

Portland Dahlia Society Bulletin

See Zoom Meeting Invitation Below

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Portland Dahlia Society Website: portlanddahlia.com

Next meeting Tuesday, October 13th, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

OCTOBER ZOOM MEETING INVITATION

Mark Oldenkamp is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83999166851?pwd=U01XS3N2aHR0TEY3eksxVzZjK2t3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 839 9916 6851

Passcode: Dahlias1!

One tap mobile

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US (Houston)

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Dial by your location

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PROGRAM NOTES FOR OCTOBER

The topics for the meeting agenda will include several “news we can use” items. We will discuss things we can do today in our gardens, for example:

Terry Smith will discuss how to go about selecting and saving seed for next year’s first year seedlings.

Should we dig clumps now that were knocked over by the strong winds? Eric Toedtli will discuss some of the finer points of digging and dividing.

How has the smoke effected our plants?

Is my first year seedling worth keeping another year?

How does a new variety get into The Book?

What can I do to prepare to dig?

What are the pros and cons to digging in mid to late October vs later?

Finally, Larry Smith we provide a recap and slide show of the winners in our Virtual Dahlia Show.

POWDERY MILDEW

Several growers have reported problems with powdery mildew this season. What seems to work well as a curative is JMS Stylet horticultural oil. (The dilution rate is three tablespoons to one gallon.) It is not inexpensive, but if you can wangle free shipping out of Amazon Prime, you can cut your cost about in half. Alternatively, you can see what your local agricultural supply store has for powdery mildew. (They may stock Stylet oil.)

For this season, it’s a little late for the preventative approach. However, next season you might consider applying a preventive dose in mid to late July. Web sites like *Rosemania* list many mildew preventive products for the home gardener. It seems to help to spray the top layer of soil as well as the young plants. Finally, it’s interesting to note that those growers who have adopted an organic approach to their gardens seem to have less to no problems with mildew.



Hollyhill Tangelo

YOU CAN HELP

Many of you have expressed the desire to contribute to a fund for the two families of PDS club members, Bob & Cynthia Patterson in Estacada and Julie Huynh in Otis, Oregon, who suffered a total loss of their homes in the recent wild fires.

A separate account, not connected with PDS, will be opened at the Lake Grove Wells Fargo Bank. Checks are to be made out to SHIRLEY BANKSTON, 1116 SW Stephenson St., Portland, OR 97219-8218.

Please note that by giving this way your gift will not be tax deductible. If a deduction is important to you, please choose a charity name that is connected to a wildfire fund.

Donors names will be kept anonymous and your donations will be accepted now until November 16, 2020. On that date a check will be sent to the Patterson family and the Huynh family.

Many thanks for keeping Bob and Cynthia and Julie in your thoughts and prayers. Any amount we contribute will help them in starting over.

TRIAL GARDEN UPDATE

Nearly all entries in the Canby Trial Garden have been officially judged with at least three qualified judges' scores. Special recognition to Linda Taylor, Nick Gitts, Ted Kennedy, Mark Oldenkamp, Gordon Jackman, Teresa Bergman, Larry Sawyer, Gary Murphy, Nan Hage and Larry Smith who took the time to score many of the entries and/or helped with receiving, watering, fertilizing, planting, grooming, record keeping and report filing.

OCTOBER IN THE GARDEN

To dig or not to dig...? Soon the colors will begin to fade and forms will become more imprecise. The sunny brisk fall days of October will begin to wane and be inevitably followed by the wet, short, cold, overcast days of late November. An advantage to digging this month is the soil is not yet waterlogged and the soil comes away from the tubers more easily. Also consider there may be some spots in your garden which have poor drainage and these areas should be first dug. Moreover, some varieties are more susceptible to rot in waterlogged November soil. Notoriously hard to winter over varieties like Rhonda, Mi Wong or Aitara Caress should be lifted and stored first before soil borne molds begin to do their damage.

If you have planted multiple plants of the same variety, compare them carefully to determine which plants have

produced the best flowers. Which plants appear more vigorous and have the best centers and overall form? This is your *superior* stock which you will want to replant or in some instances take cuttings from next year. I sometime code the tubers and the plastic tag with an "x" by the name to so indicate.

Many of us are still making crosses and attempting to save seed for next year's stars of tomorrow. It is ok to harvest the seed pods if they are firm and straw yellow in color. Some growers like to break open and dry the seeds from the ripe pods. Others prefer to leave the pods whole and allow them to dry naturally in a dry location. I find it easy to cut the pods with foot long stems and then dry my pod bouquets grouped in ADS plastic exhibition vases. Sometimes I find I'll leave a seed pod parent alone for a few weeks until the pods become more mature. My digging methodology is quite purposeful although it may appear random.

