



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

BO-BAY B-SC- LB Y/L

Volume 6, Issue 3

April, 2008

FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

SPRING IS HERE...SPRING IS HERE

Atlanta in the Spring...is there a more beautiful city anywhere when the azaleas, dogwoods and tulips are in full bloom. Another great thing about Spring in Atlanta is the first of our two tuber sales is just around the corner and dahlia planting time cannot be far behind. We will hold our April tuber sale on April 21st at 7:30 PM, at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. At press time the exact location was not firm yet. Someone will be at the main en-

trance to provide directions to the tuber sale/auction. This is your opportunity to purchase quality **heat tolerant** tubers grown in our local area. Brian Killingsworth will be our auctioneer and he will describe the characteristics of each tuber and we will have a projected picture of most of the tubers. Growing guides will be available for everyone along with instructions on how to manage your purchased tubers until planting them. Refreshments will be provided.

MEMBERS—We need your tubers! We have a need for as many tubers as we can get so if you have divided tubers at home or will divide them before the meeting please bring them to the auction as we may have less than normal this year due to the drought last summer and other adverse growing issues that were experienced. All tubers must meet the following conditions:

1. Listed in the ADS Classification book.

(cont on next page)



SHOW & TELL A-LC-DB RD/Y A MOST UNIQUE FLOWER AMONG DAHLIAS AS THERE IS NONE QUITE LIKE IT. DOES WELL IN OUR HEAT BUT NOT LAST SUMMER.

APRIL MEETING

APRIL 21 TH, 7:30 PM

TUBER SALE/AUCTION

SOMEONE WILL BE THERE TO DIRECT YOU TO THE AUCTION

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

BRING YOUR TUBERS

2008 CALENDAR

APRIL-AUGUST

APRIL

APR 21ST- TUBER SALE

ABG

MAY

MAY 10TH PLANT TUBERS

STONE MT

DISPLAY GARDEN

MAY 19TH- TUBER SALE

ABG

JUNE

JUNE 16- MEETING ABG

JULY

ANNUAL PICNIC TBA

AUGUST

AUGUST 18—MEETING

ABG

NEW MEMBERS

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

**DR. JOHN & SALLY CRYMES
ATHENS, GEORGIA**

**MANUAL & MARLENE PADIN
FAYETTEVILLE, GEORGIA**

**JEFF & KRISTY PARTIN
DALLAS, 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 April 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

2. Each tuber must have a visible eye or growing tip, or if the growing tip has been knocked off, the location of the eye circled with a MM/pen.
3. The name of the tuber must be written on the tuber with a MM or a label attached to the tuber. Please be as accurate as possible with the name.
4. Bring only those considered as heat tolerant dahlias as listed on our website, new releases, or those that grow well in your garden.
5. Do not bring any tubers that you would not grow again in your own garden because of poor performance.

Our goal is to make sure our members and those attending that are not members purchase quality tubers that will perform in our heat and are named accurately. Bring your tubers for the April sale remembering we will have another sale in May.

DAHLIAS – APRIL –planting time approaches but.....

The drought has been dented, at least, by several nice, lengthy showers. Guess what...it's Spring. The warm weather and gentle rains are a guise to suck us in to making an oft repeated mistake; that of planting too early. Beware to those who want to plant dahlias now. Hold off until May. The current soil temperature shows a reading of 50-60 degrees. Remember, dahlias like the soil temperature at planting time to be about 70 degrees, a lot like tomato plants. Who among us "farmers" has not planted tomatoes and other crops too early? At least be honest with yourself. So, what can a frustrated, impatient dahlia grower do? What to do right now? There are several current tasks that will prove beneficial later in the growing season. Hopefully you garden has already been plowed or tilled at least once this season. If not, as soon as your soil dries sufficiently (a handful of soil squeezed into a ball then crumbles easily), take a sunny day to enjoy being outside and work your soil to at least a 6" depth. Any available compost or other aged organic material should be worked in at the same time. If you have had the soil tested and the results show a pH reading of below 6.0, casting powdered agricultural lime upon the surface of the freshly worked soil will help sweeten the soil and raise the pH to a more desirable reading of 6.2 – 6.5. Since it takes several months for lime to be

be incorporated, if your garden needs lime, then don't tarry; apply the lime now!!

Now is the time to pull out any dahlia tubers stored from last year and check their overall health. A white powdery mold on any can simply be washed off. Any dried tubers can be spritzed with warm water in hopes of plumping them back up. If while doing this checking you accidentally knock off a sprout or two, not to worry for they will quickly regenerate.

Tubers of newly acquired varieties* or favorites left from last year will definitely benefit from being potted in new, fresh potting soil and exposed to light and some water. With the longer days, warmth, light and moisture, they will quickly awaken. They will quickly develop roots within the pot in anticipation of a May planting. You will be amazed to see how much growth occurs, in as little as a month's time, both above and below the soil level in the pot.

