



Dear Fellow PNDC Members Larry Smith, President

Spring is coming right up! Days are getting longer and warmer and many dahliaphiles are anxious for the growing season. I have been hearing talk from early birds of getting tubers potted and into a warm environment for future cuttings. Personally, I am still enjoying the off season and the last few weeks of hibernation before the real works begin. Before we know it, time to plant will be upon us.

I invite all members to the PNDC Spring Meeting at Elmer's Restaurant in Portland on Saturday, March 23rd. We are looking to revitalize the PNDC and hoping to offer more benefit to member societies as well as individuals, so be prepared to offer your input. The meeting for **PNDC officers and each member society's Executive Committee representative will begin at 10:30 a.m.** Lunch will be at noon, meals can be ordered off the menu and an 10% gratuity will be added to the bill. At approximately 1 p.m., the General Board Meeting will begin, to which society may send four voting delegates. Please notify me the names of your club's delegates, if you haven't already done so. After the meeting, we will have a tuber auction. Please donate newer and special varieties, proceeds will go to the PNDC treasury. Donated tubers and plants are encouraged!

Gold Medal nominations needed

The PNDC Executive Board is seeking nominations from our members for the Gold Medal of Lifetime Achievement. Any PNDC member or society is invited to nominate an individual or couple who is NOT member of that nominator's own society. Your nomination might be for someone who mentors newcomers in growing dahlias or participating at shows. Or someone who is instrumental in recruiting new dahlia club members or generously shares their knowledge and experience about growing dahlias. Contact a PNDC delegate from your society with your nomination or you can send a nomination to Larry Smith. A nomination should describe the candidate's achievements, contributions to the dahlia society, to the PNDC, and other dahlia activities. Nominations must be received by our M Saturday, March 23 meeting. Email Larry Smith at: thebodysmith@hotmail.com or: 4227 SE 76th Ave; Portland, OR 97206-3351.

Spring PNDC meeting: Saturday, March 23, 2019

March 23, 2019

Elmer's Restaurant:
10001 NE Sandy
Blvd., Portland, OR
97220

The PNDC spring meeting will be held Saturday, March 23 at the Elmer's Restaurant in Portland. Elmer's address is 10001 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland, OR 97220. The society delegates convene at 11:00 am and the luncheon and general meeting will begin at noon.

Directions to PNDC Meeting

10001 NE Sandy Blvd, Portland 97220

From South: Drive north on I-5, take exit 288 which merges onto I-205. Follow I-205 about 22 miles until exit 23A to Sandy Blvd/ Banfield Freeway. Drive .28 miles and merge onto NE Sandy Blvd and take the Sandy Blvd. ramp, (past the NE 97th Ave). Drive .08 miles and turn slight right onto NE Sandy Blvd/US-30, then go .06 miles. Elmers is on the left, just past NE 100th Ave.

From North: Driving south on I-5, take the I-205 exit, about a mile after the Clark County Fairgrounds. Take I-205 over the Columbia River and take the Sandy Blvd exit, going westbound. Follow the above driving directions to Elmers once you have gotten onto Sandy Boulevard.



Victoria Dahlia Society - by Phil Newton

Victoria, B.C.

The Victoria Dahlia Society will be holding our 74th Dahlia show this August 17th and 18th. Our flowers of the year will be Lady Darlene for the single and Clearview Daniel for the triple. We will be at the Prospect Lake Hall again (a great venue) this will be our third year at the hall. Sunday the Hall has their annual BBQ and we get hundreds of people through the show.

Philnewton@shaw.ca. If you get in touch we might be able to billet you with a club member or recommend motels near the show venue at reasonable rates. Any one from off the Island who shows or judges in show will have their show dinner, on the Saturday night, looked after by the club.

Last year show winner (single) was Paul McKittrick with his own seedling CHI-NEESE RED. Chi stands for Cobble Hill the area where Paul lives. Paul was our club president for many years and his leadership is still greatly appreciated. Paul is producing numerous show flowers Chi-ef 25, Chi-eeze Whiz to name just a couple. Great flowers and they come with a chuckle no extra charge. After years of showing this was Paul's first best in show and well deserved for all the dedication and attention to detail.

Coincidentally, Barry and Mary Willoughby won best in show with their seedling the year previous. We have great hybridisers in the club.

