



DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA NEWSLETTER

EMBRACE BB-SC-Y

Volume 7, Issue 4

July/August, 2009

FLOWER OF THE YEAR

WWW.DAHLIASOCIETYOFGEORGIA.ORG

A RAINY SUMMER? ...OUR DAHLIAS LOVE THE RAIN

Yes...sometimes they rot when we get too much rain but they grow so much better when they have adequate rain during the growing season so be happy. I have said for years that one of my best dahlia seasons was when we had rain almost the whole month of July one year and this past July has been just like it for the most part. We can all tell what the benefits of real rain bring to our dahlia gardens, better growth, earlier blooms, lots of blooms, reduction of yellowing leaves as the temperatures are lower and a general feeling of well being to our soul when we know our dahlias and other flowers are doing well. Sometimes though the rain can bring us some problems we don't normally have to contend with during the growing season. If you go out to your garden and see some weird top growth, dark green miniaturized growth,

black leaves, malformed blooms or any other growth that doesn't look correct, then chances are you have a fungus attacking your plant(s). You need to spray a fungicide on them as quickly as possible. Any general fungicide that you can find at a hardware store or a big box store will work. I would suggest an Ortho product. Cut off as much of the weird growth as possible back to a leaf axial so new growth can occur. Hopefully one spraying will take care of the problem but if it persists spray weekly until correct looking foliage returns.



A BASKET OF MINGON SINGLES ON THE HEAD TABLE OF THE 2008 AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY NATIONAL SHOW AT LONGWOOD GARDENS IN PHILADELPHIA, PA THE 2009 NATIONAL SHOW IN EVERETT WASHINGTON SHOULD BE SPACATULAR. THE LAST SHOW IN THE SEATTLE AREA HAD 4,800 BLOOMS.

AUGUST MEETING

7:30 PM

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

ATL BOTANICAL GARDEN

PROGRAM: MAXIMIZING YOUR BLOOMING SEASON, DISCUSSION OF WHAT FERTILIZERS TO USE AND WHEN TO USE THEM FOR THE BIGGEST AND MOST BLOOMS IN THE FALL PLUS CARING FOR YOUR PLANTS.

ALSO, HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE SHOWS TO INCLUDE WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN, CUTTING YOUR BLOOMS, TRANSPORTING YOUR BLOOMS, STAGING YOUR BLOOMS AND A LIST OF SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED.

2009 CALENDAR

AUG/SEPT

AUGUST 15

JUDGING SEMINAR

CARTERSVILLE,GA

AUGUST 17,

MONTHLY MEETING ABG

AUGUST 20-24

ADS NAT'L SHOW

EVERETT, WA

SEPTEMBER

**CAROLINAS DAHLIA SHOW,
ASHEVILLE**

SEPT 12-13

UNC ARBOETUM

TENNESSEE DAHLIA SHOW

CHATTANOOGA, TN

SEPT 19

**EAST RIDGE CHURCH OF
CHRIST**

**GA SOUTHERN STATES
DAHLIA SHOW**

SEPT 26-27

ABG EXHIBIT HALL

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

CHARLES BAUMRUCKER
CUMMING, GA

MICHELLE BONGIOVANNI
LOGANVILLE, GA

DICK CRABB
DUNWOODY, GA

CHRIS & MICHELLE DEMPSEY
ATLANTA, GA

GEORGIA HOLT
EUHARLEE, GA

KEN & TINA MAULDSEY
ATLANTA, GA

BILLY & THERESA SMITH
NORCROSS, GA



THESE DAHLIAS, MARIE SCHNUGG O-R AND CG ELEGANCE BB-C-L, ARE GROWING IN JOHN GEURIN'S GARDEN IN JULY 09.

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

ANNUAL JUDGING SEMINAR

The annual judging seminar will be held on August 15th, 10 AM -3 PM, at the home of Dan & Paula Pinholster in Cartersville, GA. Their address is 73 Blackfoot Trail, Cartersville. You can look up a map by going to www.mapquest.com. and using their address in the address line. No computer...then call me or the Pinholsters for directions. My number is 770-447-1405. The seminar is for any member that would like to learn how to judge and those that are already judges. It allows us to brush up on our judging skills and is always helpful to everyone that attends.

Lunch will be served at no cost to attendees so please let Dan & Paula know that you will be attending the seminar by calling them at 770-382-8110 or sending an email dfp7373@juno.com. This is an excellent opportunity to see the Pinholster's beautiful garden with lots of dahlias and many other garden delights so please plan on coming to the seminar.



