



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

SANTA CLAUS

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BB-ID-BI R/W 1983

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WATER.... OUR MOST CRITICAL RESOURCE

After 2007 the availability of water for our dahlia gardens and the rest of our outside watering needs is of primary interest to all gardeners. Jim Harrington, President of Rainwater Collection Solutions, gave us an excellent presentation at our February meeting on how to meet our need for water in our gardens. Those members in attendance received some

valuable information from Jim's lecture. While he does have his pillow collection system that he installs he told the members of a company called Watersorb <http://watersorb.com/index.html> that manufactures polymers for use in the garden and flower beds that can greatly reduce your need for watering your dahlias. Jim uses these polymers in every landscape installation his company does. Most of us may use some of these polymers already or have at least seen them in garden stores and magazines. This company sells them at a very affordable cost in quantity that are small enough for everyone.

Since this a partial solution to our watering needs our Society is planning to make a bulk purchase of these polymers if there is enough interest by the membership. Quite a bit of money can be saved by ordering in the larger amount of 55 lbs and then distributing the product as ordered. A breakdown of the amounts, costs, and how much to use are on the next page. You will need to



DEVIL DU ROI ALBER B-ID-RI P/W- 1936

PICTURE WAS NOT AVAILABLE LAST MONTH

MARCH MEETING

MARCH 17TH

7:30 PM

BASEMENT CLASSROOM

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR DUES FOR 2008. THIS WILL BE THE LAST NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE THAT HAVEN'T RENEWED BY APRIL. ALSO, THE CUTOFF FOR THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY IS APRIL

2008 CALENDAR

MARCH-AUGUST

MARCH

MAR 17- MEETING ABG

SOUTHERN STATES MTG

MAR 29, BBG, BIRMINGHAM, AL

APRIL

APR 21ST- TUBER SALE

ABG

MAY

MAY 10TH PLANT TUBS

STONE MT

DISPLAY GARDEN

MAY 19TH- TUBER SALE

ABG

JUNE

JUNE 16- MEETING ABG

JULY

ANNUAL PICNIC TBA

AUGUST

AUGUST 18- MEETING

ABG

dig your dahlias and place the watersorb in the soil and then replant the clump if you don't dig them each year. This would really enhance your water retention in your dahlia beds or other beds in your garden. If you are interested in ordering watersorb polymers for your garden please send me an email at jkreiner@bellsouth.net or call me 770-447-1405. We will mention it again at the March meeting and will try to get the order off by the 1st part of April. Please don't delay if you would like this product for your garden. If you want to order the 55 lb container please order it on your own as there is no price advantage to a bulk order in that amount.

Watersorb Polymers
(medium)

Weight	Shipping method	Total
1 lb (snow)	US Priority Mail included	\$19.99
2 lb.	US Priority Mail included	\$17.95
4 lb.	US Priority Mail included	\$30.00
10 lb.	US Priority Mail included	\$59.95
55 lb.	UPS Ground not included	\$192.50

Planting Beds

USE medium polymer and Mix ½ throughout planting hole and amend backfill with remaining ½.

1 sq. ft. 1" depth	1 1/2 tsp
1 sq. ft. 3" depth	2 tbsp.
1 sq. ft. 6" depth	3 tbsp.
100 sq. ft. 1" depth	1 lb.
100 sq. ft. 3" depth	2 lb.
100 sq. ft. 6" depth	3 lb.



**HOLLY-
HILL
ELECTRA
A-IC-OR
2001**
**THIS IS A
LOVELY
DAHLIA
THAT
WILL
PROVIDE
EXCEL-
LENT
FALL
COLOR.**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA IS VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS.

LORI GOEHRING

WOODSTOCK, GEORGIA

ALLEN & DEB HAAS

BREVARD, NORTH CAROLINIA

AFFILIATE MEMBERS FROM CAROLINAS
DAHLIA SOCIETY

BRUCE & JO ANN MILLER

CANTON, GEORGIA

DENNIS & ELAINE SLATTERY

WOODSTOCK, GEORGIA

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS AND OTHER FUNCTIONS. YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR DAHLIA BUCKS CERTIFICATE & DAHLIAS OF TODAY PUBLICATION SOON.

DAHLIAS OF TODAY

The Dahlias of Today publication has arrived and will be available to members at the March meeting. The cost has gone up this year to \$8 and that is the cost to the Society less shipping. This year's issue has an excellent article and pictures by Kevin Larkin & Karen Zydner of Corralitos Gardens, commercial growers in the Monterrey Bay area of California. They only sell cuttings and this article explains how they grow their cuttings and how you care for them after they arrive at your home. If you live away from Atlanta or can't get to the meetings the ordering information is below. The cost is \$8 plus \$2.50 shipping. Order from: Sandy Boley, Puget Sound Dahlia Association, 12027 62nd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98178. Email: sbgseattle@aol.com Telephone 206-772-3123

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 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. If you decided to add some humus to last year's covering mulch for more loft and organic components, or small rocks to add air passages and better drainage, you will be accomplishing those tasks plus possible 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. Every one you can eliminate now will be one less, very destructive beetle in the summer.



C u t - worms are another pest that you might find. They are a lot 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 agricultural 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.

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 #3) 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# 4). By doing this early potting you know which tubers are

Viable and you are insuring a developed root system when plant-

ing 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. BK

MORE POPULAR HEAT TOLERANT DAHLIAS

Last month we discussed those dahlias that did well in the terrible heat of 2007 so this a follow on article of a few dahlias that will grow well in your garden in a more typical growing year.

ZORRO —AA-ID-DR 1987 Zorro is a beautiful large dark red that grows to about 4'. It is very popular and grows well in every part of the country. It is an early to mid season bloomer and will be the first large dahlia to bloom in your garden. It grows well in our heat too.



KIDD'S CLIMAX—A-FD-LB PK/YL 1940 This an outstanding dahlia that has been around since 1940 and still year on the all across The beauty habits of make it one popular grow. It lovely coloring, grows to about 4', and grows very well in our heat. It is also **easy to grow** so make sure you add it to your garden. It was originated in Australia.



ELSIE HUSTON—A-ID-PK 1989 This one dahlia that every grower should grow as it is a beautiful pink and easy to grow. It wins on the show table every year and it grows well in our heat. It does get a little tall growing to 5 to 5



1/2 ' but worth the extra tying up requirements. It is one of my favorite dahlias and I really look forward to its blooming period.

KENORA FIREFIGHTER—B-FD-R 2005 If you would like a bright red dahlia in your garden this is the dahlia for you. It is a strong plant with lots of blooms that you will enjoy until frost. It grows to about 4 1/2 feet and takes the heat. It has become one of my favorites in the short two years I have been growing it and it will become yours too. **Easy to grow**



EMBRACE—BB-SC-Y 1999 Everyone needs to grow this dahlia as it is the most perfect one since Hamari Accord. This past show season it garnered 344 blue ribbons and above, all across the country except for the South where all shows were cancelled. It is a lovely flower on a strong plant but looks more orange/bronze in our area. It grows to about 5'-5 1/2' with many perfect blooms. Is was originated in Australia.



TARATAHI LILAC—BB-C-LB LV/WH 1996 Another great dahlia from Australia that wins on the show table each year and is an excellent garden flower. If you enjoy the cactus form then this will be a favorite in no time. It can take our heat but last year was a little too much for it to have those wonderfully colored blooms that we see in a typical summer.



ALPEN CHERUB—CO-W 1987 One of the best opened centered dahlias and very easy to grow. It puts on lots of delicate blooms that are equally as good on the show table or on your dining table. It will take the heat also. I highly recommend this dahlia for your garden. JK

