



# DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

Jessica BB-IC-BI Y/R

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Flower Of The Year

[WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG](http://WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG)

## SOME RAIN IS BETTER THAN NONE

This past Thursday and Friday morning the Atlanta area received some much needed rain; however, not very much unless you lived at the Airport which received an inch. The rest of us received a 1/2 inch or less. The value of this rain cannot be underestimated as we go into the final month before frost kills the blooms and tops. Our plants are making tubers for next year so water is very

important to that process. If you can save your air conditioner runoff that will help to water those with not many dahlias. Dishwater, shower water, laundry water-save it all if you can. In Australia they must do this every year due to the dryness. Ashley-Simpson Garden Center has 275 gal tanks for runoff available for \$95. Check it out.



YUUKYU B-ID-W GROWING IN THE DISPLAY GARDEN AT STONE MOUNTAIN. OUR DISPLAY GARDEN HAS DONE VERY WELL THIS YEAR DESPITE THE HEAT AND GROWING CONDITIONS. IT IS STILL IN BLOOM SO COME OUT AND TAKE A LOOK.

### OCTOBER MEETING

MONDAY OCTOBER, 15

7:30 PM

BASEMENT CLASSROOM

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our mini-show is canceled but everyone please bring a bouquet of "what's left" dahlias in your garden. Condition of the blooms, stems, and foliage are not important. We want

to show others in attendance some of the dahlias we grew this season. It will be a show and tell time and please bring any that are of special interest or that you are proud to have this year. You won't have to talk if you don't want to we will just look at your flowers. We will discuss the watering situation for next year also.

2007

## ANNUAL CALENDAR

- DAHLIA SHOW & EXHIBITION WILL BE HELD GA NAT'L FAIR DAHLIA SHOW OCT 10-12, PERRY, GA
- EVERYONE BRING A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS TO A REGULAR MEETING. OCTOBER 15, ABG . MINI-SHOW IS CANCELED
- NOVEMBER MEETING, NOV 19, ABG
- CHRISTMAS PARTY  
DECEMBER 9, 1-5 PM  
ASHWOOD CONDOMINIUMS CLUBHOUSE  
3227 HENDERSON MILL ROAD  
ATLANTA GA 30341  
(SAME LOCATION AS LAST YEAR)

## CHORES IN THE DAHLIA GARDEN- OCTOBER

After all of the dreaming, planning and hard work we now have the last of the blooms. Isn't it amazing how rapidly they grow, from day to day you can almost see the changes. The shortening of the days, the lessening of light, all go into urging the dahlias to make seed.

These dahlia blooms of October are determined to produce attractive flowers to entice the various pollinators to do their job, and be quick about it. The blooms seem to blow their centers more quickly now in order to make it easier for the bees and butterflies to get to the pollen.

### Tagging the "Keepers"

By now you probably have a good idea which of the varieties you will want to grow next year. There are still probably several weeks before the first killing frost. My advice is - don't waste it. Go through your garden now and cull the disappointing plants so you can use that space next year. Most people have a limited area in which to grow and you don't need to take up space with those varieties that did not meet your expectations. There is no sense in digging and storing dahlias that didn't perform as you expected. Trash them now. Literally pull them out of the ground, bag them and get any debris from those plants in case they might be infected with some virus or other disease. This winter when you get the new catalogs you will find plenty of new, appealing dahlias that you will want to grow in 2007. You will be glad that you didn't keep disappointments.

While conducting this purge, be sure to place a sturdy tag on the "keepers" (attaching it to the main stalk of the plant) because when the frost kills the top of your plants, they will all look alike. This is from one who knows from past "surprises".

If you have a digital camera use it to record blooms of those you plan to keep. In the middle of winter it is always a joy to pull up a dahlia photo file and go through it, remembering the beauty of the blooms and the thrill you felt



went seeing the first good bloom of a particular variety.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**SUSAN BROOKS**

**ATLANTA, GA**

**TOM JONES**

**CHESTERFIELD, SC**

## **WE ARE SO GLAD YOU HAVE DECIDED TO JOIN THE DS OF GEORGIA.**

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when seeing the first good bloom of a particular variety.

### Study Your Garden

Now is the time to study the layout of your garden regarding sunlight and drainage. If all of your dahlia plants are skinny and tall, with weak stems, then you probably need to provide more sun next year. There are a few dahlias that naturally grow 7' - 9', but most are in the 3' to 6' range with the average being about 4 1/2' tall. The garden in this photo would gain from the removal of some neighboring trees. If you suspect a drainage problem then dig your tubers. You might find some indication of poor drainage previously undetected i.e. mud, even though it has not rained lately. I can not over emphasize the need for good drainage. Remember a rule of thumb from the Spring - "*dahlias don't like wet feet*". Record any changes that need to be done before next year's planting and keep track of that record. Plan now to improve your garden before you plant next year!

For those who do not want to dig up the tubers, be sure to cover the beds with about 6" of mulch. Wheat straw, pine straw, or leaves make for a good, protective covering that should carry your dahlias through the winter.

