

The Dahlia Dirt

Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society



Potted Dahlia with a Happy New Owner

The MBDS again hosted a successful sales and information booth at the 2010 Garden Faire, June 26th in Scotts Valley's Skypark.

The California Native Garden Foundation now hosts this annual event, which started in 2006. It engages a growing number of local community groups and businesses that are oriented to gardening and landscaping. Non-profit groups, including MBDS, serve as Partners and help to promote the free event.

The participating groups often hold fund-raising sales of plants or other garden items while adding to event's basic educational purpose and recruiting new members.

The theme of this year's Faire was "Rediscovering Our Roots," with an emphasis on the sustainability of traditional gardening methods.

DAHLIA CULTURE TIPS

Dean Barnes recommends good practices for cutting and transporting dahlia blooms. This month's column is again a Dean Barnes classic.

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MBDS MINUTES 5/10

On June 11th, MBDS members had a productive meeting while enjoying a variety of pizzas at Tony & Alba's Pizza and Pasta. Multi-tasking!

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NEXT MEETING

Second Friday of every month
 7:00 pm Potluck;
 7:30 pm Meeting
 • Come to Simkins Swim Center,
 Community Room,
 979-17th Avenue, Santa Cruz

FROM THE PREZ By Sharon Lucchesi

Greeting fellow dahlia lovers.

Hopefully your dahlias will be well under way for a colorful summer show of blooms. It has been a slow year for us, waiting patiently for the plants to do their thing. The weather has been less than desirable with cooler temps and more fog in our area.

Gophers continue to be a challenge, and seem to be the main conversation topic for we dahlia growers.

We had a wonderful time at the Garden Faire, as always it would have been great to have more volunteers.

Another reminder to label your plants properly!!! As Dean says: "if it isn't labeled, its a weed"...

Happy Growing, see you soon!
Sharon



JUDGING SEMINAR INFO by John Morton

We would once again like to invite you and your society members to a judging seminar. We would really like to be up to speed on our judging by the 2011 National Show.

This will be July 31st from 9:00 until 4:30ish. We would like to do this as we did in the past by making the seminar free to our members with the societies paying for the costs.

(I believe last year that came to just over \$7.00 per person. We took the total cost, food for lunch & breaks, \$15 per society for the rooms we use, etc., divided that by number of participants and billed the societies by how many of their members were involved.)

We need a count by July 24th so we know how much food to get for the seminar.

We will meet at the Church of Christ, 601 MacArthur Blvd., San Leandro, CA.

Parking will be available at the back of the church

Questions?

510-276-0530 H or
510-909-1127 C

CORNMEAL AS FUNGICIDE

Downloaded from
gardening.about.com/od/
naturalorganiccontrol/qt/
Cornmeal.htm

Who would have thought that something as seemingly innocuous as cornmeal would have such potent fungicidal properties?

Researchers at Texas A&M Research Station in Stephenville, TX, noticed that a peanut crop planted following a crop of corn didn't suffer the usual fungus diseases. Further research showed that cornmeal contained beneficial organisms that were at least as effective as common chemical fungicides. Somehow cornmeal is able to attract a member of the Trichoderma fungus family, which is a good fungus that kills off disease causing fungi in a matter of weeks.

Howard Garrett, the [Dirt Doctor](#), has continued the study and finds cornmeal effective on most everything from turf grass to black spot on roses. Furthermore, since it is entirely organic, it can be used on edible crops.

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MINUTES OF THE MONTEREY BAY DAHLIA SOCIETY, MEETING OF JUNE 11, 2010

Tony and Alba's Pizza Capitola

7:00 to 7:30 p.m. Pizza and socializing

7:30pm Meeting called to order by President Sharon Luchessi

Guests – Kristine & Brion had their niece Sara and their son Riley, the award winning pumpkin grower.

Stewart Kitayama joined his wife Cathy.

Welcome and please join us again.

Newsletter – Please send articles of interest to Tom Karwin tom@karwin.com

Gaye Lynn has not been receiving newsletter. Katy will get her on the mailing list.

Announcement - Stewart Kitayama reminded us of

the first Monterey Bay Greenhouse and Nursery Tour on Saturday 6/19.

The event is a fundraiser for California State Parks. Kitayama Brothers are the largest commercial cut flower grower in the country.

Please come and see what is growing in your own backyard.

MBDS Website - The site needs some updating. Marty G. has access so we need to figure out how to be able to make change. Brion will help out.

Mini Show and Potluck - Pat and Jack Nehlany have again offered their beautiful home for a mini show where members and friends can come and practice staging dahlias and have their dahlias judged.