About 16 hours of light a day will help awaken and produce initial roots. I recommend that you try to move the pots outdoors in the morning, place them in a sunny spot, and return them indoors in the evening. Then supplement their indoor light with any number of artificial light sources to reach a 16 hour dose of light. You will be rewarded with abundant roots and very healthy dahlias ready for the planting in May. Perhaps by the last week of April it will be warm enough to leave the dahlias outside and thereby help them begin to harden off in anticipation to May planting.

Do not be surprised if the soil used for your potted tubers ends up also hosting some bothersome gnats. Fungus gnats seem to appear in those cases where tubers or young plants might receive an excess of water. This photo shows some fungus gnat damage. Hopefully



before this damage occurs you will be pestered enough by the gnats to apply a quick treatment. I recommend *Knock-Out Gnats*, a product available from Gardens Alive. (www.GardensAlive.com) That site also has excellent information on all kind of garden pests and diseases. Another suggestion for this time of the year is a weekly, light (1/2) strength feeding of a

liquid fertilizer; one with a higher middle number (the phosphorous portion) will help develop roots.

Now would be a good time to go ahead and drive your supporting stakes in the ground. Then, when you plant next month, you'll already have a support system to which you can attach any top growth from potted tubers. This top growth may be as much as a foot and will definitely appreciate having the protection of support in the case of any sudden spring storm. I recommend that you use relatively cheap wooden "tomato" staves or 1" white PVC pipe or 1/2" rebar rods (either at least 6' long). They will see you through the season. If you plan to grow just a few dahlias, then consider installing metal "tomato rings". A 3' space between stakes will allow you to work among your plants as they grow throughout the next 6 or more months.

NOTE: Allow me to digress momentarily. You can expect to see hummingbirds any day now. I always try to set our feeders by April



1st. The little beauties will be ravenous after their migration. They will entertain you all summer and up until late October so keep an eye out for them. Secondly,

and not so pleasant is a warning to watch for snakes that will soon come out to sun themselves. Most snakes are nonpoisonous and beneficial. An example of "good" a good snake is the black snake.** However, here in the country I especially keep an eye



out of Copperhead snakes. They are often only about 18" long and blend in with their surrounding; and are poisonous.

So, April is here and the glorious time of the year when the outdoors awaken. These several tasks performed in April will greatly benefit your dahlias throughout the following spring, summer and fall.

* An excellent source of heat tolerant dahlias, known to grow in this area, will be available at the April and May auctions. For all the new members - I know we throw a lot of information your way both in the newsletter and at our meetings. But remember, we too were new to dahlias at one time and a lot of what we suggest may only work in our garden. Something else may be better in your garden. Try several methods and use what works for you; and keep asking questions.

Bk

** We have had a black snake living in the barn for at least 10 years. They keep the inside free of rats. However, Linda doesn't appreciate finding an occasional snake skin. Several snake stories follow: a neighbor hates all snakes and refers to any found, and quickly dispatched, as "rattle head copper moccasins". Another reference to snakes is "you can't trust anything without shoulders". Finally, I've heard it said: "the only 3 snakes I don't like is a live snake, a dead snake, or a stick that looks like a snake".



INLAND DYNASTY AA-SC-Y THIS IS THE BEST AA YELLOW TO GROW IN THE SOUTHERN GARDEN AS IT WILL TOLORATE OUR HEAT. IT WINS BIG ON THE SHOW TABLE ALL ACROSS THE USA.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The cutoff for inclusion in the 2008 Membership Directory was April the 1st but you may still send in your dues and be a member in good standing for this year. We strongly encourage everyone to remain a member in the DS of GA and help continue to make it one of the premier flower societies in Atlanta and the South.



ELMA ELIZABETH A-FD-L BEAUTIFUL FLOWER BUT BLOOMS LATE SO START IN A POT. LOOK FOR IT AT THE AUCTION.



WILDWOOD MARIE WL-DARK PINK LOVELY WATERLILY

THE SOUTHEASTERN FLOWER SHOW WILL BE MOVING TO COBB GALERIA IN 2009. SHOW DATES ARE JAN 28-FEB 1 www.ajc.com/living/content/living/homeandgarden/stories/2008/04/09/ **Page 4**

