



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

BO-BAY B-SC- LB Y/L

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FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

I usually play golf a couple times a week and my partner and I tee off at 7 AM on those days and I know some of you are still just thinking about getting out of bed at that time. We do it to beat the heat but even then by the time we finish it is hot and we are wet with perspiration. Our dahlias look so good at 7 AM but by 2 PM we are wondering how they are still alive and if they will survive for another day of this August heat. There are some things we can do to try and help them survive

during this stressful time and I know Brian's article discusses mulching but a couple that are most important are mulching and using kelp/seaweed. Mulching speaks for itself in trying to keep those feeder roots cool that are just below the surface. If you don't mulch you run the risk of the plant just stopping its growth or slowing way down. Dahlias that don't like the heat will just grow about 18-24" and just sit there until September and then start growing again. Pink Jupiter A-SC-P (not recommended) is like that and then you may get one or two blooms before frost, but they are great blooms. Kelp keeps your plants looking good and keeps many bugs from attacking them so a weekly or every couple of weeks application really makes them respond. This heat also brings out the spider mites so make sure you are looking over your plants to see if they have invaded some of them. I found three or four plants yesterday that spider mites had attacked. Avid is the best product to combat them with and if you need some just email/call me.



2008 PICNIC IN ALYCE & PAUL'S BACKYARD IN FRONT OF THE WATERFALL. L TO R; ALYCE WALDROP, DAVE ELY, MIKE TSURUTIS AND JANICE TSURUTIS.

AUGUST MEETING
AUGUST 18. 7:30 PM
BASEMENT CLASSROOM
ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

2008 CALENDAR AUGUST-OCTOBER

AUGUST

AUGUST 18—MEETING ABG

SEPTEMBER

TENNESSEE DAHLIA SHOW

SEPT 6 & 7

**EAST BRAINERD CHURCH OF
CHRIST**

CHATTANOOGA, TN

CAROLINAS DAHLIA SHOW

SEPT 13-14

UNC ARBORETUM

ASHEVILLE, NC

NAT'L DAHLIA SHOW

SEPT 18-22

LONGWOOD GARDENS

PHILADELPHIA, PA

GEORGIA DAHLIA SHOW

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GAR

SEPT 27-28,

ATLANTA, GA

ALABAMA DAHLIA SHOW

OCTOBER 4

BIRMINGHAM, AL

GA NATIONAL FAIR DS

OCT 10-12, PERRY, GA

AUGUST CHORES IN THE DAHLIA GARDEN

August is the toughest month of the season for growing dahlias, at least here in the South. The day-time temperatures easily reach the 90s and stay there late into the afternoon. I am sure you have noticed how your dahlias and many other plants begin to wilt around noon and stay that way often until, either they are out of direct sunlight, or maybe 4 p.m.

The plants withdraw water from the foliage to protect the root system. Plants will re-hydrate during the night and start the process over again. It is the daily wilt/re-hydrate cycle. Dahlias particularly suffer from these conditions because of the rapid growth they must undertake to produce such lush growth. Were they more woody in nature, they could better withstand the heat.

Because of this situation just described, let me reiterate the virtues of mulch. By mulching your plants you help protect the shallow roots from the blazing sun. Cooler soil temperatures are far less stressful and any reduction of stress (just like us humans) will make for healthier plants. Having mulch in August is one of the best things you can do for your dahlias. By then your plants should be tall enough to shade out any weeds still trying to compete for nutrients. But, had you mulched back in July or even June, your dahlias would be even better, having benefited up to now, both from cooler soil and smothering of many weeds.

DISBUDDING

Why am I going on about midday heat when we all know that “only mad dogs and Englishmen” go out in the noon day sun; because this is the time of the year when your dahlias are beginning to produce a multitude of buds. If you have ever grown peach or apple trees then you know that they produce far more blooms than needed to produce a good crop of fruit. You have to remove about 2/3 of their blooms so they don't over produce fruit, weigh down the branching structure and thereby break many branches, leading to possible introductions of pest and/or diseases. A similar logic can be applied to most dahlias.

