

THE DAHLIA DIRT



The Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society

April 2012

Next Meeting:

Friday, April 13 at Simpkins Swim Center, Santa Cruz

7:00 Pot Luck Dinner

7:30 Meeting

Program:

Our guest speaker will be speaking to us about growing dahlias with compost tea.



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Just a short addition to the April newsletter.... We thought it was a great idea to include this timely article written by Dean Barnes. Thanks Dean!

See you all this Friday at the meeting.

MAKE A STAKE DRIVER AND PLANT LABELS

This is a good time to do garden planning and to gather things in preparation for planting. This article is a rehash/update of an article titled "Make A Stake Driver And Some Plant Labels" that appeared in the September 1998 ADS Bulletin. For some people, this could be a repetitious bore, but it might be helpful to new members.

The "Preparing To Plant" paragraphs in the American Dahlia Society "Guide To Growing And Caring For Dahlias" offers advice on stakes for dahlia plants. I decided to use 1" x 1" wooden stakes and for two years I drove them with either a heavy hammer or a spare sash window weight. If you have suffered with similar stake drivers, make a simple, easy to use steel pipe driver and save your arm at planting time.

Cut a 22-inch length of 1 1/2-inch, preferably galvanized, steel pipe. If one end of the pipe is threaded, simply screw a steel pipe cap onto the pipe and you are done. Otherwise, shape a piece of hardwood to fit into the pipe. A piece of dry tree limb from the woodpile is ideal. Drive about four inches of the wood into the pipe. Saw off the excess wood. Drill a hole and insert a pin or bolt through both the pipe and the wood to secure the plug. A 17/64 drill bit will make a hole for a 1/4-inch pin to be peened both ends.

The stake driver will weigh about 4 1/2 pounds. It is very easy to slide the pipe onto the stake (even a long one) and drive it into cultivated soil with five or six up and down blows. With one hand on the driver and the other on the stake, the stake can be kept straight.

The plant labels are made using 1/8-inch thick strips ripped from a 3/4-inch pine, or similar softwood, board. Saw the labels to desired length. A length of 4 1/2 inches is about right because some cultivars have a very long name. Drill a hole for a tie wire that can be any small gauge bare or plastic covered wire. Paint the label with white acrylic latex paint. For printing, a soft lead pencil is easy to use. Print will last a season and can be erased for reuse of the label. For the next season, just repaint the label. I prefer to completely remove print using a bench sander before repainting.

We are planning a free raffle for a few bundles of labels at the April meeting.

From the Prez....



First and foremost, thanks to all who helped create another great tuber and plant sale this past Saturday. We raised \$5,300 and have ten new members as well! An especially big thank you to Dean, Iris and Lena who

worked behind the scenes for months preparing for a successful sale. These funds make it possible for us to fund our society for the entire year and allow us to host our bloom show Aug.25th and 26th at Soquel High.

Kevin generously arranged for a speaker on April 13 to talk about growing dahlias with compost tea. He and I both have used compost tea on our dahlias. I'm looking forward to learning more from an expert. The speaker on gophers could not make it this month and is now slated for our June meeting.

April is the beginning of the dahlia planting season. Like you, I will be working hard to get my plants and tubers in the ground this month. It's an exciting time of year!! -Kristine





TRANSPORTATION TUBS

If your not quite ready to plant but would like a project to work on, here's a suggestion:

Building Your Own Dahlia Transportation Tubs

Buy a rubber tub. I like the Rubbermaid Roughneck. (10" x 13") Home Depot carries them. Small tubs are easier to carry when filled with water and they nest for storage.

Purchase 1.5" thick rigid foam roofing insulation (available at Home Depot).

