

DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA
JUNE, 2015 NEWSLETTER & MEETING NOTICE



BADGER TWINKLE M-SC-DB PR/WH
FLOWER OF THE YEAR FOR 2015

JUNE CHORES IN THE DAHLIA GARDEN

Hopefully you have most or all of your dahlias planted by now and they are through the ground and growing. I realize this statement does not always happen like we would wish as some of our planted tubers end up being stubborn and will not grow while others sometimes rot. If you have one or more that have not come through the ground in 3-4 weeks after planting you can very carefully try to find the tuber and find out what is going on with it. If it still has a tip and the bulb is hard, put it back into the ground and lightly water it in. If the bulb has rotted then replace it if you have another tuber or plant.

I have received questions this Spring about the growing tip being eaten or cut off at the ground and holes in the leaves. If the tip has been cut off at the ground you have been visited by a cut worm. More than likely, if you have holes in the leaves, you have snails, slugs or earwigs. Earwigs will also eat more of the leaf than just make a hole. Earwigs can be a major problem in your garden if you let them get ahead and do not treat for them. To defeat these insects that love dahlias use Sluggo Plus <http://www.growslugfree.com/sluggo-plus/> You can purchase it at Pike's Nursery in Atlanta or on line if you prefer.

Make sure you fertilize your dahlias every six weeks or, if you use Oscomote, up to eight weeks, but it will run out earlier than listed due to our summer heat. If it is dry make sure you water at least once a week and maybe twice a week if extremely dry. Do not over water as it can cause stem rot and /or root rot. You may go out to your garden one morning or afternoon and find a plant totally wilted. Dahlias are subject to verticillium wilt sometimes. Step on the ground around the plant and then pour a gallon and a half of water on the plant. Sometimes it will come back with just that treat-

ment, but if it doesn't respond then you will need to use a fungicide like Ban-Rot or Terraclor and pour a 1/2 gallon on the plant and ground. These high powered fungicides are very expensive so it may be best just to watch the plant and if it will not recover just pull it up and throw it away.

Make sure you pinch out the growing tip when the plant is 1' high with 3-4 sets of leaves. If the plant is higher than that, you still pinch out the tip to make the plant bush up.

Don't forget to mulch your plants by the 1st of July as that is when the heat really gets going. When your plants start to set buds make sure they have extra water so the buds will develop properly. Of course if you want to have a larger bloom disbud the side buds. If you want more blooms don't disbud the side buds. The setting of buds can be enhanced through the use of Mor-Bloom 0-0-10 which is an Alaska Product. I highly recommend this product. Some dahlias will bloom in 60 days from planting, others 90 days and others 120 days. If it takes longer than 120 days to get a bloom then review your growing techniques or purchase a different dahlia.

Additional information like pest control, deer and critter control and growing techniques can be found on our website in a growing guide under Dahlias That Grow Well In the South page. WWW.dahliasocietyofgeorgia.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**DR. HEBER & MIRIAM ETHRIDGE
MADISON, MISSISSIPPI**

**MR. & MRS. CHRIS FRENCH
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA**

**WE ARE SO HAPPY TO HAVE YOU AS NEW
MEMBERS OF THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GA**

JUNE MEETING

WHEN: MONDAY, JUNE 15, 7:30 PM

WHERE: ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN (GEORGIA PACIFIC CLASSROOM) IN THE ORCHID CENTER. (TAKE THE WALK BEHIND DAY HALL AND COME ACROSS THE OPEN AREA AND INTO THE ORCHID CENTER. IT IS THE SAME CLASSROOM WHERE WE HAD THE MINI-SHOW LAST AUGUST) OUR MEETINGS WILL BE IN THIS CLASSROOM FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR.

PROGRAM: SUMMER CARE FOR YOUR DAHLIAS. A PANEL WILL DISCUSS DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF CARING FOR YOUR DAHLIAS DURING THE HEAT OF OUR ATLANTA SUMMERS. QUESTIONS ARE ENCOURAGED AND YOU WILL PROBABLY HEAR DIFFERENT WAYS EACH GROWER CARES FOR THEIR DAHLIA PLANTS.

BONUS—BONUS—FREE DAHLIAS AT THIS MEETING—COME EARLY

EACH JUNE GROWERS USUALLY HAVE SOME TUBERS, PLANTS OR CUTTINGS LEFT OVER THEY ARE UNABLE TO PLANT DUE TO A LACK OF AVAILABLE SPACE, SO THEIR LOSS IS YOUR GAIN. COME AND GET SOME FREE DAHLIAS.



BERT PITT B-
ID-BI DR/WH

A GREAT DAHLIA FOR YOUR GARDEN AS IT LOVES THE HEAT AND IS A STUNNING BLEND OF DARK RED AND WHITE. GO TO DAHLIAS.NET / BIGLIST TO SEE WHICH GROWERS HAVE IT AVAILABLE NEXT SEASON.

DAHLIA GROWING QUESTIONS

Q: Some of the tubers I planted have three or four stems coming out of the ground. Is that normal? Should I let them grow?

ANS: Each eye growing on the tuber will produce a stalk that will eventually bloom if left to grow. It is best to pinch/cut all of the stalks except two or three. Once the plant is growing well you can reduce that to one or two. Sometimes the main growing stalk will die, for whatever reason, and the eye on the tuber will send out at least two more stalks to replace it. If you have another stalk already growing you won't have to wait for the new stalks to grow thus giving you blooms earlier. If you let the stalks grow you will have more blooms but the size will be reduced. Also, each stalk will develop its own set of tubers and if you don't dig or divide your tubers the plant energy will be consumed under ground feeding those tubers. This is why you need to divide your tubers at least every three years.

Q: I planted my tubers but some have not come up yet and it has been a month. I dug to see if I could find them but they are gone. What happened?

ANS: The easy answer is they rotted...but there should have been some of the tubers left in the ground. So, do you have chipmunks or voles in your yard or garden? I always ask that question when I give tubers away as these critters love to eat dahlia tubers and they will eat them all if left to their own desires. Growers just don't want to consider that these cute critters will eat their tubers and other bulbs. Some people think I am paranoid about this issue and I am because chipmunks ate a lot of my tubers one season. What do you do? Plant your tubers in a one gallon pot full of potting soil just as you would in the ground and then plant the entire pot in the ground. That will keep out all of these critters except the most aggressive voles and hopefully you don't have any of those. You can also purchase Repellex (Google), hot pepper, and place in your planting hole. This product will defeat deer also.

Q: What fertilizer should I use during the growing season?

ANS: You can use Osmocote as I stated in the June growing article. Another popular fertilizer is calcium nitrate. Make sure you make the bag airtight after use so it won't absorb moisture (in storage). Give your plants a small handful three or four times a year. I like to use a fertilizer called Golden Harvest which is a water soluble fertilizer. Used weekly it will keep your plants from wilting. Google or see the Society growing guide on the website. Make sure you reduce the amount of nitrogen you give your plants after September 1st unless there is a lack of rain.

Q: How far apart should I plant my tubers?

ANS: Dahlias can be crowded and still produce lots of quality blooms for cut or show so I recommend new growers have 2' between plants so you are able to tend them properly. Some growers plant 2 tubers to one stake and others 1' between plants.

DAHLIA PICTURES

