

JUDGE'S CORNER

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Virus Update

We in the DSO, along with the members of our neighbor dahlia society, the Mahoning Valley DS, have the great good fortune to be at the forefront of the clean dahlia movement. That benefit is a direct result of the ongoing support by Jim Chuey through his Scheetz-Chuey Foundation. Thanks again, Jim!

As you may recall, one of the elements of last summer's testing was free analyses of vendor's plants. A key question that several of them had at the end of the process was along the lines of "Okay, now that I know that I have lots of stock with virus, where do I get clean stock?!" Isn't that a great question?! You and I have an excellent answer to that question—but the great majority of our dahlia-growing friends around the country do not!

With the cooperation of Jim, Tony, and several other DSO members, we have been able to supply Gx (tested free of virus for the last x years) tubers both at our local auctions and the Midwest auctions. Mike, Rob and their DSO volunteers have propagated those tubers into great plants for the auctions. (Thanks again, here, to Tom Demaline for the use of their greenhouse resources!)

We are going to try and share some of our local clean stock with the other Conferences for their auctions this spring. With the support of Professor Pappu and Jim, we also plan to provide each dahlia society with the opportunity to test plants at a subsidized rate. The plans will be finalized and presented in the June ADS Bulletin. The best news in the 2018 test results was that the combination of clean stock and rigorous disinfecting of tools produced a virus infection rate of just 17%.

Judging Laciniated Dahlias

The tips of the ray florets on laciniated dahlias are split. The ideal definition says that the "majority of ray florets will be uniformly arranged with a split, twist, or curl that conveys an overall fringed or frilled effect." Further, if the florets have a shallow notch and have little twisting, it "should not be classified as laciniated." Thus, in addition to the usual Form requirements (Symmetry, Contour, Development, Trueness to Form, and Depth), there are rather specific requirements for the shape of the ray florets in a laciniated



dahlia. Those requirements are probably best treated as an important element of the Trueness to Form portion in the determination of the quality of the Form of the cultivar. It doesn't fit in any of other categories. What is the value of "Trueness to Form?" Please check page 40 of the Guide to Judging Dahlias! This page deserves a sticky note.

Consider the 2017 Trial Garden seedlings on the left. What do you think of them? The dark red florets on the bloom at the top are dark enough that it is difficult to tell how deeply they are split. However, the color does make it pretty easy to see the gaps around the circumference of the bloom. Thus, even if the ray florets were to be deeply split and presented a fringed appearance, the Contour of the bloom would leave something to be desired.

The cross-sections of the pink and the white cultivars appear more uniform and round than the dark red one. What about the "split, twist, or curl that conveys an overall fringed or frilled effect" for those blooms? As usual, of course, we would want to be able to look at the backs and the sides of the blooms in order to make an informed decision. Nevertheless, I suggest that the pink bloom shows more twist and curl than the white bloom. Do you agree?

What about the light blend at the bottom? A fringed and frilled effect is readily evident, isn't it?! At the same time, Contour on that one is not perfect, right? The gaps at 1 and 11 are pretty obvious.

Okay, how about the red bloom on the right here. I hope you agree that its Form comes closest to that ideal definition outlined above.

