

50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary!  
one heart



## ***Hamilton and District Chrysanthemum & Dahlia Society***

Dahlias with all their hue and glory,  
are worth all the love and worry.

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[www.hamilton-mum-dahlia.com](http://www.hamilton-mum-dahlia.com)

I originally started this newsletter on May 21<sup>st</sup> at which time the ground was too cold and too damp to start planting in my garden. With the weather man forecasting rain for the next few days (back in May), I thought there would be time to do the newsletter for June and the show schedule for 2014. All I was able to do was finish the show schedule; plus one major task in the garden that had to be finished before I started to plant (finish turning the garden from last year). The only item on time was your President's report, thank you Larry. I hope you had a great trip.

Calendar wise – mark July 6<sup>th</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup> – dates with two club functions before our Anniversary Show. Details about the events are further inside newsletter. I strongly encourage new members to attend July 6<sup>th</sup>'s meeting. New members – read all the attachments with this issue – they are all just for you.

Another blast from the past (maybe two or three articles, always an interesting read) along with some ideas on what to do on rainy days (surf the web). The “How to” for slug and earwig control without chemicals. It's all on the web with oh so easy instruction videos!!!

Even videos for stopping, timing, disbudding, BUT they can't beat a

# President's Report

hands-on demo this July 6<sup>th</sup> – see you there.

Jim Hall

As I write these notes Tanis and I are organizing our warm clothing for our trip next week to Newfoundland to see Icebergs and whales in Twillingate and then we are going to Fogo Island for 2 more days before returning to St John's and back home on June 4/14, should be fun.

We have just taken half of our dahlias out from under the lights in the basement and moved them to the porch to let them harden up before planting and we will move the rest up before we go away, our neighbour will keep them and our tomato plants watered for us.

The ground is still pretty cool so we are thinking of planting when we get home if things have warmed up by THEN! They should be warmer.

When planting keep in mind the various competitions we have on this year for our 50<sup>th</sup> celebration, the colour is yellow (for gold) and we plan on being at the prize table for these dahlias so watch out!

We have a new family of rabbits in our yard for the first time, other than the obvious how do we get rid of them? Somebody said I should throw some carrots into my neighbour's back yard.

Jim Hall will tell you about our July meeting for stopping and trimming and our August BBQ dinner and garden tours.

All the best and good luck with your planting ..... Larry Hall

Editor's Note: I also have rabbits for the first time! Last year, could have been two years ago, another dahlia grower on the mountain had the same situation – rabbits in the back yard. I think his solution was simply to say – “Go WEST little bunny, or GO EAST, just don't stay!” It's a good thing you don't have Lilies Larry. Rabbits love Lilies!!!

## **STOP : LOOK : LISTEN : ASK**

You can do all of the above on **Saturday July 6<sup>th</sup>** from 2 to 4 pm at the home of Mike Parrish.

Mike's address is 152 Davidson Blvd. in Dundas.

Look up his address using Map Quest or head into Dundas via #8 from Hamilton and take #99 Hwy as if you were going to Copetown. You'll pass three school's (all on your left – one a high school, two public school) after which you will get to the newest stoplight in Dundas. Turn right – the only turn you can make (\*) on to Davidson Blvd. and follow till you have a Tee intersection – turn right again (it's still Davidson Blvd.) – and Mike's house is at the corner (on your left - # 152) at the next stop sign.

If you go sight-seeing before the meeting, take #403 towards Brantford, exit at #52 – turn right and head to Copetown. At the four-way stop – turn right to go to Dundas. The first stoplight will be Davidson – turn left, now follow above instructions after (\*).

The above title of this article is perhaps the best four words to describe the club presentation this day. We'll teach you how to stop and shape a plant. Since there will be senior members doing this demo, you can watch us (there are several techniques), look at the end result. If you have read the attachments sent with the newsletter regarding timing and pinching, this would be the ideal time for you to ask questions about anything that you are unsure of.

Stopping and shaping your plants is recommended for all dahlias to grow and bloom properly. Be sure to continue summer maintenance of your dahlias. Tie all dahlias to strong stakes firmly implanted into the ground. Try to achieve and maintain continuous growth of your dahlia plants.

