



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

EMBRACE BB-SC-Y

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FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

THE NEW DAHLIA YEAR IS HERE

What will 2009 hold in store for Southern Dahlia growers? We hope more rain than last year and of course moderate temperatures in the summer but it seems we are always receive the opposite of what we would like in that regard. Just a normal growing season would be great but nobody knows what that is anymore. Anyway, just growing our dahlias will be a joy to anticipate as we go through the season. The Southeastern Show is now history so our next activity will be the Feb & Mar meetings and then our tuber sales in April

& May. Our annual picnic is always a lot of fun for everyone and then our show will be in late September. We are going to try and include a field trip to Stone Mountain next fall so everyone can enjoy the display garden at the Plantation. Hopefully the display garden at the State Botanical Garden will be up and running again this year so that will be another cont



GITTS PERFECTION A, ID, LB LV/WH ON THE SHOW TABLE AT THE 2008 NATIONAL DAHLIA SHOW IN LONGWOOD GARDENS OUTSIDE OF PHILADELPHIA. THIS LOVELY FLOWER WILL GROW IN THE SOUTH WITH LOTS OF TLC AND GOOD STOCK. ONE OF OUR FORMER MEMBERS WOULD BRING A QUALITY BLOOM LIKE THIS ONE TO OUR SHOW EVERY YEAR AND WIN.

FEBRUARY MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16

7:30 PM

ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN

2009 CALENDAR

**FEBRUARY-
AUGUST**

**FEB 16, MONTHLY
MEETING ABG**

**MARCH 16,
MONTHLY MEETING
ABG**

**APRIL 20, TUBER
SALE/AUCTION ABG**

**MAY 18, TUBER SALE
ABG**

**JUNE 15, MONTHLY
MEETING
ABG**

**JULY, ANNUAL PIC-
NIC, TBA**

**AUGUST 17,
MONTHLY MEETING
ABG**

FEBRUARY DAHLIA CHORES

Improving your soil

Although it is several months before you can actually plant dahlias in your garden, there are several things to do or at least consider in February. In previous newsletters I discussed in detail ways to improve your garden soil in order to improve this year's crop of dahlias. One point worth repeating is the addition of fine bits of granite, "turkey grit" or 8's and 9's. Several people asked what does this material look like. Here is a small pile of 8's and 9's with a dime on top to show the relationship in size.



As you can see these pieces of granite are quite small but remember, you are adding them to your current soil that probably contains a lot of red, Georgia clay. Clay is basically a solid, compacted mass, high in nutrients but lacking air and, therefore, space needed for roots to grow and water to flow in order to reach the roots and nourish the plants, then drain away. When you incorporate this material or some other similar substance like perlite into your soil, you will add necessary air pockets and thereby loftiness and drainage to the soil, making it far more beneficial to your dahlias. In the case of granite, it will also serve as a source of slow release potassium and phosphorous for as much as 10 years. Avoid adding sand because most available sand is too finely grained to help. Now is the time to have your soil tested to learn the nutrient value of the soil. Gather 5 - 8 scoops of soil from your garden, at the expected depth of the plants roots, screen out as much debris as possible, and submit to your County Extension agent (check the white pages for your

location in the Atlanta/Athens area where dahlias may be viewed. The National Show this year will be held in Everett, Washington hosted by the Snohomish County Dahlia Society and celebrating their 100th Anniversary as a Dahlia Society. A very remarkable milestone to say the least. Congratulations to the Snohomish County Dahlia Society.

If you are considering attending this great ADS 2009 National Show you won't be disappointed and you will see more dahlias on the tours and in the show than you ever thought about and of course they are all beautiful. Don't miss it!!! The website for the ADS 2009 National Show is: <http://www.scdahlias.org/national-show/>

We are looking forward to the Southern States Dahlia Shows which will be held in September and early October and the show at the National Fair in the middle of October.