Our perennial winner Connie Young Davis won the best triple. She always brings great blooms and is hard to beat. It raises the bar for the rest of us in the club to do better.

We are always looking for judging help and would like to invite anyone who wants to come to the Island for a great Dahlia Show to get in touch with myself



Cathy Featherby presenting Best Single in Show award to Paul McKittrick for his seedling Chi-nese Red MB R

Nanaimo Dahlia Society - by Anne Kenney

Nanaimo, B.C.

The Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society first meeting of the year was held Feb 5th, before all the big snow storms hit...Since then we have been buried under mounds of white garden deterrent.....At our first meeting we discussed plans for the year and viewed a video on taking dahlia cuttings. Dahlia storage issues were brought up, with one member stating she was growing penicillin in her tuber storage bins.

Vern Stephens congratulated Trevor Hoff on taking and passing, his candidate judge test and four more members have indicated that they will write the test in the near future!

Our dahlia tuber sale will be held at the Country Club Centre in Nanaimo on Saturday April 27th. The annual NGDS SHOW will be held on Saturday and Sunday August 24 and 25 at the Country Club Centre in Nanaimo. Our Dahlias of the year are Clearview Daniel and Lady Darlene.



Lady Darlene



Clearview Daniel





HOLLYHILL JITTERBUG

Last Chance to Renew Membership!

The deadline to renew PNDC membership has passed. However, if you want to be listed in the 2019 PNDC Roster and haven't renewed - send your dues ASAP to Elva Sellens, 2651 Loma Vista, Roseburg, OR 97471-6175. PNDC dues are \$10 per person, or \$15 per family. Include your address, phone number, e-mail and how you want the newsletter - by e-mail or by mail.

ADS Image Library by Claudia Biggs

The ADS Image Library has been busy this past couple of months with requests for the 2019 ADS New Introductions. You can order this program on the ADS web site. There are two versions: an automated program only for \$13 or a deluxe version that includes a second DVD of low resolution photos only for \$20. I have also finished the 2019 ADS Fabulous Fifty Dahlia program which will be posted soon on the ADS web site. You can order it from me

✻ ✻ In Memory of Tom Ball ✻ ✻

Tom Ball died February 7, 2019 as a result of pneumonia. Many of us knew Tom well when he served as the PNDC judging chair from 1995 to 2007. He also applied his talent as the editor of the PNDC bulletin for many years until 2004. Cheryle Hawkins offered to assume the newsletter editor position when he stepped down. Tom and his wife, Twyla, who preceded him in death, were a driving force for the PNDC for years. They went to all of the conference shows. In his later years, Tom became less active. He was a long time member of the Seattle Dahlia Society. Although the Seattle Dahlia Society decided to become a member of the Federation, Tom continued to be an active member of PNDC.

Greetings from rainy Portland! Under the leadership of our new Co-Presidents, Laura Oldenkamp and Nan Hage, our Board met on a mid January afternoon to plan for the coming year. We feel that member input is valuable and welcomed any interested member to attend and take part in the discussion. In the morning, prior to the Board meeting, the Trial Garden and Show Committees met.

The Canby Trial Garden, hosted by Swan Island Dahlia farm, is already at capacity with 35 entries and a waiting list. This effort is run by committee, led by Director Teresa Bergman and assisted by Linda Taylor, Nan Hage, Mark Oldenkamp, Ted Kennedy, Gary Murphy, and Kathy Knudson. Entries will be coming from all over the USA and Canada. We encourage any judges who come to the Portland area to visit the garden and help score the cultivars. 2018 Derrill Hart awards were won by Portland Dahlia Society members Ted and Margaret Kennedy (Hollyhill Tangelo, BB SC OR), Nicholas Gitts (Dancin' Queen, ST LB), and Allen Manuel, (Allen's Arctic Fox, B SC WH).

Our 91st Annual Show will commence August 24-25 at Oaks Amusement Park. Show Co-Chairs will be Eric Toedtli and Larry Smith. New to our show schedule will be classes for all of the new micro categories recently put into trial by ADS.

We have also added "Best Micro" to our awards list. Our Board agreed that the addition of these classes will give exhibitors incentive to show them and encourage hybridizers to develop more of them. We have also voted to change the exhibitor definitions for our show, see the separate article in this issue of Dahlia times for the updates. Out of town guests are always welcome at our show, plan to come to Portland and join the fun.



