This is a great opportunity to get to know other members and enjoy their fellowship.

MONTHLY AUCTION

If you have tubers of *newer* varieties that are ready to be auctioned, bring them in and they will be auctioned off at this meeting. The Board feels that we may get a better price if we do some selling prior to our main event and some of those who take cuttings would like to get them sooner. This will be limited to *newer* varieties, or those that are very hard to find.

COOKIES FOR MARCH

Larry Sawyer and Cynthia Patterson will be providing cookies for the March meeting.

MARCH PROGRAM

This month's educational program will continue our early season theme of steps to take to start our gardening for the year. Featured will be a brief presentation on slug control as well as a panel discussion of soil preparation and how plant your dahlias. We plan to have dahlia seeds for purchase and a brief presentation of how to get them started, this as a prelude to our popular seedling competition later this year.

We will also have available at the meeting Karl Laufer's sharpening service. Bring in your pruners, loopers, hoes, shears, etc. and Karl will sharpen at \$5 per edge during

the meeting. This was proposed at the last meeting and the membership thought this would be a great service.

2012 DUES ARE DUE

If you haven't already paid, dues are past due. Those receiving the Bulletin by US mail will note on the address label this month a year. If the year is 2011, your dues are not showing as current. Judges please remember that you are required to carry membership in both the American Dahlia society and the PNDC (Pacific Northwest Dahlia conference). PDS dues, ADS dues and PNDC dues should be combined and paid to the Treasurer as noted below. Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers dues are \$10 and also payable through our Treasurer.

PDS	ADS	PNDC
Adults: \$7.00	Individual: \$24.00	Individual \$10.00
Couples: \$10.00	Family: \$27.00	Dual: \$15.00
Juniors: \$1.00		
Mail to or pay at next meeting		
Larry Sawyer, 11015 S.W. Berkshire, Portland, OR 97225		

MARCH CHECKLIST

How are those tubers doing in storage? Regardless of your storage medium and method, it is advisable to see how things are storing. Sometimes rot or insects (springtails or fungus gnats) can spread from one tuber to the next. Remove the rotted portion of the tubers and treat the cuts with captan or sulfur. Many growers believe that a rotting tuber gives off ethylene gas which promotes premature sprouting in the other tubers in the same bag. While checking the tubers you may want to select some varieties for cuttings. I don't have the space to take all the cuttings I want at once. Therefore, some tubers are rotated back into storage and others come out to take still more cuttings.

While going through your stored tubers please take time to set aside tubers for our Auction and Sales. We need everyone's support to insure the success of our annual fundraisers. Including a list of varieties and respective quantities is helpful to the volunteers who will be doing the packaging at the workshops

March is a good time to get a soil test and find out what your ground lacks or perhaps has too much of a given element. Most soils in the PNW tend to be on the acid side. Applying lime, either regular calcium carbonate or dolomite, will help bring your soil back to neutral. This aids in the plants ability to photosynthesize and process soil nutrients. John Menzel once told me he thought the reason Australian growers had fewer problems wintering "hard to keep varieties" is because the Australian soils are naturally more alkaline. Most soil tests require at least a cup and a half of soil collected in a zip lock bag. It is advisable to take this sample from several different places in your garden to get an accurate representative sample. Try to keep the sample as sterile as possible by using very clean implements and wearing latex gloves. A&L Laboratories is a resource for soil tests. See their web site at <http://www.al-labs-west.com/sections/anservices/soil/fees>

FEDERATION SPRING WORKSHOP

The Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers will hold their Spring Workshop on Saturday, March 24th. There is no cost to this event and most participants bring a brown bag lunch. Presentations on varied aspects of dahlia growing are provided throughout the day. There is also an auction of new introductions accompanied by a slide show of each offering. Contact Teresa Bergman (360)274-8192 or Jeanette Benson (503) 649-4118 for more information and to coordinate car pool arrangements.

PNDC SPRING MEETING

Mark your calendars!!! The Pacific Northwest Dahlia Conference will hold their spring meeting at Georgetown Realty on Saturday, April 28th. The banquet facility is located on the lower level. PNDC Delegates meet in executive session at 11:00. The luncheon and general meeting begin at noon. More details to follow.

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 always spirited and entertaining. Membership in the PNDC is not required to attend any portion of this event. It is perfectly acceptable to arrive at 1:00 PM and participate in the auction only, if this is your preference.

TUBER SALE FLYER

Included in this mailing is a flyer for our sale and auction April 10th. 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.

STARTING TUBERS INDOORS

Many growers prefer to start their tubers indoors ahead of planting time. This gives the plants a head start and results in earlier flowers in the garden. An added bonus is that there are extra sprouts available for taking cuttings and thus having additional stock for planting, trading or making pot roots.

Many growers have a set up of stacked plastic or wire rack shelving in their basement or spare room. Suspended above the shelves are fluorescent light fixtures. The multiple shelf set up yields some bottom heat from the light fixture on the lower shelf. Regular shop lights work just fine. There is no advantage to using the more expensive "grow" lights. I leave my set up on 24 hours a day and the plants grow just fine.

How soon should we start the tubers in pots indoors? Most growers think that four to six weeks is just about right. If you were planting mid to late May, starting your tubers about the first of April would yield 8" plants to set out at planting time.

If you want to experiment on a smaller scale, you can start just a few plants on a sunny window sill. Or better yet put a few pots out on a sunny patio or deck and bring them in on a nightly basis.

As the plants increase in growth, you may want to begin hardening some of the plants off. This involves leaving them outside in a sunny, yet protected area. I have a south facing deck that works great. By late April or early May they can be left out all day and night. Be watchful of a late frost and be prepared to move inside at night if necessary.

NOTES OF INTEREST

We are pleased to announce that Debbie Thomas has consented to act as Recording Secretary. Debbie replaces Shirley Bankston who has taken on the responsibility of Special Treasurer for the ADS 2012 National Show. Additionally, Shirley will help our Treasurer, Larry Sawyer, with membership.

We will have ADS 2012 Classification Books and the Composite listing available at the sale table.

The Gitts Family would like to remind all Portland Dahlia Society members that they are eligible for a 20% discount when ordering from Swan Island Dahlias. Simply enter the coupon code PDS20 on the coupon/promotion line of their order form.