It is a very relaxed environment where you can learn how to stage your dahlias and understand what it takes to win at the upcoming shows. This year the mini show and potluck will be on Saturday, July 24th from 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

If you don't plan to stage dahlias you are still welcome to attend this lovely event. Jack and Pat's home is located between Santa Cruz and Davenport right on Hwy 1. Details to follow.

There was a very interesting discussion about hybridizing and those in attendance thought it would be interesting to discuss at next meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Katy Bannister

MBDS Website (www.mbdahlias.org) Gets a Facelift

Our updated and redesigned website deserves a visit from current and prospective members.

President Sharon recently called for a volunteer to take charge of the group's website, which had fallen out of date. During the June 11th meeting, in a pizza-induced euphoria, perhaps, Brion Sprinsock said he would give it a try. He soon revealed talents unrecognized (by us) and produced a website that stands out among garden society websites, and not just the local ones!

The site includes all basic MBDS information and links to useful sites, and it looks good too!

DAHLIA CULTURE FOR JULY

A Dean Barnes Classic

CUTTING BLOOMS

To encourage the plant to make more and better blooms, blooms must be removed in a timely manner. We can either cut blooms at their prime or wait awhile and then cut off the old, spent blooms.

The length of time a bloom will stay pretty in a vase is dependent upon things such as dahlia variety, method of treatment after cutting, and the water in the vase. Some gardeners say "put the stem in water immediately" others say "immediately put the stem in a bucket containing a few inches of hot (160 degrees) water and leave it there until the water cools." Commercial products are available for use to extend the life of cut flowers. The ADS Guide to Growing and Caring For Dahlias suggests two less expensive formulas. Formula #1 consists of 1/4 teaspoon of bleach plus 2 teaspoons of sugar in 1/2 gallon of water. Formula #2 is 2 tablespoons of Listerine in 1/2 gallon of water. Some antiseptic mouth rinses available at K-Mart and drug stores have the same ingredients as Listerine, and cost less. When I cut flowers, I put a bottle capful (4 tablespoons) of the rinse and a gallon of water in a bucket,

and put stems in right after they are cut.

BLOOM TRANSPORT

The intent is to continually encourage you to enter blooms in shows because it is the high point of what we do; and can be fun. However, if you have not already acquired a means of carrying and protecting blooms and associated leaves in transit, these few words and pictures might help.

A bucket with a holed piece of foam plastic is easy to prepare. I bend and cut holes in a piece of welded wire to place at the bottom of the bucket to help keep the stems vertical. Bucket preparation is easy; but only a few blooms can be put in the bucket.

A you-build insert for a plastic tub. Top and lower pieces of foam plastic are cut to fit snugly in the tub. Holes sized for 3/4 inch plastic pipe are drilled in the foam plastic. The pipe pieces should be about 6 inches long. The foam plastic tends to float so it is fixed in place in my tubs. Foam plastic sheets are available at Beverly's.

A commercially available Multi-Pot insert for a plastic tub. A source for Ropak Multi-Pots can be found on the internet. The insert pictured was bought several years ago from a supplier in Oregon by a MBDS member who took our orders and made the purchase. The insert has 67 tubes that are 5 inches deep. The plastic tub is a regular Rubbermaid.



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How To Apply

Dry: Work 2 pounds of cornmeal into the soil for every 100 square feet. Water well, to activate the fungus killing properties. One application per season is usually sufficient, but repeat applications won't hurt anything.

Spray: What's called 'cornmeal juice' can be made by soaking 1 cup of cornmeal in 1 gallon of water overnight. Strain the liquid and use as a spray on susceptible plants.

Cornmeal vs. Horticultural Cornmeal vs. Corn Gluten

Any type of cornmeal can be used as a fungicide.

- **Food grade cornmeal**, found in grocery stores, will work just fine, but it is more expensive and comes in smaller quantities than horticultural cornmeal.

- **Horticultural cornmeal** has not been stored under the stricter guidelines required for food grade cornmeal. Hort cornmeal is general used for livestock feed. It too will work just fine as a fungicide and it comes in bulk.

Note: Corn Gluten should not be used as a fungicide. Corn Gluten is cornmeal that has been processed to have a higher protein content.

Iowa State researchers discovered that cornmeal gluten can inhibit seed germination. It is now used as a pre-emergent weed killer. That's a great tip, but don't confuse corn gluten with the fungicidal properties of corn meal.

A final bonus, cornmeal also appears to be a source of nutrients for the soil.

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