Exhibiting changes at Portland Show

by Larry Smith

1. We have adopted more or less the same rules for exhibitor classes as Elva used last year for the PNDC Conference Show in Roseburg. We aren't going to be so strict about Amateurs having to move up to Open if they aren't consistently getting entries on the Head Table and allowing Open exhibitors who aren't getting entries on the HT to move back to Amateur. Same with Novice exhibitors, we are going to allow them 3 years or 10 shows as a Novice. As PNDC President, I am going to bring this proposal up at the Spring Executive meeting with the possibility of encouraging all PNDC affiliated societies to adopt consistent exhibitor definitions.

2. We are incorporating ALL of the new Micro classes that came out in the ADS Classification Guide into our show schedule and will be offering a head table for each class. We know that for some of the new classes, there are no listed cultivars in them....yet. We feel that offering Head Table awards for them will encourage more people to grow and enter them, as well as encourage hybridizers to come out with more Micro cultivars.



Douglas Dahlia Society by Elva Sellens

Roseburg, Oregon

There is not much going on down our way. We do not have any meetings in December and January. I ordered the 2019 new introductions DVD for our February meeting but I could not run it on my computer because it say that it had malware on it. I will try to have it checked out to see if the problem is my computer or problem with the DVD. We had 3 new members at our February meeting which delighted us. We had 3 other interested people coming to our meetings end of last year so we are hoping to keep the new members interested.

Better not complain about the rain that we have been having! Our local newspaper had an article in Saturday newspaper about the drought in our county is still on. With the recent rains, we went from severe to moderate drought.

We are about 7 inches of rain below normal for the rain year. I know that we need the rain but I am getting quite tired of it. We only had snow one day here in Roseburg and a light dusting another day so we have been lucky in our winter weather compared to other Northwest areas. It has been a cold winter so we are looking forward to warmer Spring weather.



CAMEO WL W

Our flower of the year will be Cameo. Our show dates will be September 21 - 22.

Wild Rivers Dahlia Society

by Bob Chibante, Gold Beach, Oregon

It appears that Mother Nature has forgotten that the Gold Beach area is reputed to have the most sunny days on the coast from mid northern California north. On Feb 9th, snow fell all the way down to the beach. Certainly is "inspirational" to start thinking about gardening. Changes this year at Wild Rivers Dahlia Society include Guy Chibante as the ADS representative along with being the judging and design chair. Guy is one of our charter members and has been the primary person responsible for all those gift giveaways we have for those exhibitors who stay thru the awards presentation. He started with the San Leandro Dahlia Society over 20 years ago. This is the same club our parents were involved in 1960s when we were kids. Bob Hemus has taken the position of Marketing and fundraising. Bob is a second-year member and has developed strong passion for growing dahlias. He seems to be infected with the growing dahlias virus and is in it knee deep. He is starting a flagpole garden at the newly built hospital to offer color and joy to the visitors. We are planting red and white either miniature or BB size dahlias of mixed varieties. He is looking for a few more tubers.

Hopefully there will be no fires this year and things will go well. We sell plants and bouquets at the show as our primary fundraiser and the fires the last 2 years has not helped that cause. We will have a handout about our sponsors to promote their business, dahlias or other, and a special thank you for those contributing to our success and growth of the dahlia culture. For information contact Bob Chibante at dahlias@charter.net

Coming in April, Bob Chibante will be giving a dahlia program at the Curry County Library at the invitation of the library director. Should be fun and we will have a PowerPoint show and some hands-on material. We are still looking for sponsors for our 2019



View from Bob's Deck



Lane County Dahlia Society

Deb Gilmer Eugene, Oregon

It may be freezing right now, but with tubers all tucked in their beds we have visions of winning dahlias in our heads!

So what will 2019 bring for the Lane County Dahlia Society? Our wish list includes: a successful auction on Thursday, April 4th, lots of tubers for our sales in May and June, interesting and fun programs including: the DVD of the new 2019 top-scoring dahlias from the American Dahlia Society's trial

gardens in February; Top Dahlia Picks for Your Garden by Lexa Cookson and Deb Gilmer in March; "Tricks for Growing Winning Dahlias" in June from none other than head table winner and PNDC President Larry Smith; and from farther North, Wayne Lobaugh will share ideas for hybridizing and judging open centers.