### Keep Deadheading

With the dahlias producing so many blooms now, we are kept very busy trying to remove the dead blooms. Dahlias lose the back petals first and this creates almost a steady rain of spent petals. They quickly start to decay wherever they come to rest. If left on the ground they can quickly become a breeding ground for various harmful fungi such as Botrytis. By deadheading, you remove a lot of decay before it can cause fungal problems. You also make the plant

you with a constant source of blooms. There is a right way to dead-head and a wrong way. It is tempting to just grab the faded bloom and pull it off of the stem. It is better if you take the time to cut and remove the stem along with the spent bloom. Cut down to just above the first detectible new branch (lateral) and it speeds the growth of the lateral and future blooms.

I have found from experience that the "quick and easy" way of removing just the bloom by simply pulling it off the stem can result in a very painful sting to the palm of your hand when, in your haste, you failed to detect the bee in the center of the bloom. When you make the same mistake at least once every season, you should learn to dead-head the proper way and stick to it.

**Spray for fungus**

This time of the year, with the cool nights and warm days, your garden is being subjected to nightly, heavy dews. On one hand that is very beneficial because it gently provides water to the dahlias. On the other hand, it provides the perfect breeding ground for many fungal diseases that weaken or even kill some of your plants. One particular fungus that appears now is powdery mildew. Rubigan will defeat powdery mildew. Also check more common fungicides found at your garden center store for defeating powdery mildew. Another common fungus appearing now is known as leaf spot. It initially appears on the lower leaves but works itself up the plant and can rapidly spread to adjacent plants. It doesn't seem to have any long-term effect on the plants but is unsightly. Captan or Cleery are two generally available fungicides that combat this condition. Again, it is a matter of keeping your plants as healthy as possible before their roots go into storage or hibernation.



Powdery mildew, late stage

**Fertilizing**

We recommend not giving nitrogen to dahlias about mid to late August. The earlier need to produce lush growth is replaced by a need to concentrate on blooms and roots. Having said that, I have found over the years that spraying the plants with water soluble potassium nitrate (a mix close to 15-0-35) helps

significantly strengthen the stems. Supposedly this nitrogen is needed to make the potassium work more efficiently and therefore is not a contradiction of the first sentence in this paragraph. Fertilizers containing phosphorous help dahlias produce blooms and enhances bloom color therefore we will use something like Morbloom, 0-10-10, until the killing frost arrives.



**PARKING AT THE ABG**

Construction on the new parking garage began on October 1st, 2007 and is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2009. During the construction parking will be very difficult as the entire staff of the ABG must park in the upper lot instead of behind the building. If you can car pool with some one else when you come to our monthly meetings it will be greatly appreciated. If the parking situation becomes too much of an issue we may be required to park off site and car pool from there. So, if you can, try and allow enough time to park down at the mall and ride together.

**ROSE LOVERS**

We are inviting the public to hear our three terrific speakers for the Deep South District Rose Convention.

On Saturday, October 20, Anna Davis will be speaking at 12:30. Her topic will be "Gardening in Small Spaces." Anna has been growing roses in the Atlanta area for over 35 years. Her gardens have been on many garden tours and in many publications. Mike Shoup will be speaking at 1:30. Mike is the owner of the Antique Rose Emporium in Texas. He will speak on "THE Consummate Garden Plant: Roses." His nurseries specialize in historic Roses.

Jim Mills will speak at 2:30. He is the owner of K&M Nursery in Mississippi. He will tell us all about "Growing Fortuniana Roses." He will give us the advantages of using this root stock, especially in the Deep South District.

Event Cost \$ 1 0  
 Location : The Sheraton Buckhead Hotel,  
 3405 Lenox Road Ne, Atlanta, Ga.

This particular product comes in a liquid form and can be found at Hastings and Habersham nurseries. A mixture of 1 TBS @ gallon of water will keep your blooms lively and strong and their colors quite bright. A dosage of common Epsom salts also is thought to boost bloom color and darken the foliage at the same time. Continuing to feed dahlias with potassium is thought to help tuber development and hence guarantee better storage.

### Enjoy

Take time at least once every day to just look at your blooms and marvel at their beauty. Share them with your friends and strangers. Every time you give away dahlias I bet you will receive a big, hardy smile. BK

## 2008 CALENDARS

The 2008 calendars from Tina McNabb of the Vancouver, BC Dahlia Society are now available for purchase. This is the same calendar we ordered last year and it is just as lovely as it was last year. I had the opportunity to see a copy of it at the National Show in Chicago. You may order it directly or, if you would like, I will consolidate the orders again this year and send them in to her. They make excellent Christmas gifts.



ARRANGEMENT OF JESSICA AT THE 2007 NATIONAL SHOW IN St. CHARLES, IL



REGINA PLAYING DURING STAGING AT THE 2007 NATIONAL SHOW IN ST. CHARLES, IL



FLOWERS WAITING TO BE STAGED 2007 NAT'L SHOW

