



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

BO-BAY B-SC- LB Y/L

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FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

IT HAS BEEN A FUN YEAR

It really has!!!! Even though the drought was still with us all year we were allowed to accomplish some watering three times a week and most everyone installed some water catching devices so we **could** water. The tubers sales went well and we hope everyone got the tubers they wanted and the plants did well for each of you. The picnic at the home of Alyce and Paul was

just super this year and the garden was so beautiful with so many different plants and landscapes. Martha Tate enjoyed the pictures so much in our newsletter that she honored them with an article and pictures in the AJC. We get to return to their (cont P2



THE 2008 ATLANTA SHOW TABLES JUST BEFORE THE JUDGING BEGAN

2008 CALENDAR

NOVEMBER MEETING

PICTURES FROM THE SHOWS AND ACTIVITIES.

DIGGING & DIVIDING/WINTERING OVER IN THE GROUND

NOV 17, 7:30 PM

ABG

CHRISTMAS PARTY

HOME OF PAUL

&

ALYCE DOLAN

SYMRNA, GA

DECEMBER 7

2-5 PM

NOVEMBER MEETING

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17

BASEMENT CLASSROOM

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

7:30 PM

BRING ANY PICTURES FROM THE SHOWS OR OTHER DAHLIAS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE REST OF THE MEMBERS. MUST BE ON A CD OR OTHER MEDIA FORMAT THAT CAN BE PLAYED ON A E TYPE PROJECTOR. ALSO COME AND LEARN HOW TO CUT UP YOUR TUBERS.



AN ARTISTIC ARRANGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL SHOW AT LONGWOOD GARDENS



WYN'S EEEKK!! BEST A CACTUS IN THE ATLANTA SHOW. THE ACTUAL CLASSIFICATION BY WYN'S IS "WEIRD" AND IT IS.



BEST B IN SHOW AT THE PERRY SHOW. BERT PITT, B-ID-BI DR/W. ENTERED BY RAY PHILLIPS OF THE DS OF TENNESSEE. AN OUTSTANDING BLOOM OF THIS CULTIVAR.

(Cont from Page 1) home for our Christmas party next month. From what I understand Alyce decorates for Christmas inside like she grows her garden outside so it should be a wonderful time together. If you missed the picnic you want to make sure to come to the Christmas party.

The annual show and the Southern States shows were very good this year plus the show at the National Fair was a fun time as always. It looks like this show will stay on the weekends for the near future so plan on coming down to Perry next October. The Novice and Amateur tables are usually wide open and they give cash awards.

The National Show was great this year for those that were able to attend and it was the best venue of any National Show according to those that have been attending those shows for many years. Longwood Gardens is just a fabulous place to visit.

The payoff of the entire season is when those blooms grace your garden starting in late August until frost arrives. There is nothing quite like dahlias to get flower lovers excited. This is seen when I do presentations to garden clubs and for the most part very few of their members grow dahlias so they love the colors and different forms when they see a bucket of dahlias. We hope your dahlias have done well this year and for our members we are so glad you have been able to enjoy the fruits of your membership as we have enjoyed seeing many of you at our meetings and activities and look forward to another wonderful year of growing dahlias in 2009.



KENORA FRILLS B-LC-DP, A BEAUTIFUL BLOOM

DIGGING & STORING OF DAHLIA TUBERS-

A good project for Nov./Dec.

There are two schools of thought about digging and storing dahlias.

- 1) In our climate we can take the easier approach and simply mulch the still buried roots with about 6" of pine straw or leaves or any other lofty mulch that should ward off any deep freezing of the ground. After several years you will have to dig them in order to split the large mass that has developed-just like you do with daylilies and Shasta daisies.
- 2) Those who dig and store every year do not want to take the risk of losing their tubers and more so, want to separate the clumps of highly desirable tuber to insure having more plants of their favor varieties in the future.

The following article details one approach for those in 2) above. (Photos are from the Colorado Dahlia Society.)



Your dahlia plants might still be alive, but by this time next month a frost will have ended their 2008 growth. With the holidays just around the corner now is a good time for us to plan to dig and store our crop of tubers. Once frost does kill the tops of your plants I recommend that you cut off and remove all plant material to within about 8" to 12" of the ground. **(You do not have to wait. The plants have been in the ground long enough and your tubers should be mature enough to dig and store.)** This remaining stalk will act as a handle. If you've not had a rain within the last 7 to 10 days it is a good idea to water the dahlias (try not to let water get into the open top of the stalks). Once watered, wait about a week to generate eye growth on the tubers and then dig. (We should skip this step if water restrictions are enforced where you grow. Besides, plump tubers indicate sufficient water for storage.) Place the shovel blade or garden fork prongs about a foot from the center of the stalk and gently pry up the mass from all 4 sides. GENTLY!! Dahlias are most tender now and the slender necks of the tubers can and will

easily break. Do **not** be in a hurry and try to lift from just one side. You will lose the best tubers with the most roots because they have successfully grown far out into the surrounding soil. Look at this operation as gathering a root crop and you're trying to maximize the number of tubers collected.

At this time you can wash off the soil and mark the name of the variety on the clump of tubers by using an indelible pencil or by securing a tag to the old central stalk.



Leave the washed clumps out to air dry for several hours but not in direct sun. Invert the clump during this time so any water trapped in the old stalk will

drain. Be careful when handling the tubers, not only because of the tender necks but also because the skin of these newly dug tubers is especially tender at this time and the tubers need to be cured before storing. Also, concentrate on keeping the right name with the right clump. Murphy's Law rules often apply during this operation.