JULY/AUGUST CHORES IN THE DAHLIA GARDEN

The Dahlia Society of Georgia strives to encourage and help all dahlia growers successfully produce pretty dahlias for whatever their wishes, be it exhibiting dahlias in competition or to cut for homes, churches, friends, etc. Too often we lean toward the exhibitor but, in all honesty, the majority of our members are from the latter category. Hopefully this article will provide information of more practical purpose and alternative, less costly chemicals or organic remedies. To that end I have visited garden supply departments in Home Depot, Lowes and WalMart to peruse their shelves



for readily available products that are far less costly than some of the chemicals exhibitors might use. Hopefully the following information will be of help this summer.

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. You can still plant new or replacement dahlias. Give the new transplants protection from the noon day sun by placing an opened umbrella over them. Attach the umbrella to a stake and leave in place for several days until the new plant appears acclimated to its new location.

POWDERY MILDEW- Damp weather and late in the day watering encourages mildew problems and powdery mildew is the first and probably the worst you'll see. [The photo (left) shows powdery mildew on a zinnia.] 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. There are less expensive products available but may require more frequent spraying. Some of these are IMMUNOX by Spectracide and BAYER ADVANCED DISEASE CONTROL. BODINE GARDEN DUST and SOUTHERN AG liquid copper fungicide also claim protection from diseases, including powdery mildew. Basically they are mixtures of sulfur, pyrethrins and copper. An organic approach is to remove all affected leaves and any mulch too close to the stem of the affected plants. Better air circulation will often prevent powdery mildew from ever visiting you garden. By now your 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 backs on a background field of orange that can again cause confusion with good ladybugs. Isn't Mother Nature interesting? These 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 hand-pick 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 in hopes they help to attract any Japanese beetle out of your garden.

MEXICAN BEAN BEETLE*- Yet another ladybug imitator, the Mexican bean beetle (left) 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 (right) 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 inexpensive CYGON.



MEALY BUG*- For the last several weeks I've found mealy



bugs on my dahlias. Overall they are not considered to be too harmful but they do suck the juices from plants and are a vector (carrier) for many diseases, including virus.

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





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 sprays are needed to get control of these pests.

SPIDER MITES- As covered earlier in this article, spider mites should not be a problem if we have frequent rains. In dryer times, spider mites are a major problem. (Photo to lower left shows spider mite damage.) Spider mites love hot, dry weather. As an organic



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. These almost microscopic vermin (not really spiders) often attack

the underside of the lower leaves of dahlias and the infected leaves take on a coppery color and appear to have small webs. (Photo at right shows spider mite webs.)

The leaves quickly curl inward and die. If you're unable to rid the garden of mites you will need to use an expensive 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 so you should use alternate miticides in the 3 day/3 apart spraying. Less expensive and organic



products touted to kill spider mites are several Neem oil based solutions such as GREEN LIGHT NEEM 3 in 1 and multi faceted GARDEN STATE FUNGICIDE 3 which claims to kill spider mites; besides fighting fungus. Another multi purposed product found was ORGANOCIDE sold by Home Depot & Lowe's. This item claims to be a fungicide, insecticide and miticide. Its basic ingredients are 5% sesame oil and 92% edible fish oil. Cygon is inexpensive and besides being a miticide, it is also used to fight leaf borers.

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. 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. Inexpensive and organic Bt ssp. Kurstaki will cause them to stop eating and perish.

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, 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 now 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, (bigger) blooms that you cut and bring in for your own amazement. Whatever your purpose, take the time to sit and enjoy.

*Expensive treatments for these vermin are Mavrik, Lannate, Merit, Tame and Knox Out.

Inexpensive treatments are, Malathion, Bayer Advanced All in One, Spectracide 3 in 1, Ortho Orthonex , Ortho Orthene, Ortho Max, and Sevin.

Organic treatments are on the shelves of your local stores. Another excellent source is Gardens Alive at www.gardensalive.com. They have offer of organic insecticides, miticides and fungicides from which to choose.



FIELD OF DAHLIAS GROWING IN NOVA SCOTIA

2009 PICNIC

The 2009 picnic was as advertised with lots of good dahlia friends in attendance (46) and plenty of great food they brought for all of us to enjoy. Many thanks to Henry and Jesse for hosting the picnic in their beautiful home and wonderful garden which contained dahlias, roses, swamp hibiscus and that fabulous Bonfire fibrous begonia plus many other plants and flowers. We had a great time and those that stayed late got to join in on a general discussion about dahlias for about 30 minutes. Thanks for coming and those that couldn't make it, plan to come to the 2010 picnic..