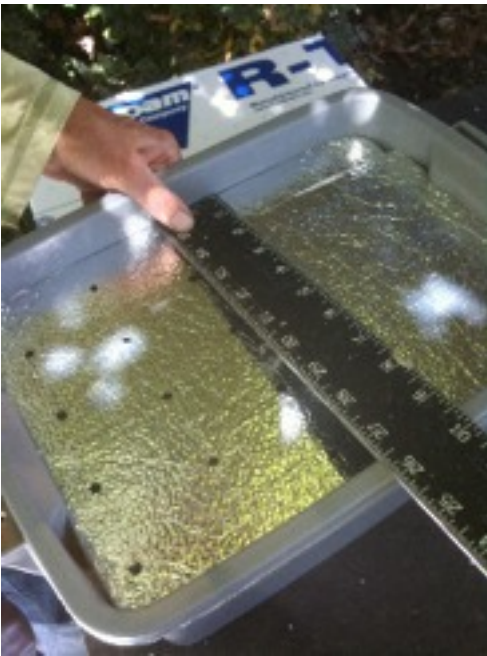
1. Cut foam to inner tub dimensions. Make it nice and snug. Use an exacto blade to cut the foam.

2. Grid out drill points every two inches in staggered rows.

Drill 7/8" holes for a snug fit of your PVC pipe.

Cut 3/4 inch PVC pipe into 5" pieces. Using a ratchet PVC cutter is easiest.

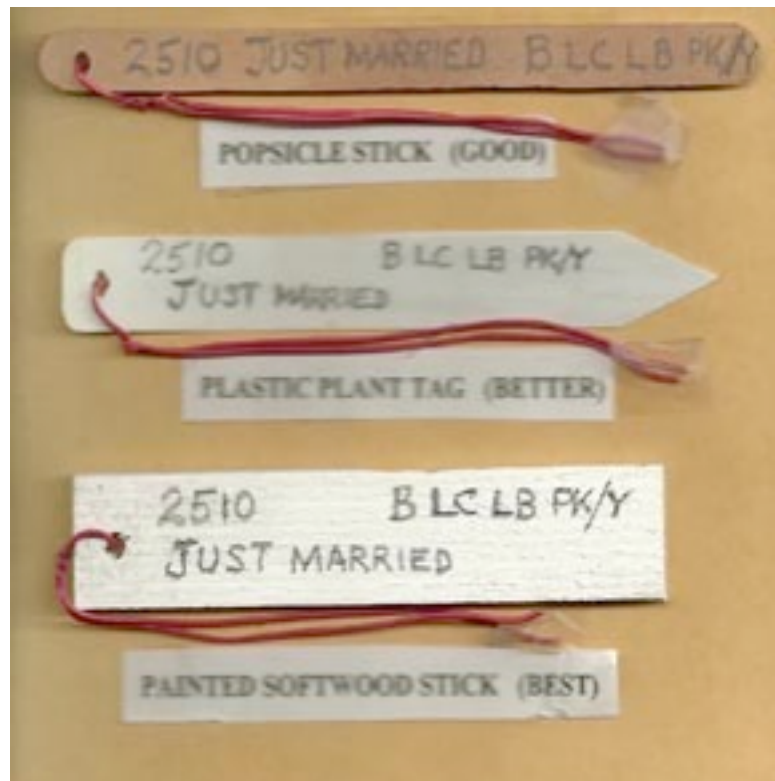
Push the PVC pipe into drilled holes and you're done.



DAHLIA PLANT NAME TAGS

Every dahlia society member must believe that it is important to somehow know and keep track of the cultivar (variety) name of each plant in their garden. The generally accepted way is to use a name tag for individual plants or a closely associated group of like plants. The name tag can be wood, metal or plastic. You can buy wooden popsicle sticks or tongue depressors and drill a hole for a tie wire. The homemade wooden stick, painted white and with a tie wire is preferable for several reasons. It is easy to print all the information that you want on it with a pencil, the print stays legible all season, the tag can be tied to the dug root clump and after cutting, to a bag or box used for storing tubers of that variety.

If you are going to make a name tag print some useful information, other than cultivar name, on it. When cutting blooms for a show, the class number becomes very important and it will be available without search if on the tag. You can feel very wise when a visitor to your garden asks “what is this one?” and you can see the name and classification code on the tag. Also, it is handy information when handling tubers in and out of storage. A softlead pencil was used to print on all of the tags shown as examples.



Minutes from the MBDS Meeting on March 7, 2012

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Kristine Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Number of members present: 31.

Treasury: Katy Bannister reported back: Just need to get the insurance from ADS for the Tuber sale and a follow up on one check. All else is good.