Seed pods can be helped along by making sure the florets (petals) are removed. The florets seem to decompose easily with the fall rains. I like to select the taller blooms for seed production, since they are more easily pollinated. Also disbudding helps to strengthen the stems and encourage more vigorous seed production.



Photo: Hollyhill Dragon Fire

If you are growing seedlings, I would suggest digging your first year keepers prior to frost. In many instances they are planted more shallowly than established varieties, thus being more vulnerable to a hard freeze. Many seedling growers believe in splitting the first year clumps in two prior to storing away. This tends to lessen the probability of crown rot. A dip of all cut portions of all dahlia tubers into an anti-fungal agent helps prevent rot during storage. I use a Captan solution. Others find Benelate solution or household bleach mixed one to ten parts water effective in stopping rot or mold. A more recent and popular trend is dipping the cuts into powdered cinnamon. Always be sure to allow your cut tubers time to cure after having divided and treated the cut portions. This should be done at storage temperature

and will take 24 to 72 hours depending on relative humidity. What works well for me is dividing, curing and storing my tubers in my attached garage.

A quick note on marking tubers... Many of us use an indelible pencil of some type or simply mark the outside of the plastic storage bag with the name of the enclosed variety. Speaking of marking, now is an excellent time to check your tags to make sure the name matches the flower. Also see if the tag is durable enough to withstand the harvest/storage process. Many of us use the white plastic tags which sometimes become too brittle and are subject to shatter. While we're checking for name accuracy and superior stock, now is an excellent time to see if your tag(s) are storage worthy.

It also makes sense to bring in your potroots prior to a killing frost. Just cut off the stalks even with the soil and pack up the pot, potting soil and root into storage boxes for safe keeping in your tuber storage location. Alternatively, potroots can be easily stored in nursery flats in your normal storage location and watered once a month. Tubers that have grown out of the drainage holes can be either left or removed. My experience has been if it makes no difference. The only advantage of removal is tighter and neater packing of the storage boxes or flats.

AUTUMN IN THE DAHLIA PATCH

By Max Ollieu

I'm starting to prepare for the Big Dig. That means getting all soaker hoses rolled up and stored, removing extra stakes needed for support, and any other obstacles such as shade cloth and movable structure that could be in the way. I also begin/continue to remove those dahlia varieties or portions of, that didn't perform well. Sometimes that's 100 percent, but more likely 10-25 percent of plants in a variety that I don't want to grow next season or have others grow. Each year, it seems I get a little more discriminating as to what qualifies to keep within a variety. My suspicion is that most of the symptoms I'm concerned about have virus as a driver. Though it does seem I have less of a problem with those varieties that have resided in my garden for a few years compared to those relatively new to my garden. In the latter case, it's not uncommon to be left with only 1-2 healthy plants as time for the Big Dig approaches. In those instances, hopefully there will be enough tubers from which to take cuttings next spring to get back to the number of plants I hope to grow.



Longtime members Arlene and Arnie Klug celebrate their 66th Wedding Anniversary. Photo by Max Ollieu

Meanwhile, we cover the raised beds and walkways in the dahlia garden with leaves from maple trees shading the lawn and garden. Those leaves when shredded through our riding lawnmower vacuum system completely cover the garden and walkways for the winter. By spring, earthworms will have consumed nearly all the leaf mulch as well as held most of the weeds and grass in check.

A goal of mine is to have the dahlia tubers dug, divided and stored in vermiculite by mid-November. Although killing frosts often impact my garden about mid-October, I don't wait for a frost before digging the root clumps. Varieties I don't plan to keep are dug first and the most valuable varieties dug last. Some of the rationale for this approach would include: (1) greater risk from drying out the tubers when the days are warm and the humidity low, and a somewhat shorter season for those less desired varieties and (2) wetter, cooler days allow tubers to retain their moisture better, as well as allow the more desired varieties to continue to grow and mature as long as possible.

It works best for me to dig about as many root clumps as I can process in one day. I dig, wash and label a variety before moving them into my garage for 1-2 days, then divide, dust with sulfur, let dry another day before placing in appropriate-sized containers (different sizes of plastic bags, as well as shoe-box style plastic crates from one to several gallons in size). Tops are left open/off with vermiculite just covering the tubers.

New vermiculite is dampened with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water to one gallon of vermiculite. Larger plastic crates are used to contain the plastic bags and smaller crates. Most of my dividing is done after dark with the music turned up.



The above photo shows Allen Manuel working in his dahlias during our smoke filled days. One picture is truly worth a thousand words.

Seemingly, there was little reported damage to the dahlias due to the smoke. All my begonias dropped their buds, but now are resetting to re-bloom. An orchid growing friend noted similar bloom/bud drop with his orchids.