



# DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

BO-BAY B-SC- LB Y/L

Volume 6, Issue 7

July, 2008

FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

## HOW ARE YOUR DAHLIAS GROWING

As I watch it rain, in July no less, out my den window I am thrilled to see my dahlias growing with vigor and the leaves turn that dark green color that comes only with a few days of real rain. I can recall a number of years ago now of a July here in Georgia where it rained all month long. The result was just about the best crop of dahlias I had ever grown so rain in July is so important to us here in the South. We hope it continues to rain but we are still in a severe drought condition in North Geor-



2007 BLOOMS FROM ED BONCI'S GARDEN IN NY

gia so I hope you have taken steps to save water from these rainy days for those dry days in August. I would like to report on the use of the water absorbing polymer, Watersorb, that we had a group purchase of back in the Spring. Most of you know that after a good rain the ground looks like dirty snow when these polymers are full of water so they are doing their job below the surface where we need that water later. When it was dry I found that digging down a couple of inches into the soil there was dampness that normally would not have been there in previous years. I have used Watersorb in my other flower beds too and have noted that it has worked especially well in my impatient beds. One of the secrets to impatient is to water them everyday and with the addition of Watersorb this is much easier to accomplish. Watersorb will last up to five years so I feel it is a good investment for getting that important moisture to your plants. It does very well in your potted plants too which are always difficult to hold water.

### NO REGULAR MEETING IN JULY

DAHLIA PICNIC

JULY 26

12:00 PM—4 PM

HOME OF ALYCE WALDROP &

PAUL DOLAN

936 HIDDEN FALLS LANE

SMYRNA, GA

770-435-4132

### 2008 CALENDAR

#### JULY-OCTOBER

##### JULY

ANNUAL PICNIC

JULY 26

HOME OF ALYCE

WALDROP & PAUL DOLAN

SMYRNA, GA

##### AUGUST

AUGUST 18—MEETING ABG

##### SEPTEMBER

TENNESSEE DAHLIA SHOW

SEPTEMBER 6 & 7

CHATTANOOGA, TN

CAROLINAS DAHLIA SHOW,

SEPT 13-14

ASHEVILLE, NC

NAT'L DAHLIA SHOW

SEPT 18-22

LONGWOOD GARDENS

PHILADELPHIA, PA

GEORGIA DAHLIA SHOW

SEPT 27-28,

ATLANTA, GA

##### OCTOBER 4

ALABAMA DAHLIA SHOW

BIRMINGHAM, AL

## JULY CHORES IN THE DAHLIA GARDEN

### Weather and Dahlias- Wet versus Dry

Dahlias appreciate about 1" of water a week but they must have time to dry out as well. As mentioned before, dahlias do not like wet feet. Dahlias benefit from being grown in raised beds or hilled planting areas where the dahlias are not at the lowest point. If you are experiencing a large number of lost dahlias then they may be planted in a low spot that is not drying out enough. Since it's early July you can either replace lost dahlias, if you have spares, or with any dahlias that are showing stress and are often found in standing water, carefully dig up and replant in a better draining location.

**POWDERY MILDEW-** Damp weather encourages mildew problems and powdery mildew is the first and probably the worst you'll see. [The photo (left) shows powdery mildew.] These dusty, milk colored powdery marks appear on lower leaves where poor air circulation doesn't allow the ground and leaves to dry out. If unchecked, powdery mildew will quickly spread up the plant and severely stress the plant. In addition, an infected plant will serve as a host for the disease which, in turn, will quickly jump to the other plants in your garden. An expensive chemical treatment for this problem is a spraying of RUBIGAN at the first sighting of the powdery splotches.



Usually one spraying, early in the season, will prevent a reoccurrence for the rest of the growing season. There are less expensive products available but may require more frequent spraying. An organic approach is to remove all affected leaves

and any mulch too close to the stem of the affected plants. The removal of lower leaves will permit better air circulation which will often prevent powdery mildew from ever visiting your garden. Be sure to remove all of these leaves and possible offending mulch from your garden and do not place it on your compost pile! Bag it and carry off. I recommend both spraying with Rubigan at least once each season and continual removal of lower leaves throughout the season.

Dry conditions stress the fast growing plants and also create the perfect environment for spider mites to attack your garden. Spider mites love hot, dry weather. As a rule of thumb, at the first site of coppery colored, lower leaves, blast the plants with your hose and repeat that several times a day. It will keep mites at bay and save you a lot of grief. If you're unable to rid the garden of mites you will need to use a miticide, like **Avid**, to regain control. Using a miticide 3 times, 3 days apart should work but early detection and a hard spray of cold water is a lot cheaper and quicker. Beware- mites quickly become immune to miticides. July is usually when you've caught your breath from all the planting, the dahlias have gained some size, and all of the dahlia predators have discovered this fresh, juicy source of food. Get out your sprayer and a container of soapy water or insecticide mix, and begin trying to find out

which visiting vermin are in your dahlia patch. If you think they will overwhelm your plants then begin an applicable spraying program, based on the vermin. If unsure, sticky yellow glue cards are available to lure the unwanted visitors and help you identify what you're up against. If you think that they are only a few and they are doing little damage, then try plucking them off and dropping them into a jar of soapy water or a mild mix of an insecticide. After all, they are only visiting and usually pass from existence within a couple of weeks. But, they are also followed by yet another plant menace or two.