### **Timing**

Several years ago, I watched a movie called 'A Good Year'. I liked it so much; I ordered it from Cinema 1. The movie is based upon the book (it's an easy read) with the same title A Good Year, by author Peter

Mayle. In the movie, one of the sub-plots is about making wine. They also ask the question – “What’s the secret to comedy?” Of course we all know the answer – it’s “Timing.” What makes a good wine? Variety of grape and age of the wine (# of years bottled) could be two answers. You shouldn’t open a bottle until it’s ‘time’.

Whether members are growing for show or the enjoyment and the beauty of the dahlia, we all want ‘A Good Year’. July 6<sup>th</sup> will be time well spent in Mike Parrish’s garden to help you achieve that goal.

I have included several articles as attachments with the newsletter. All of the articles have been re-named (Article One, Article Two, etc). I will give the appropriate titles and a short description of each article written by other dahlia growers from different geographical regions and different years – even one from the fifties! You can read them all or whatever one is of interest to you.

#### Article ONE – Timing Dahlias for Shows by Henry C. Parker.

An interesting article because it’s from the ADS March Bulletin of 1953. Old – yes! But some of the things still apply today. Different sections and wording of the article have been lighted by me. Some of the terms are a little different also – he refers to canes instead of laterals. Mr. Parker mentions ‘cutting back’ and how it can have a drastic effect on the plant causing shock which would delay blooming. He also mentions using a toothpick to remove buds and separating the tiny leaves at the top of the lateral to get at the buds. On a personal note – I have found that most varieties do not like to have the extra buds (or laterals) taken out too early. Again, it sets them back just a few days. Besides – working with the lateral at that early stage, you could damage the main stem of the bloom. The solution is to wait until the terminal bud is well developed and the two side buds are at least ¼” long. ½ inch is even better – they pull off much easier.

#### Article TWO – Stopping Dahlias by Martin Ojaste

Written in 1998 by our member Martin Ojaste, he gives an interesting explanation about his method for stopping and timing dahlias. On a personal note – even though this article gives the good advice of ‘Keeping a Journal’ - it is something that I have never done – attempted,

yes – but I never finished a complete year. And again this year – because I forgot to start one – I even forgot to bring a journal for the Ways & Means (because I couldn't find it!!!)

Jump to the year 2010 - in the spring of 2010, Martin gave a very informative talk about timing dahlias to the club. It was so good that someone sent it to the ADS to be published in the September 2010 Bulletin (still not available in the ADS Bulletin archives). Steve Nowotarski, who writes the 'Garden Dahlias' section in the ADS Bulletin, put a little note on the internet (dahlia-net or dahlias – both at yahoogroups.com) stating that he went to the garden and counted the number of leaves (why?) on the laterals. Steve called this article the best one to appear in the ADS Bulletin for a number of years.

Of course, Hamilton Dahlia Society members knew this because we had a preview of the article in the spring of 2010. Why did Steve count the leaves – because Martin's article is about the number of leaves on a lateral (side shoot). Actually, you start counting the leaves from the ground up. You definitely need to use a journal and have a keen eye for this method. It's a good idea to use a journal for every dahlia practice. From the layout of your garden, recording what plants are where, their ADS numbers and how many of each variety – the items in a journal can be endless and secretive (for your eyes only)!!!

Use the following to gain access to this article:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/363854624030/10151037510934031/>

You can save it in pdf format. Some of the members who will be at Mike's Garden on July 6<sup>th</sup> are familiar with this method. We can explain the basics, but if you need a really good understanding of the article, I suggest that you join the discussion group - Growing and Showing Dahlias - send Martin an e-mail - [Martin.Ojaste@icloud.com](mailto:Martin.Ojaste@icloud.com) for membership (is that the right way to word that?) with the group.

