

Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

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

Portland Dahlia Society website: portlanddahlia.com

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Next meeting Tuesday, February 14th, 2017 @ 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY

Members will be getting back into the thick of our obsession with the chance to interact with those similarly afflicted. First, we will view the ADS DVD featuring 2017 introductions. That should get us in the mood for a presentation on how to begin our preparations for this year's dahlia garden, including slug control. What to watch for when checking tubers in storage will be discussed. Come to the meeting and find a way to test your soil *for free*.



Clearview Jonas
Derrill Hart Medal Winner for 2017

FIRST AUCTION

Last year we tried an early tuber/pot root auction at our February meeting and it was well received. We were able to get a better price prior to our main event and some of those who take cuttings would like to get stock sooner.

COOKIES FOR FEBRUARY

Larry Smith and Adrienne Hale will be providing cookies for this month's meeting.

TUBER WORKSHOP

In looking ahead to our annual sales, we will be holding

two tuber workshops at Swan Island Dahlias. The first will be on **Sunday**, April 9 and the second will be on **Sunday**, April 30th. The second one will be to prepare tubers for the Master Gardener's sale. Starting time for both workshops is 1:00 PM. Please help out and one or both if you can. As an incentive to full shift participants is their choice of a free tuber from those available at the tuber pack. Also, we would like to have tubers you are going to donate for the sale brought in to our March meeting, or in to this month's meeting if you can't be there in March. Please be sure each variety 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. Please be generous as these 2 sales are major source of funds. When donating tubers to the April auction, Shirley Bankston would like to have your list to find pictures of the blooms. If you took pictures of your blooms last summer, please bring them to the February and March meetings. If you did not take pictures, please send your list to Shirley at shirbur@earthlink.net

At your board meeting it was decided that Portland Dahlia Society members would be given early access to the April Tuber Sale at 6:00PM. The general public will not be admitted until 6:30PM. The idea is to give those who support your society first choice among the dahlias available on the sale tables.

2017 DUES ARE DUE

If you haven't already paid, dues are past due. 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		

FEBRUARY 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 can spread from one tuber to the next. If there is some rot, many times the tuber(s) can be saved by cutting away the rotted portion and treating the cuts with powdered cinnamon, flowers of sulfur or Captan. If you are using vermiculite and the medium seems too damp (vermiculite clinging to tubers), more dry vermiculite can be added to the storage container. As you are checking through, this is a great time to select tubers you want to take cuttings from and/or donate to the PDS tuber sale. Not sure how many of you store over pot roots. I keep mine stored open in nursery flats in the same storage area (garage) as my tubers. They are still in the same pots they grew in last summer. One thing I've learned is to take the flats outdoors and water them thoroughly about once a month. This does not promote premature growth, but does enhance the keeping quality of the mini-clumps.

While discussing soil, let's visit the subject of pH. Soils in the Pacific Northwest tend to be naturally acidic. Add to this rain through our polluted skies, and we end up with more push to the acid side. To counteract the acidity, apply Dolomite Lime or Prilled (pelletized) Lime either now or at planting time. By pulling your soil more to the neutral side the plants are better able to absorb and process nutrients. An added benefit to liming is the addition of Calcium to the soil. Calcium is essential for the production of cellulose in plant tissue. (Healthier plants with stronger stems). A soil test will give you an accurate picture of what's needed in your soil. See A & L Laboratory's web site at

http://al-labs.com/analytical_services/analytical_agri2.aspx

FEDERATION SPRING WORKSHOP

The Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers will hold their Spring Workshop on Saturday, March 18th. There is no cost to this event and most participants bring a brown bag lunch. 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.

PDS 2017 FLOWER OF THE YEAR

At your January board meeting, Parkland Rave, BB IC Lavender, was selected as our flower of the year. This one is a real crowd pleaser, plentiful and easy to grow. It is also a recent recipient of the Stanley Johnson Medal. This ADS Medal is awarded annually to the variety that has the most blue ribbons and higher awards, that is among the varieties that have not yet won the medal.



Parkland Rave

PNDC SPRING MEETING

The Pacific Northwest Dahlia Conference will hold its spring meeting on Saturday, April 22nd at Parker's Restaurant, in Castle Rock, Washington. The luncheon begins at noon. PNDC delegates begin their work at 11:00 AM.

Following the luncheon is a short business meeting; this is followed by a tuber and plant auction. Many of the originators from the entire west coast (British Columbia through Southern Oregon) will be in attendance. Many will bring some of their new originations and imports to the auction. Everyone's interest in the newer varieties and the spirited bidding is more than worth the price of the luncheon. You do not need to be a member of the PNDC to attend and participate in this function but please plan to have lunch so we can meet the room rent minimum.