**A rogues' gallery of some more "bad bugs"** (others were discussed in last month's article)

**COLORADO POTATO BEETLE-** Here is another common pest that will spend the summer in your dahlia patch and garden. They have humpbacked larva which have spotted

a back-field of that can cause confusion with good isn't Nature ing? These



backs on ground orange again fusion ladybugs. Mother interesting flying

beetles are quick to flee so if you attempt to catch them by hand, be quick and determined. Right now many are mating so you'll get a bargain of two in one sweep if you're fast. Once caught, drop them in soapy water or a deadly insecticide mix. I usually wear gloves so I just flatten them by hand. If you have an over abundance then spray with an insecticide.

**JAPANESE BEETLE-** You are probably beginning to see these imported pests in your garden about now. Many of the white grubs that you turned up in spring while working your soil were immature Japanese beetles. Their visit to your plants may be short in duration but can be very destructive. Some gardeners have them for only a couple of weeks. Unfortunately, they have been known to "visit" us until mid August- far too long! I try to squash them with my fingers.



A more genteel approach would be to handpick them and drop into a container of insecticide. You be the judge.

**DO NOT BUY JAPANESE BEETLE TRAPS!!!!** If you have any of these traps, throw them away or give them to your neighbors

hopes they help to attract any Japanese beetle out of your garden. You can catch them by hand and you can often get two at a time. If this method makes you too squeamish then use something like Sevin applied directly on the pests. There are inexpensive dusters that can evenly disperse Sevin but be sure to check the wind before using.

**MEXICAN BEAN BEETLE-** Yet another ladybug imitator, **(CONT ON PAGE 5)**

## ANNUAL PICNIC

The 2008 annual picnic will be held on Saturday, July 26 from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the home of Alyce Waldrop and Paul Dolan at 936 Hidden Falls Lane in Smyrna. A link to a map **with directions** is provided below but you will need to copy and paste it into your browser. Those receiving a printed copy will have the map printed on page 6 of this newsletter. Their phone number is 770-435-4132 .

We plan to start eating at 1:00 PM so please plan to arrive before then so your dish may be included in the wonderful array of food choices we always have available. Please bring a veggie, salad, or dessert to share with the rest of us.



2006 PICNIC AT DUNAWAY GARDENS IN COWETA COUNTY

Everyone is invited whether you are a member or not and the only requirement is to LOVE DAHLIAS and maybe grow a few. We always have a wonderful time so if you are not a member and have been thinking about learning more about growing dahlias this is a great way to come and meet our members and have a great time. We look forward to seeing everyone on the 26th. **REMEMBER, NO REGULAR MEETING THIS MONTH.**

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?city=SMYRNA&state=GA&address=936+HIDDEN+FALLS+LANE#a/mapsprint/l:936+Hidden+Falls+Ln+SE:Smyrna:GA:30082-3816:US:33.8559:-84.526309:address:Cobb+County/m::13:33.855444:-84.521185:0:0:/io:0::::f:EN:M:/e>



KELVIN FLOODLIGHT AA-FD-Y, JOHN GEURUIN'S GARDEN



ALPEN FURY AN R R/fl/y/r, JOHN GEURUIN'S GARDEN

THIS SEASON IN CARTERSVILLE. JOHN IS USING A COMPOST TEA MADE FROM WORMCASTINGS TO FERTILIZE HIS PLANTS THIS SEASON.

### 2008 NATIONAL SHOW

You have read about it in the Bulletin and it is not that far away so why not attend this year's show in Philadelphia, at Longwood Gardens one of the premier formal gardens in North America. Link on DS of GA website or check your June Bulletin for info.

## GROWING 2008 FLOWER OF THE YEAR

### BO-BAY B-SC-LB Y/L

Bo-Bay, the 2008 DS of GA flower of the year, was introduced by our own Gene Boeke in 1975. It has become one of those dahlias that is known for its continuing qualities to produce lovely blooms, tubers with lots of eyes, and best of all is very easy to grow. I realize most everyone that got a tuber at the auctions have already planted them and some already have blooms but Gene has written an article on how to best grow Bo-Bay as it responds to some individual techniques. You can also file this away for next year or for 2010 when the National Show will be in Chattanooga where there is an annual award of \$1,000 for the best Gene Boeke introduction (he has other introductions beside Bo-Bay that are eligible for this award) reaching the head table.

### BO-BAY IS A BIG WINNER....."IF"

BY GENE BOEKE

Bo-Bay has won best "B" in at least three or four shows that I know about. It has even beat Hamari Accord on a good day so it will compete when you have a good bloom. There are several specifics required **BEYOND THE NORMAL CARE FOR** winning dahlias. Here are Bo-Bay's secrets.