By leaving all buds on a dahlia bush and by allowing all of the buds to reach maturity, you stand a good chance of having a top-heavy plant that suffers broken stalks. And I can guarantee a pest or two and maybe even a disease will enter the broken stalk of

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

CECIL DANIELS

MACON, GEORGIA

CLAUDE MCGINNIS

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

WE ARE SO GLAD YOU HAVE JOINED THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA

2008 ANNUAL PICNIC

As we drove down the street where Alyce and Paul live we had no trouble picking out their house long before seeing the street number as there were flowers at the street, flowers in front of the house and on both sides of the house. The real treat was the backyard and patio where all types of flowers and potted plants were centered around a lovely water fall that came down the hill. Oh yes, there were a number of dahlias too with Kidd's Climax, A-FD-LB PK/Y, being just lovely and a red dahlia, B-SC-R, that defied the experts as none could name it and Alyce had lost the name but had gotten it at the Spring Auction. It was in full bloom with many bright orangey red blooms that caught everyone's eye. It was the talk of the picnic as everyone loves a mystery. It took a couple of weeks but the mystery has finally been solved as it meets all of the characteristics of the dahlia Fisherman B-SC-R.

Many thanks to Alyce & Paul for hosting this year's picnic in a grand style in their lovely home and garden. Thanks also to all those that came and, as always, brought fabulous dishes of food to enjoy.

Those in attendance really enjoyed the flowers, food and fellowship.

See more pictures on the last page.

dahlias. The plants are too succulent and inviting to be left alone by the multitude of marauding insects, fungi and diseases.

Whether you are trying to grow the perfect bloom for the winning ribbon, or whether you want a beautiful bouquet of healthy dahlias to give to a friend, you too need to eliminate some of the excess dahlia buds that begin to form in August. In fact, for the rest of the season, right up until the first killing frost, you will probably find that you spent the most time in your dahlia patch, disbudding the excess buds produced by your dahlias.

Remember, the dahlia is trying to produce seeds to insure its survival until next season. It has to produce flowers first to attract pollinators who, in turn, cross pollinate to make possible the all important seeds. When we disbud, the plants kick into overdrive producing more buds. By our staying ahead of the production of seeds, we force the dahlias to attempt to produce more blooms. This manipulation keeps the dahlias working right up until frost. That's also why we feed and water them so much and try to ward off the various pests and diseases who try "to visit havoc" upon our gardens. Dahlias generally make 3-5 buds on each lateral (branch). In the photo below there are 4 buds: the central (main) bud, a small bud very close to the central bud, and two smaller buds emerging from the nearest node (pair of leaves). In most cases you should remove the 3 small buds and



leave the main bud to mature into the single bloom for that lateral. Once you have disbudded (removed) the 3 small buds, all of the energy

assigned to the lateral will go into producing that one central bloom. (See photo below) The stem will get longer, larger and stronger. The bud will enlarge and slowly open, showing color as the petals unfurl. Depending on the size of bloom you can generally predict when the bloom will be fully open and therefore considered mature. The rule of thumb is: AA and A size blooms take 28 days to open from a pea size



bud. B size takes about 24 days and smaller BBs, miniatures, balls and pom-poms, about 21 days. These intervals are averages and depend largely on the weather and other growing conditions.

Notice in the photo on the right how the lateral has become longer and the distance between nodes has also elongated. Dahlias generally produce a set of leaves each week. From the first photo till the second has required about 2 weeks. You could probably cut a fully mature bloom in 10 – 14 days. Notice at the 2nd and 3rd node, there are new laterals growing vigorously and will soon bear their own 3-5 buds that will again require your attention.

What I am trying to convey is the disbudding process which starts about now in August, will continue until frost and will allow you to have a multitude of large, healthy blooms with nice length of healthy stems on which to display the dahlias beautiful shape and color. At the top of this article I discussed the wilting experienced around noon. For both your sake and the sake of you dahlia plant, you don't want to

2008 JUDGES TRAINING

be out in your garden at noon trying to disbud some of the excess dahlia buds. You want to do this either early in the morning while the plants are fresh or late in the evening when they have sufficiently recovered from the stress of the heat. Early morning is the best time because the plants have had an entire night to re-hydrate. The leaves, stalks and most importantly, the bud stems, will be at their strongest and therefore easiest with which to work. The crunchy bud stems can be easily removed with a simple twisting motion. If you want to elongate the stem you can eliminate the second set of growth nodules with the same twisting motion.