Tuber Sort and Sale: The sort will take place on the 4th, 5th and 6th at Kevin's barn from Noon to 4PM. Member's should bring their clean and labeled tubers to sort. If you can't make it, try and give your tubers to someone else to bring. MBDS also has tubers that were divided in the fall that can be sorted. So, please come help sort even if you don't have any to donate this year. Prices are the same as last year. AA, A and cuttings will be \$5. All other tubers will be \$3. Members can purchase at the sort for this price or if you donate tubers you can receive 1 free tuber for every 10 tubers brought to the sort.

Please arrive at Deer Park on Sat the 7th at 7AM to help set-up. The sale starts at 9AM. Jean and Susan Dee will do the culture table. Doris volunteered to walk the line of customers and update their mailing/email addresses. Becky will have posters and signs hung directing people to the upper area of Deer Park. Kristine has contacted many of the local newspapers and has the sale listed in their calendar sections. Peggy Lindquist will also follow up on advertising. Aptos Times will possibly do an article on Patricia Santana's garden behind Manuel's in Aptos. Ozzie will ask Rosemary at KSCO radio to mention our sale. Ed will place a notice on Craig's List. Katy will email flyer/poster for members to print out and distribute to friends, family or other places of business, like garden centers or nurseries. Ozzie and Kevin will bring canopies in case of rain. Any one else with an extra canopy is encouraged to bring it as well just in case.

Kristine has many Elma Elizabeth tubers and proposed that we offer a free tuber with a paid membership at the sale. Proposal was voted on and passed. Jean will bring new membership forms to the sale.

Kristine contacted Cabrillo Farmer's Market about selling our leftover tubers the following week (April 14th) at the Farmer's Market in Aptos. They have given us a spot in the first row. Susan Dee Cummings and Peggy Lindquist have volunteered to help direct customers to our booth from other areas of the market. Kristine, Jan Palia and Iris Wallace will help tend the booth. More volunteers are welcome to help and possibly set up a culture table. Set-up is at 7AM. Market opens at 8:00 AM until 12:00 PM. Motion to approve this activity was made and passed.

The rest of the tubers will be made available for Alladin presentation and then Homeless Garden Shelter.

Pacific Southwest Conference: Kevin Larkin did a brief report back. This year's conference was scaled back to one day instead of the usual full weekend. Four of our members attended. Information was shared about the 2011 dahlia winners (this is available on our website). Roy Stier also gave a presentation on how to start pot roots.

Next Months Speaker: Kristine is trying to bring in the "gopher guy".

Speaker of the Month: Kevin Larkin from Corralitos Gardens did a power point presentation on IPM (Integrated Pest Management). He also brought in many examples of pests and damaged plants along with hand lenses so we could all get a good look at them. One of the first steps is proper identification of the pest and that is done by actually seeing the pest or by noticing the type of damage done to our plants. We also saw slides of beneficial insects. Key to keeping a well balanced critter population is sanitation. Start with healthy plants and get rid of your dead heading debris. He shared information on both organic and non-organic products. Kevin also said that if you are spraying to do so in the early morning or evening. More information can be found at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM

Minutes respectfully submitted, Iris Wallace



Future Dates

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| May Meeting: | Friday, May 11 |
| Tuber Sale #2: | Saturday, April 14 Cabrillo Farmer's Market |
| Judging Seminar: | July 14 Santa Cruz Montessori |
| San Leandro Show: | August 3-5 |
| San Francisco Show: | August 17-19 |
| MBDS Show: | August 24-26 Soquel High School |
| National Dahlia Show: | August 31 - September 2 Portland, Oregon |
| San Jose Show: | September 7-9 |
| Santa Cruz County Fair: | Staging on September 9-10 |

The Crew

President: Kristine Albrecht
Vice President: Kevin Larkin
Treasurer: Katy Bannister
Secretary: Iris Wallace
Membership: Jean Biberdorf
Newsletter: Jan Palia
Website: Brion Sprinsock



**Please send all your fascinating photos and
interesting tidbits for the newsletter to bgawlik@cruzio.com**

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