



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

INLAND DYNASTY AA—SC-Y

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DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

STONE MT DAHLIA DISPLAY GARDEN

As many of you know we have been looking for a location to institute a dahlia display/trial garden for a numbers of years. We had a trial garden for over 25 years but it closed out a few years ago and we have been looking for a suitable location to SHOW OFF our dahlias to the general public. This effort has finally taken root as the Silver Dollar Corporation has agreed to allow us to develop a

garden which will be located at the Antebellum Plantation area of Stone Mountain Park right next to the Dickey House (picture on next page). The area is a 30" X 15" plot right next to the house and just before going into the Plantation Garden area. We have called for a membership work day on May 19th for those that are avail- (cont next



ALA-MODE, B-FD-RI-R/W a VERY LOVELY DAHLIA THAT WILL GROW IN THE SOUTH. IT WAS OFFERED AT THE APRIL TUBER SALE AND CHANCES ARE IT WILL BE SOLD AT THE MAY SALE. IT IS ALSO ONE SOLD BY A NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL GROWERS SO IF YOU DON'T GET ONE THIS SEASON PUT IT ON YOUR LIST FOR NEXT YEAR.

**MAY MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 21ST**

7:30 PM

EXHIBIT HALL

(ACROSS THE COURTYARD)

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

The second tuber sale/auction of 2007 will be held at the ABG starting at 7:30 PM. We will have a new

feature this time with a table set aside for the purchase of small flowering dahlias with a cost of \$3 each that will not be auctioned. We will have pictures of most of these dahlias too. The rest will be auctioned and there will be pictures of almost all of the blooms. Come and purchase some wonderful dahlias for your home garden.

2007

ANNUAL CALENDAR

- MAY TUBER SALE, MAY 21
ABG EXHIBIT HALL
- JUNE MEETING, JUNE 18 ABG
- JULY MEETING/PICNIC, CREEK-SIDE DAHLIA FARM, AUGUST 4
- AUGUST MEETING, AUG 20
ABG
- NATIONAL DAHLIA SHOW, SEPT. 6-10, ST CHARLES, IL
- CAROLINAS DAHLIA SHOW SEPT. 15-16, UNC ARBORETUM, ASHEVILLE, NC
- TENNESSEE DAHLIA SHOW 22-23 SEPT. CHATTANOOGA CONVENTION CENTER
- GEORGIA DAHLIA SHOW SEPT 29/30 ABG, ATLANTA, GA
- ALABAMA DAHLIA SHOW OCT. 6, MCSWAIN SCIENCE CTR, BIRMINGHAM. AL
- GA NAT'L FAIR DAHLIA SHOW OCT 10-12, PERRY. GA
- MINI-SHOW OCTOBER 15, ABG
- NOVEMBER MEETING NOVEMBER NOV 19, ABG
- DECEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY TBA

MAY- DAHLIA PLANTING BEGINS

May is usually the first month in which to plant dahlia tubers or plants in the Atlanta and northern Georgia areas. Usually I recommend mid May as the start point because of the threat of late frost or at least cool soil temperatures. However, we again had a mild winter and this spring has been quite pleasant. The soil in my garden reached the desired 70 degrees. The rains have been below average so our garden soil can be worked with little concern of compacting. At the same time the cool temperatures at night have been great for hardening off any plants or potted tubers. If you've done your homework then you know that your bed should have already been prepared in a sunny location that will get **AT LEAST ½ DAY OF SUN**. It will not be in the lowest spot of the garden but instead, it should be where good drainage exists or where you've already considered that and have provided for good drainage in some manner. **DAHLIAS DO NOT LIKE WET FEET!** Once summer sets in dahlias will grow extremely quickly and many can reach a height of between 3' and 7'. You will need to provide some support system in order to keep the growth off of the ground. You can use anything as simple as a wooden or metal (rebar) stake or even a more elaborate device such as a tomato cage. **SET YOUR STAKING SYSTEM BEFORE YOU PLANT THE DAHLIAS!** Stakes have been known to find and destroy planted dahlias. I speak from personal experience.

If you have already **IMPROVED THE SOIL IN YOUR PLANTING AREA WITH ANY NUMBER OF ENRICHING ORGANIC MATTER** then plant the dahlias in a hole about 3"- 4" deep. If you are planting tubers directly in the hole you do not need to add fertilizer at this time because the tuber supplies any needed food and most moisture. Gently refill the soil over the tuber while avoiding disturbing any young eyes or sprouts that have appeared on the tuber. Some growers only partially fill the hole initially, adding soil gradually as the plant begins to grow. If any eye or sprout has been knocked off, they will regenerate themselves quickly and continue to grow. In fact I will eliminate all but one or two eyes before planting tubers so the remaining eye(s) will get full advantage of food and water. You do not need to water planted tubers at this time.

The same method goes for any tubers you may have previously potted in order to begin the "awakening process". Gently tap the root /tuber mass out of the

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are so pleased to welcome the following new members to the Dahlia Society of Georgia. We are looking forward to seeing you at some of our meetings or other functions during the year.

**RAM & SAM BELLAM
JONESBORO, GEORGIA**

**VALERIE GORMAN
SUWANEE, GEORGIA**

**TOM & ESTHER KING
TULSA, OKLAHOMA**

**JOHN VENABLE
DECATUR, GEORGIA**

(CONT FROM P-1) able to come out and help get the garden ready to plant. We will meet at 8:30 in the parking lot at the Plantation Area. This is a wonderful project that every member can help come to fruition and take pride in the result.



