



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

EMBRACE BB-SC-Y

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FLOWER OF THE YR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

2010 NATIONAL SHOW IN CHATTANOOGA

The 2010 National Show will be held in Chattanooga and hosted by the Tennessee Dahlia Society and the Southern States Dahlia Society and the Carolinas Dahlia Society. The national shows are a wonderful time for dahlia growers and lovers from all over the country to come together for a long week-end relishing in the glory of the beautiful dahlias on display for ourselves and for the public. There are many other activities that are included during this time such as tours of dahlia gardens, seminars, a fabulous luncheon

and an awards banquet on Saturday night. It is a full week-end with lots of activities and of course the show itself. Growers bring flowers from all over the country including New York, California, and even Nova Scotia and enter them into the show. As you can imagine, many activities require much preparation and coordination so there are many tasks



TWO GREAT FLOWERS THAT GROW WELL IN THE SOUTH. KENORA WILDFIRE A, SC, R WILL GROW UP TO SIZE AND PROVIDE MANY BEAUTIFUL BRIGHT RED BLOOMS. ALPEN CHERUB, S, W IS ALWAYS A FAVORITE AS IT IS EASY TO GROW AND IS COVERED IN WHITE BLOOMS. IT IS A WINNER AT SHOWS ALSO.

2009 CALENDAR

MARCH/AUGUST

**MARCH 16,
MONTHLY MEETING
ABG**

**MARCH 21
SOUTHERN STATES
MEETING
11:00 AM
CARTERSVILLE, GA**

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

**MAY 18, TUBER
SALE/AUCTION, ABG**

**JUNE 15, MONTHLY
MEETING
ABG**

**JULY, ANNUAL
PICNIC, TBA**

**AUGUST 17,
MONTHLY MEETING
ABG**

MARCH MEETING	APRIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 16	MONDAY, APRIL 20
7:30 PM	7:30 PM
ATL BOTANICAL GARDEN	ATL BOTANICAL GARDEN
DAN PINHOLSTER WILL GIVE US A TUNE UP FOR GETTING YOUR GARDEN READY TO PLANT + DVD FROM 2008 NAT/SHOW.	TUBER SALE/AUCTION

required in order to have a show of this quality. We need each member's support and willingness to help on the various committees that have been formed. It is an excellent opportunity for members from all of the Southern States Societies to join in to develop a high quality show that we all can be proud of and the many visitors from all over the country will enjoy. We can only do this with your support and help.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ROBYN ANDREWS

ATLANTA, GA

PHIL & MARY CHARPING

TAYLORS, SC

MARK TISSENBAUM & KRYSIA HAAR

ATHENS, GA

WELCOME TO THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PARTICIPATION.

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 bi-monthly newsletter. Please send your 2009 dues payment to: Henry Everett

2690 Gleneagles Dr.

Tucker, GA 30084

MARCH AND APRIL CHORES FOR DAHLIA GROWERS

After a North Georgia winter of extreme lows, cloudy days and oftentime gusty and windy days, we have been treated to a string of beautiful warm and sunny days. **BEWARE!!** Do not be fooled by Mother Nature. We still have some winter days looming out there; and they can be wicked. Besides, there are probably some dahlia related tasks yet to be done, so practice patience. **KEY POINT**-Soil temperature is most important when you plant dahlias. Wait until the soil has warmed to about 70 degrees, the same temp for planting tomatoes. Plant before that temperature is reached and you're asking for early failure.

Soil, tubers and seeds

Recent newsletters have addressed soil preparation. You want to be sure that that your beds will have proper drainage in order to protect your dahlias having "wet feet". Dahlias need at least ½ a day of sun, preferably morning sun. They like a soil pH of around 6.2-6.5. You still have time for a soil test. If you planted a winter cover crop I recommend that you cut it by the middle of March to give the material at least 6 weeks before being plowed



into the beds. Be on the watch for some winter resident grubs who later will turn into foliage and bloom eating Japanese beetles. Birds, currently moving into our area, are happy to follow behind a diligent gardener and feast on these grubs; or you can squish them with fingers, pliers or 2 rocks; your choice. During this winter you needed to check your stored tubers for signs of rot or drying out. Remove any rot found in the tubers or clumps. Then apply a dusting of sulfur or some other fungicide for further protection. The same goes for any purchased tubers that you might have recently received. Shriveled tubers can usually be revived with a misting of water and then layered between pages of newspaper than is misted as well. **IF** you can't stand it anymore and have to plant something then try placing a tuber or two in a

DAHLIAS THAT DID WELL IN 2008

The 2008 dahlia growing season ended up being a much better year than the heat & drought of 2007 and it was reflected in the quality of blooms in our gardens and in our shows. During the year we grew a number of new releases and new dahlias we had never grown before. This article highlights some of the best in those two categories. The listing is not in any order of preference.

