



KENORA WILDFIRE

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 2

February, 2008

A-ID-R

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

DAHLIAS THAT DID WELL IN THE 2007 HEAT

The weather during the 2007 growing season was, as we all know, the worst and caused the cancellation of all of the shows in the South States except for the Georgia National Fair Dahlia Show in Perry, GA. As a result growers of the Southern Societies were not able to see the best and new dahlias for 2007 on the show table so through this article I will try and discuss those new (both new re-

leases and new in my garden) dahlias that did well even in our heat during the 2007 growing season. All of these dahlias can be found on the **BIG LIST** www.dahlias.net/dbiglist.htm

ROCK RUN JAMES B-ID-FL R/Y 2006—(BELOW LEFT) What a great dahlia in the heat. It continued to put on blooms during the hottest part of the summer and they were very colorful and consistent. The centers of this dahlia even stayed closed after the weather turned colder where most dahlias centers open very soon when it turns cold. Grows to about 5'.

JIM DANDY M-FD-BI W/PR 1994— This plant grew very well all summer and had lots of lovely purple with white tipped blooms. Consistent blooms with the centers staying closed during the hottest part of the summer. I highly recommend it for your garden Grows to about 4'. (cont P-2)



FEBRUARY MEETING

FEBRUARY 18TH

7:30 PM

BASEMENT CLASSROOM

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

The program this month will be given by Jim Harrington of Jim Harrington Garden Designs. He will be presenting Rainwater Collection Solutions featuring The Rainwater

Pillow. Jim is a past president of both the Perennial Plant Association and the Native Plant Society. He has owned his garden design business for the past 19 years. We will also have a 5 minute dahlia culture checkup given by John Kreiner.



2008 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY-JULY

FEBRUARY

FEB 7-10

ATLANTA GARDEN &
PATIO SHOW
GALLERIA CENTER

FEB 18TH-MEETING ABG

MARCH

MAR 17- MEETING ABG
SOUTHERN STATES MTG
BIRMINGHAM, AL, TBA

APRIL

APR 21ST- TUBER SALE

ABG

MAY

MAY 19TH- TUBER SALE

ABG

JUNE

JUNE 16- MEETING ABG

JULY

ANNUAL PICNIC

TBA

CG ELEGANCE BB-C-L 2005—

This plant also bloomed all summer with the plant being covered with them. If you like lots of cactus flowers this is the plant for you as they are perfect blooms with a lovely lavender color. This flower really won me over to be one of my favorites. Grows to about 4'.



really grew well reaching over 6' in height. It also bloomed all summer with blooms that looked like Elma Elizabeth but you didn't have to wait until late September to have blooms like you do with EE. (no picture available)

DEUIL DU ROI ALBER B-ID-RI P/W— 1936 This dahlia is one of six that I tested last summer for Old House Gardens to determine if they will do well in our Southern heat. This dahlia did better than any others in my garden for heat tolerance during the summer of 2007 and just continued to bloom during the hottest part of August. It is a lovely combination of purple with white tips and was originated in 1936. It is a garden flower that grows to four feet. You can view the flower at this web address: www.oldhousegardens.com/bigFlwr.asp?Cat=ddRoiAlb



KARI FRUIT SALAD BB-C-DB Y/R— 1999 The book description doesn't do justice to the beautiful colors of this dahlia. It is an early bloomer with a ton of blooms that you will love to see in the garden and in your home. It did very well

in the heat considering....and then when it cooled down it even got better. Could stand some disbudding later in the season to hold size. The tips in the picture should be more purple than red. Grows to about 5'.



HEATWAVE WL-V Y/OR —1995 If you are looking for a yellow that will give you lots, and I mean lots of blooms, this is the one. It is one of the best garden flowers I have ever grown. It loved the heat blooming all summer. It is classified as a waterlily but it did not exhibit waterlily form in the Southern garden and it was more ID in form but the center stayed closed and like I said, bloomed it's head off till frost. Grows to about 4'

VALLEY RUST BUCKET MB-BR—2004 This dahlia put on lots of blooms during the summer and held up well until we had to quit watering and then it burned up as many did in our gardens last summer. It has a pretty bronze color and grows to 4 1/2 feet.



MS JULIE ST-BI RD/WH— 2007 This dahlia also did very well until the watering ban came into existence and the lack of water and the heat caused it to quit blooming but the plant did not burn up. It looks like Santa Claus but is stellar in form and actually did better in the heat than Santa Claus. Grows to 4'. (no picture available)

RINGO BB-FD-BI RD/WH—1994 This little dahlia just bloomed it's head off in our Stone Mountain Garden all summer long and was a most beautiful red and frost white. The plant covered itself with blooms. It grew to 4 1/2 feet. JK



WYN'S SENSATION A-SC-Y 2007—It looked more orange than yellow but was a nice A flower. The plant grew well in the heat and bloomed but had a hard time holding it's center. In a normal summer I think it will do very well in the South. Grows to about 5'.

CAMPOS GIBBY B-SC-DB PR/W— 1999 Lots of lovely blooms if you like this color combination which I do. The plant grew very well in the heat and it bloomed all summer. It is a vigorous plant and reached 5'.



COMMO POLY A-FD-L—1974 Our new member Steve Williams, who, by the way is now is working in Iraq as a civilian, gave me this plant and it

FEBRUARY DAHLIA CHORES

Improving your soil

Although it is several months before you can actual plant dahlias in your garden, there are several things to do or at least consider in February.

