

THE DAHLIA DIRT



The Newsletter of the Monterey Bay Dahlia Society

June 2013

Next Meeting:

Friday, June 14 at Simpkins Swim Center, Santa Cruz

7:00 Pot Luck Dinner

7:30 Meeting

Program:

**At this meeting we'll share our secrets of watering successful dahlias.
Bring your secrets to share.**



From the Prez....

This time of year has me wondering about how best to water my dahlias and how much is enough.

Half my patch is just starting to sprout but the plants I started from cuttings in December are a couple of feet tall and require a lot more water. I've made the mistake in the past of watering my whole patch with my drip tape, soaking everything well and as a result rotting out my tubers.

I've also had the opposite problem of not watering enough and having the larger plants wilt at any hint of sunshine. It seems hand-watering is inevitable for the month of June until all my small plants catch up to the larger ones.

My recent technique is to turn my drip tape on just long enough to wet the tuber area and hand water my larger plants so they



Seedling

don't suffer. How do you water your dahlias this time of year? We will be sharing our watering secrets at this Friday's society meeting. See you there and happy growing.....Kristine



AC Ben



Staking dahlias



And raspberries too!





Classy Frass

By Tom Karwin

A new garden product, Insect Frass, might raise eyebrows, but it might also do some good for our plants.

We already find landscaping value in the excrement from bats, birds, cows, horses and other more exotic creatures. Insect Frass is really nothing new: we could regard it as an old friend dropping in our gardens.

The commercial provider of Insect Frass, Organic Nutrients, in Diamond Bar California, claims that this product is "the only immediately plant-available source of chitin ('kite-in')."

The company cites the Environmental Protection Agency finding that chitin triggers a plant's autoimmune system's defenses against pests and pathogens, including botrytis, powdery mildew, early and late blight, and root rot. Chitin also is a bio-pesticide that kills root-feeding nematodes and their eggs, and other plant-eating pests. Insect Frass also provides macronutrients and micronutrients (2-2-2) and is an excellent source of beneficial microorganisms.

Organic Nutrients promotes the formation of frass by feeding a 100% organic vegetarian diet of vegetables, cactus and wheat bran to its insects. The company doesn't reveal its frass collection technique, so I'll still assume the Tiny Shovels Method.

Gardeners can buy Insect Frass in bags as small as 1/2 pound, and use it in several ways:

- Foliar drench
- Root drench
- Amendment to potting medium
- Top dressing

I recently installed three pairs of azalea plants in close proximity, so they have identical growing conditions. I will treat one plant of each pair with Insect Frass, and watch for any evident differences in their growth and general health.

For more information about Insect Frass, browse to <www.onfrass.com>.



Minutes from the MBDS Meeting

Minutes from MBDS meeting on May 10th, 2013

Kristine Albrecht called the meeting to order at 7:40pm. Number of members present = 21.

Minutes: Motion was made to approve the April minutes as written in the May newsletter. Motion was approved.

Treasury: No report. Katy had foot surgery this week. Jean and Janet also absent due to knee surgeries.

Membership: No Report

Dahlia Show: Our annual dahlia show date has been set for Labor Day weekend (August 30th –September 1st) and will be held at Soquel High School cafeteria. Kevin has made arrangements to rent all of our tables this year. Iris will meet table vendor for set up and obtain a map of layout from Kevin. Kevin will be attending ADS National show that same weekend and will be unable to attend.

Show committee is as follows: Court of Honor and Awards, Lena and Randall Marsden; Judges and Clerks, John Morton; Hospitality/Refreshments, Patricia Santana on Friday and Saturday and Mary Banister on Sunday; Photography Section Manager, Ed Rosser; Lunch on Saturday, Jan Palia; Facilities Set Up and Tear Down, Iris Wallace; Publicity, Kristine Albrecht and Julie High; Tallying, Iris Wallace, Katy Bannister and Karen Zydner (?); Culture Table, Dean Barnes and Mary Bannister; Bloom and Bouquet Sales, Bettie Crandall, Doris Wilson and Jan Palia; Contact Info, Kristine Albrecht. Please note this is only a preliminary list and we will need more volunteers as the show nears.

Raffle: The idea of having a raffle at the show was discussed. Possibly sell tickets to help offset costs. Raffle winner would receive a box of tubers shipped in the spring. Woody spoke knowledgeably about the pros and cons of doing a raffle. She is unable to help this year due to prior commitments with the County Fair. Is there's someone who would like to do this? Possibly sell tickets at the bloom sale table outside? We should have blooms on display of potential tubers that will be shipped.

Donation Box: Do we need to have a donation box? Last year we collected \$120. Some members thought it was a good idea and that visitors don't mind making a donation. People appreciate seeing the blooms. Other members felt it looked like begging and felt uncomfortable about having a donation box. A motion was made to approve having a donation box. Motion was passed.

Water Key: Remember to get water key from Kevin.

Signs: Becky will check begin and ending times and get back to Kevin so that all signs and publicity state the same times.

Dahlias of Today: Katy had several copies of the latest Puget Sound publication available for \$13.

Culture: Kevin presented a talk on fertilizer. He demonstrated how application of fertilizer is figured out by weight and had showed us how to do the calculations. Best not to apply nitrogen after September 1st. This allows plants to harden off and develop good tubers.

Future Dates

Monterey Greenhouse Grower's

Open House

June 15

July Meeting

July 12

MBDS Annual Show

August 31

Soquel High

September 1



The Crew

President: Kristine Albrecht

Vice President: Kevin Larkin

Treasurer: Katy Bannister

Secretary: Iris Wallace

Membership: Jean Biberdorf

Contributing Writer:

Tom Karwin

Newsletter: Jan Palia

Website: Brion Sprinsock



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

Want to see past issues of the newsletter?