KINDRED SPIRIT— BB, C, Y, 2007 This plant has very dark brownish foliage which is unique and very lovely. The blooms appear early in the season and just cover the entire plant with these beautiful yellow cactus blooms. I highly recommend it as an addition to your garden.



CLEARVIEW ORCA—B, SC, W 2008 A Northwest dahlia for sure but it grew very well in our Southern heat and produced a few high quality blooms that would have been competitive on the show table but they were late. It even maintained it's lavender blush which is unusual in the heat of the late summer. It had good substance and got very deep maintaining its center.



Rayann's Peach—S, DB, OR/RD 2008 This dahlia was wonderful in my garden this past season. It grew very well in the heat and had lots of blooms all season. It won the 2008 Evie Gullickson award as the best new opened-centered dahlia. It will compete on our show table giving much needed competition in this class. **Kenora Frills—B, LC, DP 1996** Allen Haas brought this dahlia to our 2007 show in Perry and everyone was really taken with it and the high quality bloom and excellent color. That was a mountain grown bloom so how will it do down here in the flat lands? It



did very well this past season with a vigorous growing plant with many blooms with the color and quality we had seen. We did not disbranch or disbud very much so the blooms for the most part were not up to size. It is an excellent dahlia for everyone to grow.



Amhurst Regina—A., SC, Y 2009 We grew this dahlia in the Stone Mountain Garden for the first time in 2008 and it grew right up to size with great depth and lots of blooms. It does very well in the heat. It was also grown in the Dahlia Dell in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco last season and did very well. Picture is from the St Mt garden

and was taken in early September.

Hollyhill Chloe—B, SC, DB, DP/OR 2007 This is a beautiful orange dahlia that liked the heat too. It grew very well and had blooms till frost. I recommend that you give it a try. **Wyn's Fiesta—BB, C, OR,**



2007 Another orange dahlia but a straight cactus with very spiky petals that started blooming early and bloomed it's head off until frost finally took it. The two plants we had at St Mt drew lots of attention and lots of comments. Great garden flower that didn't always keep it's centers very long but the number of blooms and cactus form makes it worth growing.

Person's Ben—BB, SC, R 1996 This is a great red dahlia for your garden. A few years ago Scott Cone won best BB in the Georgia show with it. Vigorous plant with many quality bright red blooms that hold up well in the heat.



Gallery Dahlias—Below are pictures of Gallery Dahlias that we planted in the St Mt garden for the first time in 2008. The ones shown did very well in the heat and bloomed all summer. Caznne, Y, started blooming very early but also went out of bloom much earlier than the others. They all went out of bloom before frost arrived. Their quality of bloom, controlled height, and growth habit make them great dahlias for bedding or pots. The pictures are from the Gallery Website.



REMBRANDT



ART FAIR



CEZANNE



LEONARDO **Page 3**

Pot. vertically, (photo on left) only covering the lower half of the tuber (the root end). Water lightly and if possible,



provide some bottom heat. A good source is on the top of a refrigerator or water heater. Recently I heard about using an inverted plastic storage tub with an electric light in it. Within weeks eyes will elongate into shoots. By doing this

early potting you know which tubers are viable and you are insuring a developed root system when planting time arrives. Not to mention you “scratched the itch” to plant something. For those adventurous enough to try propagating more plants, this operation prepares the dahlias to yield cuttings; or you can simply split the clump seen in photo #3, lightly dust the cut surfaces and plant in individual pots.



For those who decided to leave their tubers in the ground over winter, you might want to dig up some that you especially liked, wash off the soil and split the clumps, as described above; and replant in new potting soil. You will be surprised at how quickly these clumps will awaken.

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 in the garden. 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 middle

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 host-



ing 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) The website also has excellent information on all kinds of garden pests and diseases.

At our last meeting we gave seeds to those who wanted to try getting their own “new dahlia”. Because all of the seeds were gathered from hybrids, any dahlia plant produced from those seeds will be a brand new hybrid. When you grow new dahlias this way you are guaranteed to be the first person to ever see the resulting blooms.



MY BEVERLY

Gilly Simmons of Anderson, South Carolina has been a major producer of some outstanding dahlias seedlings. He has produced such beauties as *My Beverly*, *Beverly Too*, *Tyler*, *Allie White*, *Allie Yellow*, and *My Cindy*. Gilly has perfected certain steps that, if followed, should

produce an abundant crop of dahlia seedlings. Due to the general nature of this newsletter I will try to cover the overall approach but will gladly share his details with anyone interested.