We will be hosting the Pacific Northwest Dahlia Conference Show this year September 14th - 15th. At this fabulous show we will expect many more



Hollyhill Black Beauty

exhibitors and bloom entries. Show flower for 2019 is Hollyhill Black Beauty, an award winning black-red Informal Decorative (BB ID DR). Our 2020 show flower will be Hollyhill Pink Tigress.

Our slate of officers for 2019 is: Co-President, Newsletter Editor and Show Chair: Cheryle Hawkins; Co-President: Camille Noel; Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, Program & Membership Chair Deb Gilmer. The 2nd Vice President

position is vacant.

Co-Recording secretaries: Pat Chasse and Alison Allen; Treasurer & ADS Representative: Phyllis Shafer; Show Judges Chair: Lexa Cookson; Show Setup Manager: Eugene Kenyon; Refreshment Hosts: Jennifer Ellis and Monica Henry;

PNDC Representatives: Dick Bach, Deb Gilmer, Cheryle Hawkins, and Camille Noel; and Newsletter Distributor and Show Medals Exchange: Dick Bach.

May your dahlias be bountiful and prolific this year!

Dahlia Growing from Nanaimo: The Sophomore Slump

By Trevor Hoff (Novice Grower and soon to be Candidate Judge)

In 2017, after many years loving dahlias, I found myself in a situation where I was able to grow my own.

I had recently moved on to a property with a large established garden plot. At the start of the year I joined the Nanaimo Gladiolus and Dahlia Society and began my dahlia journey. I planted 80 tubers and soaked in the information at our monthly meetings and took in all the advice I could get from our knowledgeable growers. I had an excellent year full of healthy plants and beautiful blooms. I even managed to get one on the head table with the best miniature in show (Keating Ted).

Over the winter I decided that in 2018 I was going to expand my garden to enable myself to grow more dahlias, more flowers and more vegetables. Unfortunately my property is typical of Vancouver Island and as such the soil is very rocky with deep bands of shale. Therefore I decided that I would build raised beds and bring in two dump trucks full of premium bulk potting soil from a local vendor. I would plant dahlias in the new raised beds and use the existing fenced garden for plants that were less deer resistant.

By early May I had everything set up and ready for planting. I had started my dahlias in pots about six weeks earlier and most of them were off to a good start. I got everything planted and now it was time for Mother Nature to do her thing. After several weeks of watching my dahlias grow very slowly I started to get concerned. At this time I did a home soil test on some

of my left over bulk soil and the results were grim: no detectable nitrogen, trace phosphate and only a moderate amount of potash. This was from soil billed as premium garden soil (50% Peat/ 40% Steer/10% Sand)". It is now clear to me that those claims are not as honest as I would expect.

So despite much of the guidance that I saw on the Internet that suggests not to feed dahlias heavily with nitrogen, I did just that. I certainly feel that I saw an improvement but my dahlias never did recover to where I had hoped. In late August I had only 7 single entries to enter in our show from over 250 plants. Many of my plants never made it past a first flush of blooms before it was time to dig them up. From a tuber perspective I got about 33 percent less tubers per plant and many of a smaller size than the previous year.

I guess this just further highlights the importance of good soil in the dahlia growing process. Going forward, all I can do is develop a plan to improve my soil over time. I will be starting later this fall with steer manure and possibly kelp meal. In the spring I will likely fertilize more aggressively at the time of planting. Next year I will probably forget about vegetables and other flowers all together, and plant exclusively dahlias including in the existing garden. Thus doubling my chances of success at our annual show which will be held August 24-25th at Country Club Mall in Nanaimo. Our flowers of the year 2019 are: Lady Darlene (single), Clearview Daniel (triple), and Phyllis M. (gladiolus).



