

Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

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

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Next meeting Tuesday, April 11th, 2017 @ 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.

Bonus for current members paid up for 2016, 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. Members that are working the event are encouraged to wear their Portland Dahlia Society purple t-shirts or aprons so they can be easily identified.

We are still welcoming tuber donations. Just please be sure the tubers are well marked and be willing to help sort the tubers to the sale tables or the auction table. If you are donating tubers, please send a list to Shirley Bankston. Shirley's address is shirbur@earthlink.net

Last year we used our digital projector to display photos of the tubers 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 **Sunday**, April 9th, beginning at 1:00 PM our first work party will be held at Swan Island Dahlias in preparation for our sale and auction at the Church on Tuesday, April 11th

A second work party will be held at Swan Island on **Sunday**, April 30th at 1:00 PM. This one will be to prepare tubers for our Clackamas County Master Gardener's Spring Sale. Please consider helping us

prepare for these events. Donors please email Shirley Bankston with your list so she can have the labels ready.

COOKIES FOR APRIL

Treats will be provided by the membership. Since we expect a large crowd (members as well as non-members) for the Auction, we can impress with our variety of treats to keep the sellers and buyers doing what they do best.

We all need to thank Teresa Bergman for her years of service to the membership at the coffee counter. Each month she has prepared air pots of coffee, etc. at home and brought them to the meeting for us to enjoy. After this month, she is permanently retiring from the coffee counter. We are asking for volunteer(s) to replace her. Please see either Larry or Teresa.

APRIL CHECKLIST

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. Please be aware that compost or manure purchased from third parties may contain residual herbicides which can stunt and/or disfigure dahlias. Your own compost should be fine as long as it never contained grass clippings from weed and feed treated lawns. 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 in Milwaukie. Take the Milwaukie Expressway to International Way. Peruse their offerings and pricing at <http://www.concentratesnw.com>. Concentrates offers a 10% discount to Portland Dahlia Society members on many (not all) of their offerings.



Parkland Rave– 2017 Flower of the Year

DAHLIAS OF TODAY

Dahlias of Today is the annual publication of the Puget Sound Dahlia Association. It contains photos as well as articles about the new dahlias for 2017. We expect to have some copies available for sale at the April meeting.

PORTLAND AUCTIONS TIPS

By Ted J. Kennedy

Note: Our 2017 Auction is on April 11th at 6:30 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 97th 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 11th. 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.