

JUDGE'S CORNER

by Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com

Yes; it is growing time again! It seems like it takes forever to arrive and then it is over in just a couple blinks of an eye!

Big Picture

The DSO has a long tradition of team judging based on a discussion of the attributes of the entries in the classes judged. Even though that is the approach recommended by the ADS, you may find judging teams (at the upcoming National Show in Michigan, for example) where the team leader discourages discussion. If you find yourself in that situation, I encourage you to persevere. A key benefit in judging with judges from outside our own club is to learn how they approach the judging process. So, ask away! Provide your observations politely and respectfully and listen carefully and respectfully to the other team members.



Judge's "instructions meeting" at the National Show in 2012. Expect the teams to vary in approach.

A brochure on the responsibilities of the team leader was developed by Bob Schroeder, the ADS judging chair. It was distributed to our DSO judges and is available on the ADS website. It very well describes the inter-active discussion approach we use in the DSO. It is a good idea to review its contents at least once each season, along with the other sources of judging information with which you need to be familiar: The Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD), The Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD), and fronts and the backs of the Seedling Evaluation Scorecards. To be an effective and competent ADS Judge, you need to have a working knowledge of all of those documents. Very few judges will be able to quote the specific contents of the GJD; but we all should be able to provide informed opinions on the basis of our reading and our understanding of all of those documents.

The Seedling Scorecards provide a very useful shorthand version of the contents of the GJD. It is always a good idea to take a look at those documents before each show so that the general judging criteria are fresh in your mind. The scoresheets are included at the end of the CHD. That should be in your pocket and available in every judging situation!

Judging in a Dahlia Show

Okay, in a couple months, you will have gathered some dahlias from your garden, staged them in show vases, and put them out on the show tables. You are ready to judge. Do you have the show schedule and your CHD in your judging apron? How about a small tape measure? The local judging chairperson will ordinarily call the group of judges together to go over his or her expectations. You need to listen to and follow those instructions carefully.

When you get your judging assignment, you need to quickly move to your assigned area. Stay with your team during judging; don't be distracted by any other issues. If you are the team leader, make sure that everyone knows everybody else on the team, including the clerk. Make sure that the less experienced judges on your team know that they should be comfortable in providing inputs and in raising questions whenever they wish. Encourage their inputs if they appear hesitant to provide it.

Be aware that every entry in every class deserves your attention. You do not need to agonize over every detail but you do need to make sure that every entry is observed and evaluated. Listen to and respect the observations of the other team members. Provide your observations, particularly when they differ from the others on the team. Participate in the decision-making process and adopt the team's decision as your own.

Proceed through your judging assignment as quickly as you can and ask the judging chair if there are other assignments for your team before you separate. Remember Glenn's rules: Enjoy the judging process and learn something while you are interacting with your colleagues!

Judging Seminars

We will have two upcoming judging seminars after the picnic this summer and after judging at the Petitti's Show on October 5th.