ROOTING DAHLIA LEAF CUTTINGS

By Ted J. Kennedy

It is a common practice to root dahlia cuttings taken from sprouting tubers. These cuttings root easily and are very easy to do. Dahlia cuttings can be taken in another method that I call leaf cuttings. Tuber cuttings are taken when the sprout is about two inches tall and removed from the tuber by slicing it off the tuber just above where it emerges from the tuber. The cutting, when taken in this manner, has primordial tissue near where it attached to the tuber that has the ability form roots very easily. Leaf cuttings are taken from a dahlia plant that has been allowed to grow to a height of 12 to 18 inches or so and involves the removal of the leaf nodes along with some leaf material to provide material for rooting.

Leaf cuttings are rooted in much the same way that tuber cuttings are rooted. Both are rooted in some sort of damp medium such as sterile potting soil, mineral wool, Oasis

cubes, sterile sand and others. I use sterile potting mix called germination mix. It is a peat moss based product that has some vermiculite or perlite, a bit of lime to raise the pH, and a surfactant to allow the mix to absorb water quickly. Note that it has no fertilizer in it and fertilizer is not recommended for use in rooting dahlias.



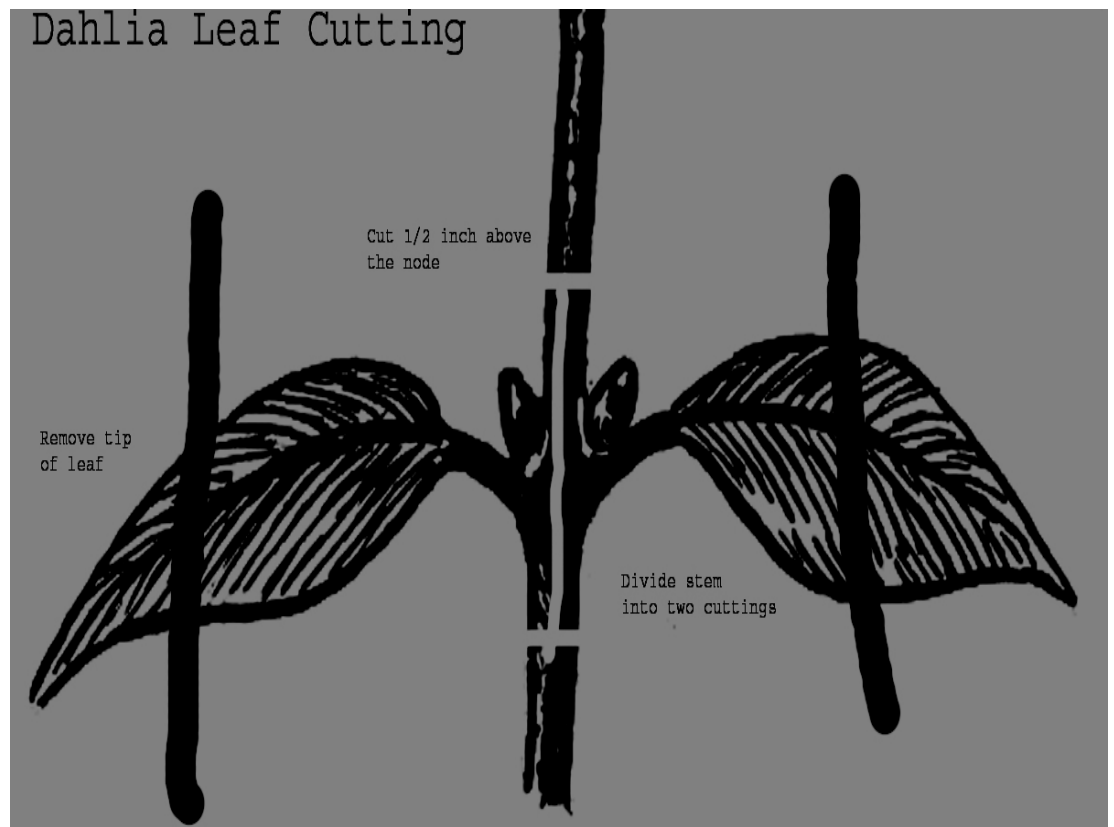
Hollyhill Spreckles, MB Variegated

Leaf cuttings take much more time to root than tuber cuttings. They also require that you have a dahlia plant that is 12 to 18 inches tall and that means that the cutting material must be started several weeks before one would start tubers for tuber cuttings. The added time to obtain cutting material and for the cuttings to mature into a plant large enough to be placed into the garden is a negative factor for many people. However, the advantage of leaf cuttings over tuber cuttings is that you can harvest many more cuttings from the green plant, perhaps as many as 12 to 15 in some cases. The plant may be vigorous enough to be grown on for another round of 5 to 10 cuttings and in total from one plant it is easily possible to get 20 or more rooted cuttings.