TUBER SALE TUBERS

How do I know what tubers to look for at the sale/auction? If you have a computer go to the DS of GA website and select the Dahlias in the South page. Then select Heat Tolerant Dahlias and review those that are the most popular. That is a good start and then review further for any others you might be interested in purchasing that may be offered. Those without computers use your classification book and look for the biggest winners across the USA. Here are a few you may see at the auction: **AA, A**—Inland Dynasty, Elsie Huston, Spartacus, Ben Huston, Ivory Palaces, Zorro, Penhill Watermelon, Danum Meteor, Elma Elizabeth, Kidd's Climax, Vassio Meggos, Verda, Kenora Wildfire, Islander, Camano Messenger. **B**—Bo-Bay, Bo-Joy, Sterling Silver, Gloriosa, Hamari Accord, Kenora Firefighter, Kenora Sunset, Madame De Rosa, Scaur Swinton, Yuukyu, Beverly Too, April Dawn. **BB**—Embrace, Just Peachy, David George, Taratahi Lilac, Jessica, Hissy Fitz, Kari Fruit Salad, Heatwave. **Min**—Rose Toscano, Rebecca Lynn, Peaches n Cream, Fire & Ice, L. A. T. E., Campos Gigi, **Waterlily**—Wildwood Marie, Nepos, Taratahi Ruby, Cameo. **Stellar**—Camano Pet, Pink Pet, Primrose Pet. **Orchid**—Honka, Marie Snugg. **Single**—Rio Rojo. **Collarette**—Pooh, Sean C, Alpen Cherub. **Ball**—Senior Ball, Cornell, Jessee G, Snoho Peggy. **Min Ball**—SB's Sunny, Chimacum Troy, CG Spirit. **Pompon**—Willo Borealis, Lismore Moonlight



BOQUETS OF DAHLIAS AT THE HOME OF ED & PAM BONCI IN NEW YORK. WE HAVE THIS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE FALL



VERNON ROSE BB-FD-V LV/DR A LOVELY FLOWER FOR YOUR GARDEN. 2007 NATIONAL SHOW IN CHICAGO.



VASSIO MEGGOS A - ID-L, SPORT OF SPARTACUS, THIS FLOWER HAS ALL OF THE WONDERFUL GROWING CHARACTERISTICS OF SPARTACUS PLUS THE LOVELY LAVENDER. COLOR. IT IS A GRAND NEW WINNER ON THE SHOW TABLE AS IT IS IN THE GARDEN.. LOOK FOR LOUIE MEGGOS A-ID-W NEXT YEAR. ANOTHER SPORT OF SPARTACUS.



POOH CO-BI RD/Y/Y EASY TO GROW AND FULL OF FLOWERS

Rain barrels: simply saving water by mother nature



A plentiful supply of rainwater led Postell to add a 250-gallon tank to his other downspout, increasing his water storage for a not-so-rainy day. *Photo by Mary-Melissa Williamson*

by Mary-Melissa Williamson

With last year's lingering water shortage still apparent, most Georgians are more conscious of water usage. Watering restrictions last summer drove nurseries and landscaping companies into bankruptcy. However, one local man wants to show residents that there is a simple way to save your garden. Rain collection, or water harvesting, is a practice that can practically save your landscaping from drought. This type of collection is relatively maintenance-free and can greatly augment county water sources. Commercial programs for rain collection can cost thousands of dollars, and involve sophisticated equipment to filter and pump stored water into below-ground cisterns or tanks. For Ellijay resident Charlie Postell, a simple visit to the hardware store and local supply store yielded three rain barrels connected to his gutter downspouts at the cost of one commercially available rain barrel. Although Postell has not had his system in place for a full year, his recent addition of a 250-gallon tank to another downspout shows how plentiful the rainwater is. "An inch of rain will overflow three 60-gallon barrels," Postell observes, which is supported by data from the UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. An average Georgia rainfall provides two-thirds gallon of water per square foot of roof, or, one inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof

Environmental Sciences. An average Georgia rainfall provides two-thirds gallon of water per square foot of roof, or, one inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof yields 623 gallons of water. Even though last summer only provided 1.5-2 inches of rain each month, that amount would add 1,000 gallons of water to your garden each month. Postell, and local gardening groups in support of rainwater harvesting, hope that homeowners with gardens realize how easy it is to simply attach a collection device to existing gutter systems. Practical considerations for barrel collection include barrel placement (distance to garden, secure foundation, higher elevation to aid in gravity-assisted dispensing) and safety (use covers if small children can access the barrels). For Postell, the cost of a few spigots, downspout adapters, and barrels is nothing compared to the confidence that he can maintain his beautiful landscaping and water his crop of beans in the coming summer, drought or not.

EDITOR'S NOTE This system is very similar to the one our new member Allen Haas talked about at the March meeting. The storage tank is the same one the Perennial Plant Society was selling earlier in the year. Allen has a source for tanks that hold 270 or 340 gallons of water and a couple of members and myself have installed them or are in the process of installing them. The tanks only cost \$50 each but they are located in Anderson, SC. Below is the contact information.

My contact for the 270 and 330 gallon caged storage containers is: Juan Garay at 864-356-2830. He works out of his home and has a variety of containers available. He's located across the street towards Anderson from Greensouth Equipment (John Deere Dealership.)

GreenSouth Equipment, Inc.
5046 Hwy 29 N
Williamston SC 29697
United States
8648478400

If you would like additional information please contact Allen Hass 1-828-399-0418.

GROW MORE DAHLIAS