MAKING STRONGER STEMS

Dahlia stems have a chore in keeping some of these large blooms upright, particularly when it rains. The blooms absorb a lot of water within its petals and many a dahlia grower has been saddened to visit the garden shortly after a heavy downpour only to find their prized blooms hanging upside down. There are also some varieties that appear not to be strong enough to hold up the blooms that it creates.

Several years ago Gene Boeke shared with me a solution to this problem. Potassium is the 3rd element listed in fertilizer descriptions. It helps dahlias produce tubers and it helps dahlias strengthen their stems. In particular, Gene told me about a mixture of potassium nitrate, 13.75-0-44, that is available in a prilled form (coated). The supplier is Regal Chemical, located at exit 12, Hwy. 400, in Alpharetta -770-475-4837. You can scatter it around the base of the plant and water it in and/or spray on the foliage with no fear of burning. I use it in both ways and I try to begin spraying by mid August, at least twice, about ten days to 2 weeks apart. There will be a noticeable hardening of the stems shortly after the second spraying and a continuation of hardness until sometime in late October.

OLD TOOL, NEW APPLICATION

For several years I have used a two sided, yellow sticky trap in



the greenhouse to catch flying visitors such as fungus gnats and moths. It is a product available from **Garden's Alive!** And several other suppliers. This year I noted an early invasion of whiteflies in the field. Having extra traps I placed several throughout the planted dahlias and was amazed at the results. This photo shows a clean trap and one after just 4 days. It's effective for aphids too.

BE SURE TO ALWAYS USE SUNTAN LOTION AND A HAT!!! bk

The 2008 show season is just around the corner so it is time to sharpen up our judging skills and this year we are combining with the Carolinas Dahlia Society for some hands on training. The class will be held at the Great Smokey Mountain Trial Garden in Cashiers, NC. It starts at 10 AM on



GREAT SMOKEY MOUNTAIN TRIAL GARDEN IN 2007

this coming Saturday, August 16th. While it is a class most of it will be conducted as a field visit using the flowers in the trial garden in the training to demonstrate actual judging points and discuss forms and colors. Each person will also have the opportunity to scorecard some of the seedlings in the trial garden. For further information please email or call Brian Killingsworth 706-276-1405/killer@ellijay.com

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Freddie Yentsch a longtime member in the Dahlia Society of Georgia passed away last month. A memorial service was held on the 20th of July. He was an Accredited Judge and a faithful member of the Society always participating in all of the meetings and activities. We will miss gentle personality and ability to discuss any subject in depth.

We want to express our deepest sympathy to Imogene and to the other members of his family.

WATER STORAGE TANKS

Some members have asked me to publish a picture of the water storage tanks that Allen Haas (Allen did most of it as I hurt my back) and I installed under my deck. During the past three weeks they have been most important as my yard has received very little rain and I have had to rely upon the stored water for much of my watering. The second picture is Don Ehrett of the Alabama Dahlia Society and a similar setup with one 340 gal tank. He has used his most of the summer for all of his watering needs. Saves money too.



TWO 340 GAL WATER TANKS UNDER JOHN KREINER'S DECK



DON EHRETT BESIDE HIS 340 GAL WATER STORAGE TANK

GALLERY DAHLIAS AT ST MT DISPLAY GARDEN

These short dahlias have done very well during the heat and continue to have lovely blooms. The two



ISLANDER A-ID-PK



GALLERY DAHLIA REMBRANDT 18" LAV

shown here are very lovely with many 3"-4" blooms. We will have more pictures from the garden as more of the plants come to full bloom production.



GALLERY DAHLIA CEZANNE YELLOW 12"



GREAT FOOD! ENJOYED BY ALL. WHERE ARE THE DESSERTS ?



MORE OF ALYCE'S BEAUTIFUL GARDEN



ROSIE TRIPP, DIANNE & MICHAEL GAY IN THE GARDEN



WHERE IS THAT RED DAHLIA?



CARLA SCHISSEL ADMIRING THE RED DAHLIA & OTHERS



WHO KNOWS THE NAME OF THAT RED DAHLIA?