So to summarize: Tuber cuttings are much easier to do as compared to leaf cuttings. Tuber cuttings root much faster than leaf cuttings and tuber cuttings reach planting size much quicker than leaf cuttings. Leaf cuttings have the potential to give you many more plants than tuber cuttings. In the garden there is little difference between

plants grown from tubers, tuber cuttings or leaf cuttings. They will all grow tall and healthy and produce wonderful flowers. However, the plants grown from tuber cuttings will have smaller more compact tuber clumps than those grown from tubers. The tuber harvest yield will be about 50% less from tuber cutting plants. Leaf cutting plants will have even smaller tuber clumps but will still yield useable tubers. The exact yield of useable tubers from leaf cutting plants is very dependent on the tuber making capabilities of the dahlia variety. Those varieties that make very small or very few tubers may have no useable tubers when grown from a leaf cutting. One excellent use for plants grown from leaf cuttings is the production of pot tubers. Leaf cuttings produce enough tuber material for a nice pot tuber. So leaf cuttings are an excellent way to increase stock, especially if you want plants for excellent flowers or you need cuttings to make pot tubers.

Leaf cutting instructions: Before I outline the leaf cutting process, I need to emphasize the need for sterile materials. The rooting mix must be sterile and although the germination mix I use is not technically sterile, it works very well. The pots and flats that you use must be sterilized and I have found that soaking pots and flats in a laundry bleach solution of about one cup per 30 gallons overnight works well. Another issue is that the plants



you use for the leaf node cuttings must be free from fungus disease. In my indoor propagation area, fungus disease is not a problem.

And finally let's discuss the actual process of taking the cuttings. As explained above, you need a dahlia plant that has been grown to 12 - 18 inches tall. That plant can either be a tuber that was allowed to grow tall or a rooted tuber cutting that has been grown to that height. I use tuber cuttings to produce my plants.



*Hollyhill Showtime, B SC Orange
New for 2017*

I cut off the plant about 1/2 inch above the first nodes I leave this pair of nodes because it is possible to grow the plant on for more cuttings and it will send up shoots from these nodes. If you cut it off below the nodes, the plant will probably die.

You now have plant material for the cuttings. The plant you have grown will have 4 to 6 pairs of leaves emanating from the stem. Now cut them off about 1/2 inch above and below the inter node. You will then have a piece of stalk with two leaves coming out of it. Using a scalpel or razor blade, carefully cut down the middle of the stem and you will have two cuttings to root.

Since the cutting will take so long to root, it is advisable to remove 1/2 of the leaf to reduce surface area. You will notice at the junction between the leaf and the stalk that here is a miniature sprout (called an axillary bud). It is this tiny sprout that will form roots. Unlike tuber cuttings this tiny sprout not only produces roots, but it also produces leaves. The tiny axillary bud needs to be placed under the rooting medium so that it is just barely under the soil. Firm the soil around the cutting to ensure that it is solidly in place. The cutting is now placed under lights just as tuber cuttings are placed under lights. Note that I do not use any rooting hormone or other chemicals.

The leaf cutting will root in about 3 weeks. The process is that a tiny plant will emerge from the axillary bud. The original leaf above the axillary bud will die. Because the

plant is so small, you must keep it under the lights for some additional time for it to grow. At three weeks a very weak liquid fertilizer can be given to encourage growth.

During the time that the leaf cutting is rooting, the plants must be kept moist. For 20 years or so now, we have been placing our cuttings into a sealed plastic bag to conserve moisture. We use white 13 gallon kitchen bags that holds a flat of 36 pots (10 x 20 flat, 2.5 inch pots). The flats are placed under florescent lights (2 to 6 inches above the flat). The ideal temperature is 70 degrees. Colder or warmer is much less effective.

Leaf cuttings can help you propagate large numbers of plants but as you can see the process is more complicated than taking tuber cuttings. Success rates for rooting leaf cuttings can be very high, easily over 90%. That is very comparable to tuber cuttings. It is the extra growing time that the plants need to mature that is the biggest negative in the process.



Scott's Caldera, B SC Bronze