



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

CREEKSIDE GENEVEVE, B, FD, BI, FLOWER OF THE YEAR
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WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

MARCH –ANOTHER MONTH of PREPARATION AND WAITING

Improving your garden's soil

March came in like a lion and that was a good warning to us all not to be too hasty and not to plant any tender plants that can't take future frosts much less just plain cold, damp soil conditions. Be patient. Yet on beautiful days such as the first Sunday in March, if your soil can be worked without lumping (i.e. it is dry enough to be dug) spend some time turning over the top 4" to 8" of your garden. Had you decided to add some humus for more loft and organic components, or small rocks to add air passages, you will be accomplishing those tasks plus possibly one more of good value. The same pretty weather that drew you outdoors will also draw insects up from

the lower levels of your soil. By spading the soil you stand a good chance of exposing these villains to future quick and hard frosts. We have more to come, believe me. This is an excellent way to rid your garden of future troubles or at least reduce the odds to a number easier to handle. After turning over your soil, closely inspect the top of the soil. You will probably find several, inch-long, whitish grubs. These are probably grubs from the Japanese beetle that can cause so much damage later. Either squash them or at least drop them in some bleach or insecticide. Whatever you do, show them no mercy. Cutworms are another pest that you might find. They are a lot
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DAHLIA SOC OF GEORGIA MARCH MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 20TH

7:30 P. M.

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

GARDEN CLASSROOM (BASEMENT)

On the threshold of the new growing season, the March meeting will focus on two topics of immediate interest to our members. We will view a DVD on **how to grow dahlias in containers**, something sometimes desirable and

necessary in our crowded and often shady north Georgia landscapes. Then we will have a demonstration of how to use cuttings for growing dahlias. This is always interesting even if you don't take cuttings for yourself. **BE READY TO ASK YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING YOUR DAHLIAS AS THE APRIL & MAY MEETINGS ARE TUBER SALES AND THERE WON'T BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK THESE TYPES OF QUESTIONS THEN.**

2006 ANNUAL CALENDAR

- MARCH MEETING, MAR 20,ABG
- APRIL TUBER SALE, APR 17,ABG
- MAY TUBER SALE, MAY 15,ABG
- JUNE MEETING, JUNE 19, ABG
- JULY , ANNUAL PICNIC, TBA
- AUGUST MEETING, AUG 21,ABG
- CAROLINAS DAHLIA SHOW UNC ABORETUM, ASHEVILLE-SEPT 9 & 10
- NATIONAL DAHLIA SOCIETY DAHLIA SHOW, LONG ISLAND, NY SEPTEMBER 14-17
- TENNESSEE DAHLIA SHOW, CLARION HOTEL, CHATTA-NOOGA, SEP 23 & 24
- GEORGIA DAHLIA SHOW, ABG, ATLANTA, GA SEPT 30 & OCT 1
- ALABAMA DAHLIA SHOW, MCWANE SCIENCE CENTER, BIRMINGHAM, AL OCT 7 & 8
- GA NAT'L FAIR DAHLIA SHOW, PERRY, GA OCTOBER 11-13
- OCTOBER MEETING, MINI DAHLIA SHOW, OCT 16, ABG
- NOV MEETING, NOV 20, ABG
- CHRISTMAS PARTY— DEC, TBA

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

BONNIE MANN

MARIETTA, GEORGIA

WE ARE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU AS A NEW MEMBER OF THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA.

SPRING TUBER SALES

Our Spring tuber sales will be held during our regular meeting times in **April (17th) and May (15th)**. These are always fun evenings with everyone having a great time and purchasing some heat tolerant tubers for your gardens. We use an auction format for the sale which just increases the fun and the cost doesn't get too high. The tubers are high quality and will have a visible growing tip or it won't be offered for sale. All types of dahlias will be available for purchase from those that will grow to 12" in

diameter to 2" Pom Pom types. There will also be waterlily forms and open-centered forms. So plan on being at the tuber sales.

MEMBERS—Please bring as many tubers for the sale as you can. All tubers need to meet the following criteria: **1.** They must have a visible eye. **2.** They must be listed in the ADS Classification Book. **3.** They must have the correct name written on the tuber or on a tag attached to the tuber. **4.** All tubers must be divided and ready for sale.

MULCH PURCHASES THIS YEAR

There has been a warning on the internet recently about the mulch that is available this growing season as some of it could be from the hurricane devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi. The

caution is related to the possibility of the Formosan termite being included in the mulch as they have infestations in Louisiana for sure. Make sure you know where your mulch came from before you buy

it this season or use material from your yard or your neighbor's yard. Just make sure no herbicide or weed killer has been applied.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY CUTOFF DATE

The cutoff date for being included in the annual membership directory will be **April 1st 2006**. We would like to have everyone included in the directory so if you haven't sent in your dues yet please do so before the cutoff date. You can pay your dues at our meeting this month or you can mail your check to **Henry Everett, 2690 Gleneagles Drive, Tucker, GA 30084**.



LUPIN SHELIA , ORCHID, DARK PINK, DARK PINK & WHITE. A VERY BEAUTIFUL OPEN CENTERED DAHLIA.



EMBRACE, BB, SEMI-CACTUS, YELLOW
BEST BB IN LAST TWO NAT'L SHOWS



harder to see. They are about 1" long, brown in color and blend in very well with the dirt, so get down close to the ground. If found, treat them the same way as the grubs.

Have you had your soil tested this year?

It is still not too late to have your soil tested. Take a sample of soil from several locations in your garden and take the sample to your county extension agent. In a couple of weeks you will be notified of the pH level of your soil as well as recommendations to improve it and your overall fertilization level. Dahlias like a pH level of about 6.5. A reading of 6.0-7.0 is fine and will provide the slightly acidic level desired by most plants, not just dahlias. If the application of lime was suggested, I recommend a dose of powdered lime, broadcast by hand on the surface of your soil, and left to be delivered by future spring rains. Neither dig it in nor plow it in. The rain and the lime will work together just fine. It takes lime several months to begin do its job of sweetening the soil.

Check your tubers

Do not forget to check your tubers. This late in storage, tubers often start to shrivel. If they do, then mist them lightly with water and leave them uncovered for several days to encourage absorption. If you have ordered some tubers that have been delivered, check to see if any have shriveled. Treat them also with a light misting.



PHOTO # 1

IF you can't stand it anymore and have to plant something, then try placing a tuber or two in a pot, vertically, (see photo #1) only covering the lower half of the tuber (the root end). Water lightly and, if possible, provide some bottom heat. A good source is on the top of a refrigerator or water heater. Recently I heard about using an inverted plastic storage tub with an electric light in it. Within weeks eyes will elongate into shoots.



PHOTO # 2

By doing this early potting you know which tubers are viable and you are insuring a developed root system when planting time arrives. Not to mention you

“scratched the itch” to plant something. For those adventurous enough to try propagating more plants, this operation prepares the dahlias to yield cuttings; but that is for another day.

Be patient and rest up. You will soon have plenty of work to do.....enjoyable work, but work.

BRIAN KILINGSWORTH

CORRECTIONS

THE WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR THE GARDENING IN GEORGIA ARTICLE LAST MONTH IS: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/GeorgiaGardeners/ I APOLOGIZE FOR THE OMISSION.

2006 ALABAMA DAHLIA SHOW LOCATION HAS BEEN CHANGED TO THE MCWANE SCIENCE CENTER IN DOWNTOWN BIRMINGHAM.

CHECK OUT THE SPREAD ON DAHLIAS IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF MARTHA STEWART'S LIVING MAGAZINE