The Club Archives –

I do not have the show results for 1989 (our 25<sup>th</sup>) but I do have '88. Ralph Suttell had good entries of Walter Hardisty (AA) and Irene's Pride (AA), along with Downham Royal (MB) and Glenplace (Pom). Martin Ojaste had the Best BB SC with The Queen. Ron Duxbury was successful with Gay Mini (M FD), Crichton Honey (Ba), Carrie (M FD), and Wiggles (M C). The Dahlia of the Year was Hamilton Lillian (BB FD Or). The same variety (Hamilton Lillian) won the single BB section (overall), and the best 3, 5 and Basket (back then, the basket was seven blooms). All winning entries of Hamilton Lillian came from a garden at 82 Clifton Downs Rd. (John Mooney – he remembers it well!). At the 1988 ADS National Show held in Toledo, Ohio – Martin Ojaste won a Special Class with Edna C (B FD Y). Marty continued with his winning efforts in 1990 by receiving the Best B entry with Magic Moment (B SC) and the Best 3 BB Dahlias with Hamilton Lillian at the 1990 ADS National Show in Falls Church, Virginia. And John Mooney sent some entries down also. John won the BB basket section and also the first President's Cup. Both entries were Hamilton Lillian (again)!

## Small World

I mentioned in the last Newsletter that I had met some of the former members of the Hamilton Dahlia Society. At the time I was unaware of their former membership (or executive positions).

Don Walker - Having lunch at work (so many years ago ....), a man sat down across from me and asked if he could show me something. In his hand was a piece of string (pulled from the janitor's mob) with two loose knots having a space of say four inches between them. "I'd like to show you something that I do in the garden," he said. Borrowing my hands, he placed one end over my little finger (left hand) and pulled it tight saying "We'll pretend your finger is a stake" and the other end he placed over the little finger on my right hand. He pulled the string to get a small loop (say 2 inches) stating – "That's how I tie my Chrysanthemum's." The man was Don Walker, a former President of the club during the '70's. We talked several times over the years about Mums and Dahlias. I remember Mr. Walker even came to a couple of shows. Retirement came and we lost contact. Mr. Walker passed away March, 2003

June Hurd- Over the years, several of our members have given talks (about dahlias of course) to various horticultural groups in the surrounding area. One of my first talks (back in the early 90's) was given to the Stoney Creek Horticultural Society. A few days later, while visiting the garden of Glen Hamilton, I mentioned giving the talk and the Hort. Society's President's name. That's when Glen told me that June Hurd was a former member of the Dahlia Society. She had given reference to the club but gave no recognition of her past involvement. In the old 1974 HDCDS Yearbook that I have, June is listed as a Director for the Society, along with John Mooney and Glen Hamilton.

Margaret Ruth - Back in the early 2000's, my wife Bonnie was working at a retirement home as the hairdresser. I had taken some dahlias in to display. The staff had placed them in the main reception area for all to see. Bonnie had also placed several pictures of the garden on a bulletin board inside the salon. When one of the ladies was having her hair done, she commented on the dahlias, stating that she and her husband used to grow them. Bonnie's first reaction (private of course) to this comment was – "OH SURE!!!" Bonnie told the lady of my involvement with the Dahlia Society. Bonnie almost dropped her scissors when the lady asked if John Mooney was still active in the Dahlia Club. A short time later, I was introduced to Margaret Ruth. She and her husband Joseph were long time members of the Mount Hamilton Horticultural Society. They are also listed in the 1974 yearbook as members of the Society.

One quick note about the retirement place – regarding the pictures on the bulletin board in the hair salon – one lady had stated that a certain dahlia displayed prominently on the board was her favorite. When all was quiet after dinner at the retirement place, for a number of years I delivered usually three blooms of that certain dahlia to the lady. She was always thrilled to have them. And when Bonnie went to get her for her hair appointment, she always took notice if the lady needed fresh blooms – as she was notorious for not throwing spent blooms away. The ladies favorite dahlia – 'Embrace' of course.

This summer, if you have the opportunity, share your blooms in one way or another, a neighbor, a friend, a relative. And definitely invite them to the 50<sup>th</sup>

### Article THREE - Timing Blooms for Shows

I've included this article from an ADS Bulletin in 2000 mainly because it has a chart referring to the size of the bud as it develops on the lateral. The third line of this article is highlighted because I agree and disagree with the sentence. Which reads as follows – “Many varieties will produce buds quite early and these must be removed. “ But isn't this what most gardeners want? – early blooms on their dahlias. When I grow a new variety (1<sup>st</sup> time in the garden but maybe several yrs old), I try to take cuttings so I have more than one or two plants. Usually, one plant is stopped early, even before it is planted, so I can get a look at the bloom (sometimes in early July). For many years I tried to get the plant that bloomed early to give blooms again at show time – no luck. The plant was giving all its energy to the developing flower bud (or two), and not allowing the other laterals to grow, laterals that were sometimes five or six sets of leaves down from the main flower bud.. But when the early bloom(s) was finished, the other laterals would start to grow and that process would be even quicker if I took off the spent bloom(s) (unless I wanted early seed production).