Last month I discussed in detail ways to improve your garden soil in order to benefit this year's crop of dahlias. I mentioned adding fine bits of granite, "turkey grit" or 8's and 9's. Several people asked what does this material look like. Here is a small pile of 8's and 9's



with a dime on top to show the relationship in size. As you can see these pieces of granite are quite small but remember, you are adding them to your current soil that probably contains a lot of red, Georgia clay. Clay is basically a solid, compacted mass, high in nutrients but lacking air and therefore space needed for roots to grow and water to flow in order to reach the roots and nourish the plants, then drain away. When you incorporate this material or some other similar substance like perlite into your soil, you will add necessary air pockets and thereby loftiness and drainage to the soil, making it far more beneficial to your dahlias. In the case of granite, it will also serve as a source of slow release potassium and phosphorous for as much as 10 years.

To know the nutrient value of your current soil, now is the time to have a soil test. Gather 5 - 8 scoops of soil from your garden, at the expected depth of the plants roots, screen out as much debris as possible, and submit to your County Extension agent (check the white pages for your county). They will send in the soil for testing and in several weeks you will receive a report of your garden's overall pH and any recommendations for liming or adding of fertilizers. There may be a small fee (about \$8) for this testing but it will probably be the best \$8 spent for gardening in 2008 as well as future years.

Here is how pH works and why it is so important to know. There is a scale where a pH reading of 7 means your soil is basically neutral- neither acidic nor alkaline. Readings below 7 indicates some degree of acidity and basically a little bit of acid is good for plants. Readings above 7 indicates a degree of alkaline soil. Now, as in

WINTER SHOWS

We would like to thank all of our members that volunteered to help with the Southeastern Flower Show and the Atlanta Garden & Patio Show. We really appreciate your time and effort in helping to answer dahlia questions, and handing out our growing guide and the list of heat tolerant dahlias to the public. There will be more people growing dahlias as the result. Thanks again!

2008 DUES

It's that time of the year again to renew your membership in the Georgia Dahlia Society so please don't delay in sending in your check to our Treasurer, Henry Everett or you may pay at the February meeting. The dues are the same as in past years and remains one of those items (maybe the only one) that has not gone up in cost. Dues are \$27 for an individual or \$30 per household. You can't even fill up your gas tank one time for that amount of money, not even a Honda. Your dues allow you to be transported to the wonderful world of dahlia growing with a wonderful group of like minded individuals growing the most beautiful flower in the world. You are valued as a mem-



SHOW TABLES AT 2007 NAT'L SHOW IN CHICAGO

ber and we hope your membership is valuable to you. Learning the in's and out's of growing our dahlias takes time; so all of the instruction benefits and networking available to members is indeed worth every penny of your dues.

We are all hoping and praying that the 2008 growing season will be much different from 2007 so please continue your membership in 2008.

all things, too much of anything is not good. Too much acid or too much alkaline will poison a plant. Readings of 6.0 to around 6.5 are desirable for dahlias.

If your soil test comes back and the reading is about 5, you will probably be advised to add some amount of lime to “sweeten “ the soil up into the 6’s range. In Georgia we basically have acidic soils and a recommendation of lime is likely. It will all depend, of course, on whether the soil has been used recently to grow other crops.

When applying lime, remember that it can take up to 6 months to fully alter your soil. Lime applied in February will still be working in August. My advice here is to get the soil tested now and apply powdered lime to the top of your garden, now. Do not plow or dig it in. Rains will carry it into the soil. Granular lime will probably take too long to break down and even longer to be incorporated into the soil, so use powdered lime.

In case your soil test comes back with a 7 or above, there will be a recommended dosage of fertilizer to apply. Fertilizer generally works a lot faster than lime so you will have a time advantage in this case. An important point to remember is a pH reading too low or too high means the nutrients will stay locked up in your soil and therefore unavailable to your plants, regardless of the amount of fertilizer present in your soil.

Inspect your tubers

If you have stored dahlia tubers from last season,



be sure to check them for over all conditions. Some may have a whitish mold- this is harmless and can be washed or wiped off. If you find some have shriveled, mist

them with warm water and recheck in 2 weeks. Also check for any signs (or smells) of rot. Gently squeeze a tuber to test for firmness. It should feel solid, like a potato. If you feel some mushiness, slice through the tuber at that spot. You will see rotting material. Continue to slice off rot, going toward where the tuber joins the old stalk, until you reach firm tuber. Tubers showing only partial rot may be saved by shearing off the bad parts, back to healthy

flesh, and then coat the wound with a fungicide like sulfur. You do not need much of the tuber to successfully grow a healthy dahlia. Again, recheck in 2 weeks.



Enjoy the downtime and stay warm. Spring is coming. BK

THANK YOU BRIAN

Brian Killingsworth has been our president during the 2006-2007 years and we would like to thank him for his leadership of the Dahlia Society of Georgia during a very difficult time in his and Linda’s life. We appreciate his love for dahlias and his determination to share that love and vast knowledge of growing dahlias with our members and with the general public. He shares that knowledge with us each month through his growing articles that appear in our newsletter and through presentations and networking with members at our meetings. We are all better dahlia growers as a result of his efforts.



CREEKSIDE VOLCANO B-LC-FL

ORIGINATED BY BRIAN KILLINGSWORTH