2019 PNDC Dahlia Show Dates

Including Show Flowers

Victoria Dahlia Society

August 17-18

Prospect Lake Community Hall

Lady Darlene, Clearview Daniel

Nanaimo Dahlia Society

August 24-25

Country Club Mall, Nanaimo

Clearview Daniel, Lady Darlene

Wild River Dahlia Society

August 31-September 1

Event Center on the Beach, Gold Beach
Show flower to be decided

Portland Dahlia Society

August 24 -25

Dance Pavilion at Oaks Amusement Park,
Portland

Hollyhill Jitterbug

Lane County Dahlia Society

September 14-15,

Wheeler Pavilion, Lane Events Center, Eugene

Hollyhill Black Beauty

Douglas County Dahlia Society

September 21-22,

Douglas County Fairgrounds, Roseburg

Cameo

ADS thoughts by Mark Oldenkamp

The ADS Board has some changes that are happening. We just learned that Larry Smith and Nathan Payne, both from Portland, have accepted to role to help ADS with Publicity. Please note there is a new Treasurer for ADS, Charles Miehm. And there is a new person taking over the ADS store, Cammi Waggoner. Contact information is published in the Bulletin and should be updated on the website. There are some additional leadership openings in ADS that President Brad Freeman is working to fill. Let me know if you have an interest in learning more.

ADS is trialing a new interactive email tool for communication amongst the board, executive committee and for broadcast messaging to Society Presidents and ADS Representatives. This tool is called Groupvine, so please note that emails that might come to your contacts from ADS with a Groupvine tagline are legitimate.

The Trial garden program is actively aiding hybridizers with interest in getting feedback on potential of new cultivars. The Canby Trial Garden is fully reserved the earliest ever. The Portland trial garden team met recently to discuss plans for the new year. If anyone is in the Canby area during bloom time, there will be judging supplies at the Trial garden once blooms are ready to be judged. Qualified judges are encouraged to help with scoring.

I hope everyone enjoyed the December Bulletin. All of the show reports, trial garden and seedling bench winners and runner ups as well as a genome project update. Did you note that 2019 is the Year of the DAHLIA? I hope everyone is looking for ways to leverage this opportunity.

The annual planning meeting for ADS will be May 3-5 in Red Deer, Alberta, Canada. The complete Board membership is invited to participate in a full agenda to seek out and prioritize goals and initiatives for the year. This is primarily attended by the Board members and the local hosting society members are encouraged to attend. The meetings are open so if you want to attend this year make sure your passport is up to date.

The National Show this year is in Grand Rapids, Michigan on August 29-September 1. It should be a great event, so plan ahead to attend. Hopefully you have the National Show for 2020 in Wenatchee, WA on September 10-13, 2020. It will have been several years since the show was in the West. Both should be Dahlia extravaganzas.

Judges training planned July 13

A Judges Training is planned for Saturday, July 13 around 9 am at a charter school in Troutdale (east of Portland). The training is designed for potential candidate judges and will also provide an advanced segment which is planned to help meet the refresher

requirements for experienced judges. More information will be provided when the event is finalized.

For more information, contact Mark Oldenkamp, PNDC Vice President at dahliafan57@gmail.com

ROOTING DAHLIA LEAF CUTTINGS

By Ted J. Kennedy

It is a common practice to root dahlia cuttings taken from sprouting tubers.

These cuttings root easily and are very easy to do. Dahlia cuttings can be taken in another method that I call leaf cuttings.

Tuber cuttings are taken when the sprout is about two inches tall and removed from the tuber by slicing it off the tuber just above where it emerges from the tuber.

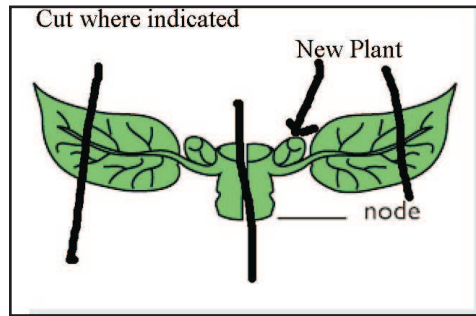
The cutting, when taken in this manner, has primordial tissue near where it attached

to the tuber that has the ability form roots very easily. Leaf cuttings are taken from a dahlia plant that has been allowed to grow to a height of 12 to 18 inches or so and involves the removal of the leaf nodes along with some leaf material to provide material for rooting.