The other good item in the article is the chart regarding the size of the bud as it matures to a mature flower. Very handy this chart. BUT it takes a while to get the nerve to be able to take a lateral with a bud showing colour, and take it away from the main stem. It's tough to do man – but if you don't – it slows the growth of all the other laterals. The article was published June 2000 – my records show no author given.

One more article on timing:

#### Article FOUR

Again- have highlighted some areas I believe are important in the article. Has the chart again – I would have used the chart created by Lillian and Homer Beck so many years ago – but I can't seem to find my original copy – the one in the article is the same I believe. Brian Killingsworth mentions Stopping and then Disbranching – this means take down the numbers of laterals. If your plants are growing extremely well, and are say two feet (or better) high you may want to stop them. They could have 4 or even 5 set of leaves. The laterals will soon start to grow, usually the top set being the fastest. These, and possibly the next set of laterals will be too early, so they must be removed. Now here's a catch 22 – if you take the top laterals off too soon, the others start to grow and they too will be too early. I find that with a lot of varieties, the lower laterals will not move unless they are forced to. When the top laterals have finished blooming, and removed from the main stem of the plant, then the other laterals will start to move.

### Visiting Members

Got an e-mail from Ken McManus requesting some dahlias. He and Susan Barth visited for awhile before they went back to Fergus. Enjoy them Ken and hope to see you both at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Show.

Karl Schwarze came by for a short visit. His dahlias are short compared to other years. He's going to try some extra TLC that I recommended.

We've had too much rain. Dahlias don't like wet feet. When the soil is wet, they don't start to send out feeder roots so they live off the mother tuber. And when it's spent, and with no feeder roots, the plant starts to wilt and takes longer to recover from the heat.

This could mean that there's a possibility that it will never recover and die or it could stay short until those feeder roots start to develop. Which will definitely delay plant growth and blooming. If you have a spare, replace that ailing plant – there's still time.

## Another Chart

Some of our growers use the following chart with slight variations depending on your garden.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| AA (10" – 12") Varieties | 70 (or longer, shady – increase by one or two weeks)      |
| A (8" – 10") Varieties   | Usually 60 to 66 days (again – depends on garden)         |
| B (6" – 8") Varieties    | 60 days – great weather can make a plant bloom in 55 days |
| BB (4" – 6") Varieties   | 55 – 60 days  |
| Ball dahlias             | 50 – 55 days. Again a bit longer if in shady location.    |
| Miniature Ball and Poms  | Approx. 50 – 55 days                                      |
| All other varieties      | Usually 45 to 55 days                                     |

Be sure to check different methods of stopping, , timing charts, how to take laterals out (you can see this in a video if you look hard enough), different methods of bug control along with the many types of homemade (and simple) traps for earwigs and slugs.

Personal note: Have already tried some – they do work – but my simple hose on the stake beat them again. I must be using the wrong recipe to attract earwigs to those traps. And beer for the slugs – been too hot – had a better use for the beer.

## Final Page:

It's June 28<sup>th</sup> – I finished planting June 21<sup>st</sup>. Our show is three weeks later this year. With the weather we've had – I think I made the right choice.

Was going to include one more timing article from England but decided to give the highlights (at least what I consider important) of the article.

And they are all in the last paragraph of the Article and it read as follows: So what conclusions have I drawn from my stopping times this year? Well double stopping is definitely the most precise way of timing when blooms will flower and weather conditions did not seem to alter anything but not all varieties give good blooms from this method. Single stopping depends on how big the plant is (or how big the side shoots are) when you come to stop. Stopping times vary tremendously from one location to another depending on (I think) how much light the plants are getting (less light causing them to flower later).

And most importantly: NEXT YEAR, LIKE YOU, I WILL GET IT RIGHT.

Strange – I've been saying that for years.

**Garden Tour August 30** - times and gardens in next newsletter.

Your Executive is close to making a decision about where we will dine after the show. When all the details are known, will send out an e-mail with the information so members can check out the menu of the restaurant.