

Fraser Valley Dahlia Society

Newsletter

46172 Clare Ave., Chilliwack, BC, V2P6N1

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Since 1997 Vol.1. Feb.. - March, 2011

Meetings: Held on the 4th Tuesday of the month February through October,

At 7.30 PM, Central Heights Church,

1661, McCallum Road. Abbotsford

Enter at rear of church at Gym entrance.

Meeting **7.30 PM**, Feb, 22, 2011

Refreshments: Pat Glennie , Arlyne Kuiper and Diana Youngson

Program: Taking Cuttings from Dahlia tubers and / or Pot tubers, with Roy Campbell

Question and answer period. Waking up our tubers.

Meeting **7.30 PM**, March, 22, 2011

Refreshments: Peggy Byland , Carole Rollie, and Johanna VandenBosch.

Program: Tuber Sale and Getting our garden ready for spring planting with Ralph Kuiper.

President's Message:

Wishing you all a happy New Year and hoping you had a great Christmas. One thing that makes me happy in the new year is when I check the state of my stored tubers and find that they seem to be in fine shape. A few small adjustments have made a great difference in the storage temperature and for me this is one problem that has now been finally dealt with. It is still too cold to do anything other than plan which Dahlia plots I can make larger- but not so much larger that I find myself unhappy and overwhelmed by the work load I have created by wanting more plants. Be careful not to turn your hobby into a job you keep finding reasons not to keep on top of. Even if you have room to add more dahlias, make sure you are prepared for the time you will need to spend in your garden. A hobby of any kind should stay a hobby you enjoy and not become a job you have to force yourself to do. Please take note that our monthly meetings this year are at the same location, but starting at an earlier time.

meetings will start at 7.30 PM and end at 9.30 PM.

Our February meeting will have Roy Campbell giving an excellent presentation on taking cuttings.

The Federation Flower of the year for 2011 will be:

Skipley Spot Of Gold.

The Unsworth Challenge flower (\$5.00) is Pam Howden.

The Memorial Flower is Trengrove Milenium.

If you have tubers of these varieties consider taking cuttings. If you are not successful you still have the tubers to plant in your garden and a excellent chance of growing great cuttings next year.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our February 22nd meeting at 7.30 PM

Doug Youngson

It is about time to check your tubers and remove any tubers that are not healthy. If any tuber is rotting and left with other tubers it will decay others around it. If you do have a chance, check do it soon.

This also will give you a idea on the number of tuber you may have for the tuber sale. This is the time to get your selling labels ready to save time in the spring. I have the sales catalogue ready and can send you one by email, if you like to get started. Make sure you have a sellers number , or obtain one from. Ralph 604 792 0252 or rkuiper@shaw.ca

...take cuttings from your new or favorite dahlia tubers.

by Richard Parshall

The first question people ask about the taking of dahlia cuttings is "Why bother taking dahlia cuttings at all, when all I have to do is plant my tubers?" Actually there are several good reasons why taking cuttings might be advantageous to the average dahlia grower as well as the more experienced grower. The most important reason would be to quickly increase your number of plants from a single tuber. If you plant a single tuber you will only get one plant the first year and then more plants the second year by dividing your tuber clump at the end of the growing season. If, however, you force your single tuber to send up shoots in March and April, you can cut off those multiple shoots, place them in a rooting medium, pot them up when roots have developed, and have 5 to 10 plants to plant out into your garden about the middle of May. When you spend \$15 or \$20 for those fancy new releases and you get 10 new plants instead of only one, then the cost basis of your plants becomes considerably less. Plus you can share the extras with your friends and neighbors.

A second reason for taking cuttings is that it gives the growing season a head start. One foot high plants set out in the garden in mid May will bloom sooner than the tubers that you planted around the first of May (Average date for planting dahlia tubers in the Pacific Northwest). Therefore, you will get to enjoy your dahlia garden for a longer time.

A third reason for taking dahlia cuttings is to save that hard to grow dahlia. Some varieties (Camano Cloud) don't always grow very well from tubers but do fine when grown from cuttings.

If we have convinced you to try taking a few cuttings this year, then the next question would be "When do I start?" The answer, depending on your resources and depth of involvement, is some time between the first of February and the first of March. Start earlier if you plan on taking a lot of cuttings; later if you're only doing a few.

People often ask, "Don't I need a greenhouse to take cuttings?" The answer of course is that it would be nice, but certainly is not necessary. If you have a greenhouse by all means use it, but if you don't, use your basement, garage, spare room, small space on the kitchen counter, or a window sill. The key elements are light, heat, and moisture. If you can introduce these either naturally or artificially then you will have a place to grow your cuttings.

Taking Dahlia Cuttings: Step #1, Benching up tubers and pot roots

Sometime in late January or early February gather those new and hard to grow tubers and pot roots (Cuttings from the previous year grown in 4 inch pots) from which you are planning to take cuttings. Place them in individual pots if you're only taking cuttings from a few tubers. When taking cuttings of numerous tubers, then I recommend using six inch deep plastic trays (16" x 22" or 10" x 16", available at most large chain hardware stores. Fill pots or trays to within one inch of the top with lightly moistened potting soil or a half sand and half peat moss mix. Plant your tubers vertically in rows spaced about 4 to 6 inches apart being sure to place a variety label next to each tuber. Expose the neck of each tuber an inch or two above the soil level to make the taking of cuttings easier. Finally, place trays or pots about 6 to 8 inches below florescent shop lights. No bottom heat is needed if set up is in a heated room (60 to 70 degrees). If set up is in a cool garage or basement then bottom heat is recommended. Sources of bottom heat could be heating cables (cheap, \$25), special heating mats (expensive, \$100+), or the top of the water heater or freezer (free). Most tubers will begin to eye up in a week to 10 days. Some, however, may take up to a month while others spring forth in 3 or 4 days It depends upon the variety