1. Grow in the shadiest part of your garden.
2. Bo-Bay normally has short stems making it a crotch bloomer setting down in the plant. This requires you to remove the central bloom bud and the weaker side bud. If the bud removal is done early on (central bud no larger than a BB shot.) with a sharp pen knife, Bo-Bay will obtain a normal length stem. The dahlia will not show evidence of this side budding.
3. The colors in Bo-Bay tend to fade in stronger sunlight so often an umbrella is used to shade show worthy blooms.
4. Some more adventuresome might try some Gibrellic Acid of the side bud cut.
5. Foliar feed Bo-Bay only about the time the bloom shows first sign of opening. If you foliar feed too early you stimulate the foliage making the leaves too large.
6. Seldom is the first bloom as good as those that follow so cut the first bloom bud off early.



7. Bo-Bay is a strong grower so you want to have 6-8 canes on each bush. If you limit below this number you will get oversize coarse blooms.

Now that you have the secrets—it is up to you.

When you have a bloom you love, experiment ! You will be surprised with the improvements you can achieve.



CHEROKEE BEAUTY AA-ID-P

ANOTHER 2008 BLOOM GROWING IN JOHN GEURIN'S GARDEN  
CB IS ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING PINKS YOU WILL EVER HAVE IN YOUR DAHLIA GARDEN. LOTS OF BLOOMS FOR A N AA SIZED DAHLIA..

### GEORGIA NATIONAL FAIR DAHLIA SHOW

THE SHOW IN PERRY, GA WILL BE ON THE SECOND WEEK-END OF THE FAIR THIS YEAR, OCT 10, 11. STAGING ON FRIDAY, DINNER FRI NIGHT,



the Mexican bean beetle will be with you until frost. They seem to be every where and usually they are. Serious uses of insecticides are needed for this pest. **LEAF BORERS**-This photo shows the damage done by leaf borers. They tunnel through the leaf and reduce the strength of the plant. I've

usually stopped them for a season with one spraying of **CYGON**.

**WHITE FLY**-If you brush by a dahlia plant and a cloud of minute flying insects arise from



Whiteflies on mint leaves

the leaves, you probably have an infestation of white flies. As with mites, a hard blast from the hose, particularly the backside of leaves, help to rid you of recently arrived whiteflies. Otherwise, they are very hard to eradicate! If not treated whitefly adult and nymphs will severely damage the plants by sucking juices from leaves. They initially create honeydew which attracts ants

and black sooty mold. The leaves will take on a mottled look followed by a layer of black sooty mold (photo to left) which interferes with photosynthesis and eventually can kill the plant. Weekly sprayings are needed to get control of these pests. Neem oil or insecticidal soap is recommended or spraying with Orthene, Cygon or Rotenone/Pyrethium.



**SPIDER MITES**- As covered earlier in the June article, spider mites should not be a problem if we have frequent rains. In dryer times, spider mites are a major problem. (Photo to left shows spider mite damage.) These almost microscopic vermin (not really spiders) often attack the underside of the lower leaves of dahlias And the infected leaves take on a cop-



perly color and appear to have small webs. (Photo at right shows spider mite webs.) The leaves quickly curl inward and die. If you suspect spider mites,

hold a piece of clean paper under an infected leaf, and gently tap the leaf. This action will dislodge some of the spider mites and you'll be able to see your foe. They will appear to be minute grains of pepper.



**GRASSHOPPER**- These "eating machines" are every where now. They come in all sizes and colors- and they can do a tremendous amount of damage. Unless you have a flock of chickens or other fowl such as guinea hens running loose in your dahlias, you will have to resort to some type of spray or dusts.

**KATYDID**- Later in the season you will start finding these green, flying pests in your garden. Not as numerous as grasshoppers, they can still do a lot of damage and seem to have a definite fondness for blooms. I usually remove those I see by hand. Since they appear later I have, by that time, established a weekly spraying program that keeps their numbers down. They are master of camouflage.



**CABBAGE LOOPER and CABBAGE WORM**- It is still a little early to find these in your dahlia patch but they will make their appearance near the end of July- for sure in August. They love the heat! They are hard to see due to their color but you will know something is doing a lot of leaf damage. *Bt ssp. Kurstaki* will cause them to stop eating and perish and is relatively safe.



So.... The busy time is here! Don't tromp on the planted surface, pull weeds, tie the ever growing plants to their stakes, pull weeds, look for bugs and disease, pull off and discard old, bottom leaves, pull weeds, pinch out the tops of plants to encourage laterals (branches) to grow, feed periodically and maybe use some MESSENGER, water when necessary, and study your plants as they begin to form the initial bloom buds of the season.

If you're growing mainly for competition, remove these buds so they will reappear nearer show time. If you're growing just for pleasure, let the buds mature and bloom. If you can stand to disbud several of the side buds\* you'll have stronger and longer stems to hold up the first blooms that you cut and bring in for your own amazement. What ever your purpose, take the time to sit and enjoy. Even stare off in space if you like because you've earned it. And if you listen carefully, you might even hear these pampered plants grow as they prepare to present you with a kaleidoscope of flowers in the months to come. You'll be proud. Bk