Drainage is all important. Gilly uses small 4"x6" trays with several holes in the bottom; starts with a thin layer of perlite, then a thicker layer of regular potting soil. He makes 4 rows, "crammed full" of seeds, then a thin layer of propagation soil and pats the surface. "Do not water". He places these small trays in larger, solid bottomed trays; and floats (my term) the small trays in preferably warm water into which a small amount of Subdue, a fungicide, has been added. Here again bottom heat is very helpful in getting seeds, like tubers, to awaken. The trays will absorb the moisture without top watering without dislodging seeds. Gilly expects his seeds to take between 3 and 10 days to germinate.

Initially keep the sprouts going without fertilizing; just light, bottom heat and bottom watering. Once they have 2 sets of true leaves use a weak dose of 15-30-15; again using the bottom method of watering and continue the dosage of fungicide. Seedlings can be potted up when they reach 2 - 3 pair of true leaves. It is important that the seedling soil is dry when you transplant to avoid breaking the tender growth. The dirt, with a little coaxing, should drop off of their roots. Once you start to plant your garden you can treat these seedlings in the same manner. One point, do not pinch out the top because you want the plant to bloom as soon as possible. Some hybrids are pretty and others are not. Keep growing the ones you like and remove the others to free up space for other, more productive plants.



AMHURST REGINA

in 2009; a mighty pretty flower named for his equally pretty wife. Harold Stewart from Tennessee has had some nice new varieties; we've introduced several of the *Creekside* stable; and Buddy Dean of Hilltop Gardens in Cashiers, NC has become the premier introducer in the South with his *Hilltop* line of dahlias.

HILLTOP IVAN



HILLTOP KELLY



You too can come up with your own beauty and whether it goes big time, locally or just in your own garden, it is a thing of beauty that you will have the joy of seeing before anyone else. I bet you'll want to show it off. * 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 newsletters 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.

BOJOY

CREEKSIDE TORRY



Besides Gilly there are several other southern dahlia growers with named varieties to their credit. Gene Boeke, of our society, has produced some gorgeous dahlias such as *Bobay*, *Bojoy*, *Bodeo*, *Bolei*, *Bovar*, *Bobel*, *Bozoe* and new in 2009, *Bokay*. John Kreiner is introducing *Amhurst Regina*



SEEDLINGS IN THE PIPELINE. CREEKSIDE DOC ON THE RIGHT. ON THE LEFT IS A BABY OF BEV TOO.

SOIL AMENDMENTS

Are you perplexed each growing season as to which amendments to add to your dahlia garden to get the best production and blooms? Brian's growing column each month should answer most of those questions for you and all you have to do is make the choices and take the action. I have used Black Kow (composted cow manure) at a proven rate of six pounds per plant in my beds for years and have always had adequate success but it is always difficult to get A & AA sized cultivars up to size so I went to a combination of Black Kow and mushroom compost. Results were about the same but I know for some growers mushroom compost works very well. I have always known that you must use some type of manure for your dahlias as they respond to that addition and many growers use horse manure. We added well composted (aged) horse manure to the soil at the Stone Mountain Dahlia Garden this past season and what a garden we had with tons of blooms and the A & AA blooms all up to size all season. This is not news for many growers but I felt I needed to share this information since we had such great success. How much do you use? Walter Reeves said yesterday on his program to use 2" over your beds. You want to be careful and not use too much as the nitrogen content can cause your tubers to rot in storage and I did have more rot this winter than usual. So be careful. Another amendment I would like to recommend is Farfard potting soil. I added this soil to one of my Black Kow beds as an amendment and the plants and blooms in that bed were the best in my garden. Gilly Simmons in Anderson SC places a scoop (about two handfuls) of Farfard in each planting hole so each plant gets a shot of this 40% peat, 40% bark, 10% vermiculite and 10% perlite mix.



COUNTRY BELLE



2008 NATIONAL SHOW



CAMANO RASCAL



2008 NATIONAL SHOW

APRIL /MAY TUBER SALES

Members please bring your tubers to the sale as we need them so we can make sure we will have enough. Make sure each tuber has an eye or if the eye has been knocked off please mark the location by circling it with a marker. Each tuber brought to the sale should be listed in the ADS Classification book either currently or in the past. Exceptions would be Gallery dahlias. Make sure each tuber is marked accurately with the name of the tuber written on the tuber or an identifying tag attached. If a certain tuber(s) didn't do well in your garden or doesn't do well in the heat please don't bring it to the auction as chances are it won't do well in someone else's garden either. We want to make sure we have the best assortment of high quality, heat tolerant dahlias available to those attending the auctions.



2008 NATIONAL SHOW



KENORA MAJESTIC



HILLTOP SAPPHIRE



KENORA WOW