DAHLIA QUESTIONS

pot and place in the bottom of the hole. It is fine if any sprouts protrude above the top of the hole because that will provide you with an indication of the dahlia's health. You should water in this root/tuber mass to help it get off to a quick start. A handful of slow release fertilizer at planting time, left on the surface, is a good step at this time.

If you have created or acquired any dahlia plants then a small handful or less of fertilizer can be worked into the soil used to cover the base of the dahlia plant in the planting hole. Use a general, balanced fertilizer such as 8-8-8 or 12-12-12. As a precaution against burning the new leaves provide some type of cover over these plants for about 48 hours. This protection will allow the young plants to adjust to their new settings with the minimum of damage. Here again the plant will provide you with a visual indicator of its overall health.

At this time let me make two suggestions. Hold back several tubers or plants to replace any that fail to make it. At this month's auction buy several extra dahlias because as with any other flower, dahlias are subject to rot or other damage at various times throughout the growing season. Planting time is an "at risk" time until the dahlias acclimate to their new surroundings. Second, as an experiment, I challenge you to leave a plant or two or a started dahlia tuber or two in the pot. Any size pot will do. Plant the entire pot in the ground, covering to slightly over the top of the pot. Keep track of which ones are still in the pot. Experience has shown that there will be no discernable difference in the growth nor bloom production of these plants and, in the case your



garden is visited by tuber eating voles (photo on left), the pot will stop these eating machines from feasting on your dahlia tubers.

For the past several years we have grown all of our dahlias by leaving them in the pots and planting the pot directly in the ground. Our garden contained over 1000 dahlia plants. I believe we have had the very same number and quality of blooms and there are at least three advantages over dahlias planted directly into the garden soil. First, you will avoid any damage from burrowing moles and voles. They can not chew through the pots. Second, if the particular variety of dahlia is a poor tuber maker, you will find that they do make tubers if planted while still in the pot. Third, in the fall when the plants die back, those left in pots are easily pulled from the ground and are very easy to store. That way you can avoid all of the digging and mess associated

Q: How do I treat cuttings that I purchase at the auction or receive from another grower? A: 1. Harden them off to the sun & wind. 2. Make sure they have an over abundance of roots by looking at the bottom of the plant. DO NOT plant the cutting until it has lots of roots or soil fungus can kill it. If not enough roots give it a mild fertilizer and let it continue to grow in the pot until it does.

3. Plant it on a cloudy day if possible and build a little tent over it with dark plastic & sticks to shade it from the noonday sun until it acclimates 3 or 4 days after planting.

Q: What are some easy to grow tubers that I should look for at the tuber sales? A: Bo-Bay, Elsie Houston, Alpen Cherub, Peaches N Cream, Honka, Cherokee Beauty, Yuukyu, Verda, Taratahi Lilac, Rebecca Lynn, Zorro, L . A. T. E., Camano Messenger, David George, Jesse G, Marie Snugg, and Willow Borealis.

Q: How should I handle my tubers I purchase at the auction until I am ready to plant them? A: Put them in a plastic grocery bag and close the top so air can't get to the tubers and cause them to start shriveling. You may use a zip lock bag too but leave the top open unless it is a large one.

Q: Since it has been so dry this spring can I water in my tubers when I plant? A: Yes, lightly unless we start receiving regular rain.

MEMBERS BRING YOUR TUBERS

We need your tubers for the tuber sale/auction so come early and bring your tubers that meet the following conditions:

1. Each tuber must be listed in the ADS 2006 or 2007 classification book.
2. Each tuber must have a visible eye or the spot where an eye was broken off circled with a black marker.
3. Each tuber must be marked with it's name written on the tuber or a label attached with the name.

The table where the tubers will be will be organized starting with AA, A, B, BB etc. Please place them by size in alphabetical order. This will assist us in locating the tuber on the computer run so we can flash a picture of the bloom on the screen.

(CONT FROM P-3)

with washing and storing clumps of tubers. If you chose not to dig and store, simply cover with 4" to 6" of mulch and the dahlias will survive winter and grow again next season.

One last warning- until your plant's stalk has grown to the width of a good sized pencil; you should inspect your newly immerging sprouts and plants daily, if possible. At this stage new tender growth is very inviting to cutworms (Photo above). They come out at night and you might find that new



growth has been cut off at the surface. Your plant will look like it has been visited by a "tiny lumberjack". (Photo on right) If you find that a plant has been damaged, search several inches down in the soil immediately around the damaged growth and you will probably find a fat, brown and round cutworm. Cutworms are hard to spot so take your time. Two stout rocks, used as cymbals, will take care of your lowly nemesis; ditto for an old pair of pliers. Some growers have been known to wrap aluminum foil around the lower couple of inches of new growth as a preventative cover. It works!

Now, all the waiting is over. Begin planting your dahlias, get your hands dirty and your back sore. Rejoice that your passion is gardening.

BRIAN KILLINGSWORTH



FRIGOULET BB-IC-RI R/W



ZORRO AA-ID-DR



CAMANO CLOUD BB-SC-PK



AMY K B-SC-LB PK/WH