What is curing? I understand it to be a slow drying process of the tubers so that the skin will thicken and toughen. By accomplishing this curing the tubers should store well during the winter because the thick and tough skin will prevent any moisture from escaping from the tubers. When tubers lose moisture they shrivel and will not be viable at spring planting time. Now is when you must decide if you will only cut the clump into halves or quarters or whether you will try to claim as many tubers as possible. This decision is usually tied to how many plants you want to grow next year and whether or not this particular variety is a favorite of yours. Having dug, washed, dried and decided the number to store, study the clump closely. The old



stalk "flows" into the new tubers over a slender neck. The eyes for next year's growth form where the old stalk (mother plant) connects to the often time

slender necks. In this photo the eyes are the white, circular objects. One eye is protruding in the upper right corner of the photo. I use sharp garden

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

KIM TAYLOR

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

WE ARE SO GLAD YOU HAVE DECIDED TO JOIN THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA. YOUR NEW MEMBER PACKET WILL COME IN EARLY 2009.

to re-dry. Other products to use are Daconil or Cleary 3336. The final step is to put the tubers in a storage



medium for their winter hibernation. I have used perlite, peat, vermiculite and wood shaving. (Sprinkle a little bit of sulfur in the bag, too.) All have good and bad points so it is up to

you. Perlite and woodshavings make for "pretty" tubers that stay plump. But they also seem to pass rot from one tuber to the next even if they don't touch. Vermiculite, the courser the better, do not pass on rot but seem to allow some shriveling and can be dangerous to work with in enclosed areas. Peat has to be dampened before use; too little and the tubers shrivel; too much, they can rot. The same inhalation danger applies to perlite. As I said, it's up to you.

Finally I place the tuber and storing medium in a zip-lock bag that I leave open during storage to allow the ebb and flow of moisture. Also write the name of the variety on the outside of the bag. There are bags on the market that have holes in them, allowing the tubers to breath. The filled bags are stored in the dark and cool as possible but not freezing. I check several bags during the winter to see if all is well.



Remember-these methods are only based on what I've experienced. Other growers use other methods ...so ask around, try as many as you can and go with what works best for you.

Then it's time to rest -----us and the tubers.

BK

sizes and shapes and razorblade holders like box cutters. Sharp is important and equally important is safety. Think where your other hand is before you cut. Blades can and do slip so be forewarned. If you have a lot of clumps to cut then you might want to invest in a fileting glove found in any fishing supply store.

Warning- A word about spreading diseases when dividing tubers. It is believed that a multitude of virus that can infect dahlias can be passed on by contaminated blades. I've used a flame or bleach dip to clean blades between clumps.

Rule of thumb - Every tuber or partial clump must have an eye in order to grow next season. Eyes are most visible in the fall and right after digging and washing. If dug but not cut up at that time, the eyes will sink back into the necks and often become invisible until the clumps awaken in spring.



Using a sterilized and sharp blade, locate tubers with solid necks that connect to the older stalk material ("mother plant"). Carefully cut these away from the

clump and trim off any rotted area and stringy roots. Marking tubers correctly is very important. If the tuber is dry, use a permanent ink Sharpie. If the tubers are still damp, use an indelible Noblot Ink Pencil.



These special pencils are available from commercial dahlia dealers or perhaps the society. A word about tuber rot while in storage is needed. Try to cut off all of the old stalk before storing. It is often the source from which rot

will spread. Another location for rot is in the very center of the tuber. The latter is hard to find and often goes undetected until spring when you find that the rot has advanced throughout the tuber and turn this one time promise into useless mush.

A step I've used to guard about this internal rot is to soak cut tubers in a solution of fungicide before allowing for an over night drying. In particular I use Banrot, a product from Scott at a mixture of 1TBS per gallon of water. The tubers are submerged for about 10 minutes then laid out

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 2008 Christmas party is less than a month away and we are looking forward to returning to the home of Alyce Waldrop and Paul Dolan where our annual picnic was held. They have a lovely home and I have been told that Alyce does a magnificent array of Christmas decorations every Christmas season so it be a wonderful time together for our members and any one that would like to consider joining the DS of GA is welcomed. We will have a late lunch/dinner so bring your favorite Christmas salad, veggie or dessert for everyone to enjoy. The meat and drinks will be provided by the Society.

We also have a gift exchange so everyone bring a gift not to exceed \$10 in cost and ladies bring a gift for a lady and men for a man. The party will start at 2 PM and is over at 5 PM. It should be a great time together in celebrating the Christmas season with our dahlia friends. Plan on being there. The address is: **936 Hidden Falls Lane, SE, Smyrna, GA.** Their phone number is: **770-435-4132**



DAN & PAULA PINHOLSTER WITH THEIR WINNING BLOOM OF HAMARI SUNSHINE B-ID-Y AT THE 2008 ALABAMA SHOW.



LINDA KILLINGSWORTH ADMIRING BLOOMS AT LONGWOOD



FIRE & ICE M-FD-BI R/W IN JOHN KREINER'S GARDEN



A WONDERFUL NEW DAHLIA FROM AUSTRALIA CALLED KINDRED SPIRIT BB-C-Y, WITH VERY DARK FOILAGE. IT BLOOMS EARLY AND OFTEN COVERING THE PLANT WITH THESE CACTUS BLOOMS.



KENORA PEPPERMINT BB-FD- BI R/W IN GARY MINOR'S

GARDEN IN TULSA, OK. SHOULD GROW IN GA TOO. Page 5