

# Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

September Meeting at Swan Island Dahlias, 995 NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; Canby, OR 97013

**Club Website: [Portlanddahlia.com](http://Portlanddahlia.com)**

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**Next meeting Tuesday, September 10th, 2013 @ 4:00 PM**

## PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER

Our program for September will be a reprise of last year's highly rated gathering at Swan Island Dahlias. We realize that work schedules may limit some member's arrival times. It is perfectly acceptable to join in when ever your schedule or inclination allows.

We will start at 4:00 PM with a tour of the gardens and an opportunity to judge seedlings at our ADS sanctioned trial garden. This is an easy way for judges to fulfill their annual requirement for trial garden judging. Senior judges will be available to work in teams with those just starting out.

At about 5:30 we will have dinner. Please bring a pot-luck dish of your own to share along with a serving spoon. The Society will provide soft drinks, paper plates and plastic utensils.

Nicholas Gitts has agreed to be on hand to answer any dahlia related questions. And we plan to have an arrangement demonstration as well.



**Salmon Rays**

## TENDING THE TRIAL GARDEN

by Ted J. Kennedy

I went to the Canby Trial garden to deadhead and disbud yesterday. It is located on the Swan Island Dahlia farm and their Dahlia Festival is going on this last weekend and the next. I had to park a quarter of a mile away and was guided into my parking spot by the numerous parking attendants (local high school kids). I walked from my truck through the parking lot, by the barn full of tractors (city folk like to see tractors), by the Kettle Corn stand, by the hamburger stand (the \$6.99 Dahlia burger was the most expensive item), past the gigantic flower sales booths (one was not enough for the festival), past the root cellar entrance that is boringly full of boxes of tubers in the Winter). The root cellar is now full of (hundreds) baskets and displays of dahlias all done by paid florists. I finally made it past all the other booths too. And I rounded the corner and went past the greenhouse where Marge Gitts grows her Ponderosa (that means grapefruit sized) lemons. Oh, and the live band music was being played on the loud speakers (at a low volume as this is a flower farm after all). At last, I am at the trial garden where I can get to work. But I forgot to get a bucket in which to put the spent flowers. I retraced my steps to the flower sales stands and procured a suitable bucket. I went back to the trial garden and proceeded to remove the "over the hill" blooms while people gasped that I was being so callous with these glorious flowers. Several people started reaching into the bucket while asking whether they could have a blossom. Eventually, I felt like swatting their hands like one would do with pesky flies but thought better of that.

So, I spent 30 minutes of actual work and 2 more hours of endless questions and answers. Most visitors have a very basic knowledge of dahlias (they are pretty sure they are flowers). Nearly 40% of them had no idea that they grow from tubers (I say potatoes are tubers too but sadly many visitors had no idea that potatoes grow underground too). Usually at these affairs, one meets at least one very knowledgeable person with a scientific background and we engage in the specifics of dahlia genetics. Not today. Nearly all my discussions of dahlia

breeding this day were at the level of "bees gather pollen and place it on the flower and it makes some seeds". And they say then, "Oh, so you grow these dahlias from seeds." And they are then amazed that dahlias make tubers.

The poor Swan Island Dahlia people must be rather used to these questions. And the most common question of all is "Do I have to dig my dahlias every year?" and then they "brag" how they have left them in the ground for several years (in most years recently they have not frozen in the ground here in Portland). And then they ask how do you divide those clumps now they have grown to "Volkswagen Beetle"(my words this time) sized clumps. And of course our answer of "dig them every year" is not what they want hear and I explain how to use axes and chainsaws to divide these clumps.

And people are from all over the place. One lady determined that we grew up 6 blocks away in Walla Walla. And we went through that long list of names of people that people give out in such situations to see if you "knew them". I knew nobody (Walla Walla had 25,000 people in those days!). But we knew lots of places and agreed that the best place in town to get burger was the "Iceberg Drive In".

The lady from Alaska by the way knew that she had to dig her tubers

Editor's Note: We still need volunteers to help Ted with the Trial Garden. Please contact Ted ([e4449@aol.com](mailto:e4449@aol.com)) if you can help with deadheading and disbudding.



## KITSAP AND GRAYS HARBOR SHOWS

by **Ted J. Kennedy**

Here in Oregon our show season starts on Labor Day weekend with the Portland Show. It is followed by shows in Coos Bay, Eugene and finally the show in Roseburg. In Washington State the shows start in the first weekend in August at the Kitsap County fairgrounds. This is traditionally the only show on that weekend and because of that, people from Seattle and

further North attend along with a few people from Oregon. The Grays Harbor show is the next weekend and is one of the few ADS approved shows at a county fair.

Kitsap: The show is sponsored by the Kitsap County Dahlia society and this year's show celebrated their 89th rendition. One would think that a dahlia show at such an early date would not have very many blooms. This is obviously not the case because all of the sizes from the smallest poms to the Giants were well represented. This show is held in the President's Hall at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds. The building is of ample size (and they only use half of it!). Parking for exhibitors is ample but certainly could be closer to the show as most people have to carry their entries a few hundred feet to the building. One accommodation for people traveling a long way to the show is the late starting time of 10AM for the judges meeting.

This year when the judging was done, the best fully double entry was show by a six year old! It was perfect blossom of Glenbank Twinkle. The entrant was Aurora Brant whose family loves to exhibit dahlias. Here is link to the Kitsap Facebook page with pictures: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Kitsap-County-Dahlia-Society-KCDS/163033117084216>

Grays Harbor: One of the big attractions to the Grays Harbor show is that it held in conjunction with the Grays Harbor County fair. Exhibitors get free admission (\$10.00!) and free parking (\$5.00). And if you judge or clerk, a lunch stipend of \$10.00 is given so you can eat all the curly fries and deep fried Twinkies that you want in the concession area. Parking for exhibitors is the best of all shows and no one is more than 50 feet from a door to the show.

This year the best bloom was Weston Spanish Dancer entered by Bob Schroeder. There are always ample entries at Grays Harbor and all the types were well represented. Other outstanding blooms include a dazzling Spartacus and near perfect Mary's Jomanda.

Picture: AC Inara AA FD BI PR/W new in 2014 as exhibited at Kitsap by Ken Greenway. .

Ted  
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## IN MEMORIAM

Our friend and long-time member Wally Kaste passed away recently on a trip returning from Portland. His funeral was held September 4<sup>th</sup> in Cathlamet, WA at 11:00 AM at the United Church of Christ. Our condolences to his family.

