



DAHLIA DIGGINGS

Don't Forget: The intra-society plant sale at the April meeting

OFFICERS FOR THE 2008 FISCAL YEAR ARE:

PRESIDENT- Mike Plannett (314) 846-6650

VICE PRESIDENT- Kineth Launius (417) 255-0605

SECRETARY- Bob Sewell (618) 234-0176

TREASURER- Jim Davis (573) 484-3731

FINANCIAL SECRETARY- Shirley Pollinger (636) 584-8311

HEALTH AND WELFARE CHAIRPERSON- Judy Sewell

MEETING: April 18, 7:30 PM Missouri Botanical Garden. Unless otherwise noted the society meets on the third Friday of the following, upcoming months - June, July, September, November and December.

REFRESHMENTS: Ray Mitchell, Toby Charles, Shirley Pollinger.

CONDOLENCES: Society members offer condolences to the family of Ray Horrell at the recent passing of Ray's wife, Irene. Ray is the most senior member of the society and has been recognized for some time as the poet laureate of the society. Irene was Ray's quiet dahlia partner. She will be missed by the membership.

BOARD MEETING REPORT: The annual board meeting of the society was held April 1 and was presided over by President Mike Plannett. Approved agenda items by the board will be brought before the society membership at the regular April meeting for further discussion and a formal vote.

The following recommendations will be brought before the membership:

- It was recommended that the society donate \$100 to the ADS to help defray the cost of updating its internet website. The suggestion was put forth by Colleen Simons.
- It was recommended that beginning with the 08 plant sale that the society continue to sell plants to members for \$3 but increase the price to the general public to \$3.50. The suggestion was put forth by Jim Boever.
- It was recommended that entries placed in the People's Choice section of the show remain exactly as placed upon entry. The suggestion was put forth by Bob Himmelberg.
- It was recommended that society reimbursement for plants donated to this and all future plant sales be increased to 40 cents (regular varieties) and 25 cents (border dahlias). That suggestion also was put forth by Jim Boever.
- It was also recommended that the society adopt new guidelines for flowers sent to deceased members and member spouses. In lieu of sending flowers the society would honor the deceased individual by making a \$50 donation to the Missouri Botanical Garden in memory of the person. This suggestion was put forth by Simons.
- Lastly, board members requested that Joe Davinroy, the society liaison with the Garden, confer with the Garden's scheduling office regarding adjustments for this year's show - Oct. 1-2-3. Joe is expected to report his findings to the membership at the April meeting.

In addition, President Mike Plannett announced that the society will start using a borrowed digital light projector and lap top computer for future education segments, with the possible future intent of the society to purchase its own system.

INTRA-SOCIETY PLANT SALE: The society will be venturing into uncharted waters at its April meeting when it conducts the first-ever intra-society plant sale. And because it is a first there is no way of measuring its success or failure. The idea of such a sale was put forth once the Garden calendar could only accommodate a one-day sale in May. And because the plant sale is so vital, the membership felt that the May 11 sale should be geared to the public that annual attend the Garden on Mother's Day.

That's not to say that members cannot purchase plants at the May 11 Garden sale. However, it is hoped that members will take advantage of the April meeting sale, instead, and rely on the May 11 sale for anything not found at the April meeting sale.

Upwards of 200 plants could be available for the April meeting sale. Remember this, however: Many of the available plants likely will be smaller than members are accustomed to simply because they will lack the extra month of growth. That growth can be achieved while our patches continue to dry out from the excessive amounts of rain this spring. *IN THE MEANTIME JUST BE PREPARED TO DO A LITTLE EXTRA TLC.*

So if you plan to take advantage of the April meeting sale, keep two things in mind: First be prepared to pay for your plants that evening (\$3 per). And second, bring something to carry your plants home.

Those propagating have provided the probable available varieties but have not provided an exact amount of each they plan to bring. Therefore, it is likely that the best overall selection will be early. So keep that in mind.

