

The JUDGE's Corner

Ron Miner baronminer@aol.com

Happy New Dahlia Season, everyone!

It seems like forever since I've prepared a judging note for the Digest. It has certainly been a tough time for the DSO and our judges! Paul and Lois will be sorely missed. Their contributions to the DSO and our shows were substantial. Lois joined us to judge whenever she could; Paul was virtually always there and ready to judge. We benefitted greatly from both their involvement and I'm confident that they also enjoyed the process.

I'm happy to announce that Mike Weber has completed the requirements to become an Accredited ADS Judge. Congratulations and thanks, Mike! Now we need 10 or 20 more of our DSO dahlia enthusiasts to do the same thing. There are relatively few requirements to be and/or to become a candidate judge. You need to be a member of the ADS and you need to grow and to show dahlias. I would want you also to invest some effort in studying the judging manual. The step from candidate to accredited judge is a bit more substantial. You need to judge regularly for three plus years, submit a judging examination with passing marks, attend a couple judging seminars, and judge seedlings. Fortunately we have a few candidate experienced judges ready for that step. Come on Mike, Barbara, John, and JoAnn!

The primary motivation for the special show section and judging seminar at Petitti's last fall was to lure new candidate judges to the show table. It worked and I was delighted to add Rob and Sharon to the candidate judges list.



Best OC at Petitti's in '09



Worst OC at Petitti's in '09.

Many of you will recall that I distributed seed from a series of open-centered cultivars to those interested in the project. At Petitti's we then had a special show section for open-centered seedlings and held a judging seminar to select the best and the worst of the bunch. This year I am thrilled to continue that process! Steve and Sandy Boley have graciously supplied me with several hundred seeds collected from Irish Pinwheel! The Boley's are premier hybridizers in the Pacific Northwest and their Irish Pinwheel won the award for the best Stellar entry in the Trial Gardens in 2007. We are extremely fortunate that Steve and Sandy were willing to share seeds from this exceptional cultivar with us. Steve, Sandy, Thanks! I should also note that the Boleys are the inspiration for this Petitti seedling judging project; they have sponsored a similar project at the Puget Sound DA for a number of years.



It is extremely likely that we will have a viable ADS winner among the plants grown from these seeds! Therefore, I anticipate that many of you won't be able to resist the opportunity to grow some. The only requirement for getting the seeds is a commitment to bring as many entries to the Petitti show as you have available in your garden at showtime! I hope that many of you will recognize this as a wonderful opportunity to grow some first-rate seedlings! Try it; I guarantee you'll love it!

We will probably also repeat the open-centered competition that provided an opportunity not only to judge but also to classify the entries. Please plan to save a corner of your garden to grow these seedlings and please plan to bring a few to the show at Petitti's in October.

We will talk about the judging of stellar dahlias in a future column. In the meantime, make sure you read the definition of stellar not only in the judging manual, but also in the last couple Classification and Handbook of Dahlias!