Leaf cuttings are rooted in much the same way that tuber cuttings are rooted. Both are rooted in some sort of damp medium such as sterile potting soil, mineral wool, Oasis cubes, sterile sand and others. I use sterile potting mix called germination mix. It is a peat moss based product that has some vermiculite or perlite, a bit of lime to raise the pH, and a surfactant to allow the mix to absorb water quickly. Note that it has no fertilizer in it and fertilizer is not recommended for use in rooting dahlias. Leaf cuttings take much more time to root than tuber cuttings. They also require that you have a dahlia plant that is 12 to 18 inches tall and that means that the cutting material must be started several weeks before one would start tubers for tuber cuttings. The added time to obtain cutting material and for the cuttings to mature into a plant large enough to be placed into the garden is a negative factor for many people. However, the advantage of leaf cuttings over tuber cuttings is that you can harvest many more cuttings from the green plant, perhaps as many as 12 to 15 in some cases. The plant may be vigorous enough to be grown on for another round of 5 to 10 cuttings and in total from one plant it is easily possible to get 20 or more rooted cuttings.

So to summarize: Tuber cuttings are much easier to do as compared to leaf cuttings. Tuber cuttings root much faster than leaf cuttings and tuber cuttings reach planting size much quicker than leaf cuttings. Leaf cuttings have the potential to give you many more plants than tuber cuttings. In the garden there is little difference between plants grown from tubers, tuber cuttings or leaf cuttings. They will all grow tall and healthy and produce wonderful flowers. However, the plants grown from tuber cuttings will have smaller more compact tuber clumps than those grown from tubers. The tuber harvest yield will be about 50% less from tuber cutting plants. Leaf cutting plants will have even smaller tuber clumps but will still yield useable tubers. The exact yield of useable tubers from leaf cutting plants is very dependent on the tuber making capabilities of the dahlia variety. Those varieties that make very small or very few tubers may have no useable tubers when grown from a leaf cutting. One excellent use for plants grown from leaf cuttings is the production of pot tubers. Leaf cuttings produce enough tuber material for a nice pot tuber. So leaf cuttings are an excellent way to increase stock, especially if you want plants for excellent flowers or you need cuttings to make pot tubers.

Leaf cutting instructions: Before I outline the leaf cutting process, I need to emphasize the need for sterile materials.



The rooting mix must be sterile and although the germination mix I use is not technically sterile, it works very well. The pots and flats that you use must be sterilized and I have found that soaking pots and flats in a laundry bleach solution of about one cup per 30 gallons overnight works well.

Another issue is that the plants you use for the leaf node cuttings must be free from fungus disease. In my indoor

propagation area, fungus disease is not a problem.

And finally let's discuss the actual process of taking the cuttings. As explained above, you need a dahlia plant that has been grown to 12 - 18 inches tall. That plant can either be a tuber that was allowed to grow tall or a rooted tuber cutting that has been grown to that height. I use tuber cuttings to produce my plants.

I cut off the plant about 1/2 inch above the first nodes I leave this pair of nodes because it is possible to grow the plant on for more cuttings and it will send up shoots from these nodes. If you cut it off below the nodes, the plant will probably die.

You now have plant material for the cuttings. The plant you have grown will have 4 to 6 pairs of leaves emanating from the stem. Now cut them off about 1/2 inch above and below the inter node. You will then have a piece of stalk with two leaves coming out of it. Using a scalpel or razor blade, carefully cut down the middle of the stem and you will have two cuttings to root. Since the cutting will take so long to root, it is advisable to remove 1/2 of the leaf to reduce surface area. You will notice at the junction between the leaf and the stalk that here is a miniature sprout (called an axillary bud). It is this tiny sprout that will form roots. Unlike tuber cuttings this tiny sprout not only produces roots, but it also produces leaves. The tiny axillary bud needs to be placed under the rooting medium so that it is just barely under the soil.

Firm the soil around the cutting to ensure that it is solidly in place. The cutting is now placed under lights just as tuber cuttings are placed under lights. Note that I do not use any rooting hormone or other chemicals. The leaf cutting will root in about 3 weeks. The process is that a tiny plant will emerge from the axillary bud. The original leaf above the axillary bud will die. Because the plant is so small, you must keep it under the lights for some additional time for it to grow. At three weeks a very weak liquid fertilizer can be given to encourage growth. During the time that the leaf cutting is rooting, the plants must be kept moist. For 20 years or so now, we have been placing our cuttings into a sealed plastic bag to conserve moisture. We use white 13 gallon kitchen bags that holds a flat of 36 pots (10 x 20 flat, 2.5 inch pots). The flats are placed under florescent lights (2 to 6 inches above the flat). The ideal temperature is 70 degrees. Colder or warmer is much less effective. Leaf cuttings can help you propagate large numbers of plants but as you can see the process is more complicated than taking tuber cuttings. Success rates for rooting leaf cuttings can be very high, easily over 90%. That is very comparable to tuber cuttings. It is the extra growing time that the plants need to mature that is the biggest negative in the process.