Here is a sneak preview of what will be likely available:

*Narrows Tricia (BSC yellow), Kiara Pompadour (BFD light blend), Scaur Swinton (BFD dk pink), Oreti Stacy (BLC light blend), Mingus Bruce L (BLC yellow), Sheila Young (BLC dk pink), Mrs. Eileen (BFD orange), Nenekazi (BLC light blend), Ferncliff Illusion (BID light blend), Babylon Red (BFD red), Bracken Sarah (BBFD light blend), Brookside Cheri (BBC dk pink), Just Peachy (BBSC light blend), Hamilton Lillian (BBFD orange), Aitara Diadem (BBFD bicolor), Brindisi (BBID light blend), Ayres White Knight (AASC white), Aitara Bronwyn (ALC dark blend), Badger Twinkle (MSC dark blend), Sugartime Sunrise (MFD light blend), Barbarry Atom (BBFD red), FormbyTwilight (??), **AND THERE COULD BE OTHERS, TOO.***

Of the varieties listed above, the following have been former court-of-honor winners –Kiara Pompadour, Scaur Swinton, Aitara Diadem, Brookside Cheri, Hamilton Lillian and Just Peachy.

AUTAY CHIPPER: Those members who are propagating Autay Chipper – the 08 flower of the year – and plan to attend the April meeting come prepared to provide a count as to how many cuttings your root stock has produced to date. An impromptu check earlier indicated a low yield. Hopefully that trend has reversed; otherwise, plants will be at a minimum and may have to be limited to only those members who plan to enter the show.

MARCH ADS BULLETIN: When your bulletin editor was first introduced to dahlias as a small boy by his grandfather he was told that the dahlia was considered by many gardeners “a man's flower.” Many years later that term was echoed again by some new acquaintances he encountered at a Greater St. Louis Dahlia Society plant sale. And when it came to the Fab 50 listing in the yearly March ADS bulletin that “man's flower” concept was almost always reflected by the varieties atop the list. Many an old-timer in the STL society jokingly referred to any variety smaller than BB size as “sissy flowers.” But times have changed.

A check of this year's Fab 50 listing reveals something altogether different. No AA-, A- or B-size variety in the top five. Included, instead, are two relatively new types of dahlias – novelty and stellar. And the top A-size variety – Kenora Jubilee – slipped from second in 07 to sixth this year. The oldest variety among the top 10 is Hamari Accord, which was introduced in 1986. It currently ranks seventh, after a long run as the No. 1 rated variety.

Holding No. 1 for the third straight year, now, is Embrace, a BBSC yellow. And rounding out the top five in order are: Valley Porcupine, a novelty; Mary's Jomanda, a ball; Elvira, a peony type; and Camano Pet, a stellar. Yes, times have changed

NO MEETING in MAY: The society does not have a scheduled meeting in May but there will be a May bulletin.

MAY PLANT SALE: Plan to volunteer for a variety of jobs at the May 11 plant sale at the Garden. It will be held from noon to 5 p.m. that day. And in connection with the sale the society needs members to locate and save all types of boxes that can be used by customers to take their plants home. And because we cannot set up the sale prior to May 11 it will be imperative that such items be available when the sale begins, and that ample volunteers are available to get the plants and other sale items in place so the sale can get off to a smooth start.

FOR THOSE WHO MISSED IT: Included in the March society bulletin was a breakdown of the class themes that comprise the arrangement section of the 08 show. But just in case you missed it here are the class themes ---“A tisket, a tasket”, “I’m a little teapot”, “Jack be nimble, Jack be quick” and “One, two buckle my shoe.” The overall theme this year is nursery rhymes.

SOCIETY WEBSITE: Don’t forget to check out the society website which has an updated, composite propagation list. This will give you and your friends an idea of what likely will be available at the May plant sale.

WHITE ELEPHANT: Plan to attend the April meeting because it will feature a little of everything – good refreshments, some surprising white elephants, interesting dahlia conversations and, yes, the first ever intra-society plant sale.