2009 MEMBERSHIP DUES

It is that time of the year again to renew your membership for 2009. We hope every member from 2008 will renew for 2009 and continue in your quest to grow your dahlias even better this year. The cost is the same as in previous years \$27 for an individual membership and \$30 for a family membership. Please send your dues in early so there will not be any interruption in your receiving of the quarterly Bulletin from the American Dahlia Society. This is one of the benefits of membership along with many others if you have never been a member before. We have a new member welcome package which includes a \$10 discount on the tubers you purchase at one of our tuber sales; a free copy of the slick publication, Dahlias of Today which is published annually by the Puget Sound Dahlia Association in the Seattle, WA area; the assignment of a mentor from our more experienced growers to help you in every aspect of learning to grow your dahlias; a website that provides a growing guide and listing of dahlias that will grow well in our area and the South; and, lastly, a monthly newsletter. Please send your 2009 dues payment to: Henry Everett

2690 Gleneagles Dr.

Tucker, GA 30084

THE 2010 ADS NATIONAL SHOW WILL BE HELD IN CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE IN SEPTEMBER 2010. PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND.

county). They will send in the soil for testing and in several weeks you will receive a report of your garden's overall pH and any recommendations for liming or adding of fertilizers. There may be a small fee (about \$7) for this testing but it will probably be the best \$7 spent for gardening in 2009 as well as future years.

Here is how pH works and why it is so important to know. There is a scale where a pH reading of 7 means your soil is basically neutral- neither acidic nor alkaline. Readings below 7 indicates some degree of acidity and basically a little bit of acid is good for plants. Readings above 7 indicates a degree of alkaline soil. As in all things, too much of anything is not good. Too much acid or too much alkaline will poison a plant. Readings of 6.2 to around 6.5 are desirable for dahlias. If your soil test comes back and the reading is about 5, you will probably be advised to add some amount of agricultural lime to "sweeten " the soil up into the 6's range. In Georgia we basically have acidic soils and a recommendation of lime is likely. It will all depend, of course, on whether the soil has been used recently to grow other crops. When applying lime, remember that it can take up to 6 months to fully alter your soil. Lime applied in February will still be working in August. My advice here is to get the soil tested now and apply powdered lime to the top of your garden, now. Do not plow or dig it in. Rains will carry it into the soil. Granular lime will probably take too long to break down and even longer to be incorporated into the soil, so use powdered lime. In case your soil test comes back with a 7 or above, there will be a recommended dosage of fertilizer to apply. Fertilizer generally works a lot faster than lime so you will have a time advantage in this case. An important point to remember is a pH reading too low or too high means the nutrients will stay locked up in your soil and therefore unavailable to your plants, regardless of the amount of fertilizer present in your soil.

Inspect your tubers

If you have stored dahlia tubers from last season, be sure to check them for several/all conditions. Some may have a whitish mold- this is harmless and can be washed or wiped off. If you find some have shriveled, mist them with warm water and recheck in 2 weeks. Also check for any signs (or smell) of rot. Gently squeeze a tuber to test for firmness. It should feel solid, like a potato. If you feel some mushiness, slice through the tuber at that spot. You will see rotting material. Continue to slice off rot, going toward where the tuber joins the old stalk, until you reach firm tuber. Tubers showing only partial rot may be saved by shearing off the



bad parts, back to healthy flesh, and then coat the wound with a fungicide like sulfur. You do not need much of the tuber to successfully grow a healthy dahlia. Again, recheck in 2 weeks. Enjoy the downtime and stay warm. Spring is coming.

Editor's note: Since we were unable to get the newsletter published in January we are including some parts of the article that Brian wrote for January.

DECIDING ON WHICH VARIETIES TO GROW

A word to the wise; most catalogs or pricelists hype those dahlias grown in areas with very different weather from what we experience

here in the South. What is a barn burner in Oregon or Washington will not like 98 degree weather for 10 consecutive days. We have to grow heat tolerant varieties of dahlias that have proven to be able to withstand our midday scorchers.