MIGNON, POM, CACTUS? By Ted J. Kennedy

People love to categorize everything and dahlias have suffered the same fate as most things. Usually when items are placed into categories, there is at least a little logic in the naming scheme. Roses have their Hybrid Teas, Grandifloras, Floribundas and Polyanthas and I am sure that the logic of those names is at least historical if not descriptive. Dahlias, too, have been categorized into descriptive categories with rather obscure names: Mignon, Pom, and Cactus are three that impress me as being particularly obscure.

We are all probably not too familiar with that most uncommon word: mignon. As I type it into the word processor it is so uncommon that it is underlined in red as a misspelled word. But of course it is not all that uncommon as it is part of the name of our favorite beef steak the filet mignon. And what does a beef steak have to do with our mignon single dahlias? As it turns out, mignon is a French term that translates as “delicately small and pretty”. So in regards to beef steak it is one that is small and the “pretty” must mean “pretty good”. Another word that could have been used as a synonym for mignon is “dainty”. Guess what, the definition of dainty is “delicately small and pretty” the same as mignon. I rather like the sound of “dainty dahlias” but we will continue to have Mignon dahlias.

Ball dahlias, miniature ball dahlias and pompon dahlias. We all know these dahlias all have the same formation but differ only in size. It appears that when

you have very small ball dahlia that the word “ball” is no longer descriptive enough. So we have pompon dahlias. Again the word is French in origins. It is spelled many ways: pom-pon, pompom or pompon but pompon is our spelling. I believe it was French word for a: “decoration consisting of a ball of tufted wool or silk; usually worn on a hat”. For most of us who have grown dahlias for several years, we have shortened the word to pom and the plural poms. I believe that we will be calling these “micro balls” pompons for some time. I suppose that is as good name as I can think of but “tiny balls” sort of appeals to me.

And then we have cactus dahlias. This one goes way back to the 1800s when a dahlia was imported into Europe that had ray florets that were long and skinny. No one seems to know where it came from but it brought with it the genetic material to create our cactus, incurved cactus and semi cactus types. But that does not answer the question of why they are called “cactus”. In my etymological research*, I discovered that the word cactus was used for a plant called cardoon, a member of the artichoke family. And the flower of the cardoon is what we would call in dahlia terms a cactus, long rolled florets. Could that explain how our cactus dahlias got their name?



Exhibitor Class Clarifications by Larry Smith

Below are the clarifications on the exhibitor classes we plan to use at the Portland show this year:

Exhibitor Classification Update to Portland DS Show

In order to further encourage members to exhibit in our show, the Portland DS has agreed on the following changes to exhibitor classes:

Novice: (Pink tags)

Exhibitors entering dahlias in this division are inexperienced in the showing of dahlias. They may remain in this division for up to 10 dahlia shows regardless of winnings. They will end the show season in the same exhibitor category as they started, instead of moving up mid-season.

Amateur: (Blue tags)

This division is for advanced exhibitors who show dahlias for fun and experience. Those entering in this division are encouraged to remain until they consistently have entries on the head table and/or win special awards for the last three show seasons.

Open: (White tags)

Experienced exhibitors who have had entries on the head table and/or won special awards in the prior show seasons are required to enter in this division. Exhibitors that have not won head table awards during the past three show seasons may return to the Amateur division.

The definitions are a hybrid between what Douglas County's schedule listed for the PNDC Conference Show last year and the Federation definitions. The PDS Board has agreed to implement these changes in a trial period for the 2019 show and will reevaluate after the show.

We found that at most shows, the Open/Advanced Amateur class has been top heavy, leaving far fewer blooms competing in Amateur and even less in Novice. Some members have stated that having to move up in class too quickly decreases their incentive to show because they don't feel that they can be successful among some of the more serious exhibitors. It has also been suggested that members who show in only their home society's show won't have the experience gained by those who show in multiple shows each year and could, therefore, be at a disadvantage.

Since having different exhibitor class definitions within different PNDC shows could create confusion for those who do attend more than their home show, this will be brought up as a topic of discussion at the upcoming Spring PNDC Meeting.