I have three suggestions: 1)-study the following list of several heat resistant dahlias we have compiled over years of growing dahlias in the South, and 2)-use the ADS Classification and Handbook you should have received with the December 2008 ADS Bulletin. 3) Refer to the list of heat tolerant dahlias sorted two ways on the Dahlia Society of Georgia website under the page of DAHLIAS THAT GROW WELL IN THE SOUTH.



FIRE & ICE M, BI, R/W



ALPEN CHERUB CO, W



JESSE G BA, PU



MARIE SNUGG O, R



A LA MODE B, FD, BI OR/W



ISLANDER A, ID, P



BERT PITT B, ID, RI R/W



BO-BAY B, SC LB Y/L



BO-D-O BB, ID, Y



L.A.T.E. M, FD, LB O/Y



MY BEVERLY BB, LC, LB Y/DP



SHOW 'N' TELL A, LC, DB



CAMANO PET ST, LB Y/OR



ELSIE HUSTON A, ID, P



WILDWOOD MARIE WL, DP



EMBRACE BB, SC, Y



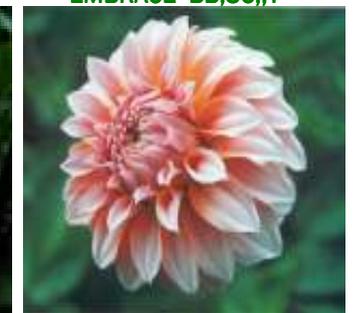
SANTA CLAUS BB, ID, RI R/W



POOH CO, R/Y



KIDD'S CLIMAX A, FD, LB P/Y



PEACHES N CREAM MFD P/Y

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

We would like to thanks Alyce & Paul for hosting the Christmas party in their beautiful home which was decorated so wonderfully in the Christmas season. We had about 40 members and spouses in attendance and a good time was had by all. Thanks also to everyone for bringing such great food that we all enjoyed.



GENE & JOY BOEKE, DAVE & CHERIE FELTON, JACK HELLRIEGEL



L-R ALYCE WALDROP, DAVE & BRENDA ELY



KATHY KEYES ADMIRING ONE OF THE CHRISTMAS TREES



L-R DAN & PAULA PINHOLSTER, JANICE & MIKE TSURUTIS



L-R BRIAN KILLINGSWORTH, FRANK MCCOMB, LINDA KILLINGSWORTH, JACK HELLRIEGEL



L-R REGINA KREINER, DEB HAAS, ROBYN ANDREWS, MARILYN AMUNDSON, CAROL PENN

2009 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT—————FRANK MCCOMB

VICE-PRESIDENT—————ALYCE WALDROP

TREASURER—————HENRY EVERETT

SECRETARY—————CARLA SCHISSEL

ADS REP—————PAULA PINHOLSTER

Please give your officers for this year your fullest support.

STONE MOUNTAIN DIG

On a very cold morning this past December a number of members gathered to dig the tubers from the Stone mountain display garden. We want to thank all of those members that joined in this "great fun" braving the very cold start and getting the tubers dug and the bed cleaned up.

I would also like to thank those members that helped in keeping the display garden trimmed, dead-headed, and the plants tied up during the growing season. We couldn't have had such a beautiful display of dahlias without your help.



BOB & LORI GOEHRING CUTTING THE STALKS



LARRY BLOOMER HARD AT WORK IN THE COLD



L-R LARRY BLOOMER, JOHN KREINER, DICK AMUNDSON

NEW 2009 MEMBER RELEASES

This year we have two new dahlias that have been released by our members. The first is a new addition in the BO series by Gene Boeke and is called BO-KAY B, SC, LB BR/Y. It is a lovely light blend that fits right in with Bo-Bay, B,SC, LB Y/L. It is available through Hilltop Gardens in Cashiers, NC. It scored 86.9 in one trial garden.



The second release is called Amhurst Regina A, SC, Y from John Kreiner. It grew right up to size in the St, MT display garden last summer so it will take the heat. It is available as a cutting through Coralitos gardens in California. It scored 90.86 in one trial garden.

