

## The JUDGE's Corner

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I have been thinking about our judging seminars for 2014 and I would like to continue to hold one at the summer picnic and one after completion of judging at the Petitti show. I hope that there will be a good opportunity for a third one in my seedling bed at home. It should be chock-full of second year Blossom Gulch seedlings. There should be lots of opportunities to evaluate open-centered seedlings using the ADS TG Scorecard. We have a lot more experience with numerical evaluation of the fully double cultivars than we do open-centered. We can use a little more practice before the BG seedlings start to hit the Seedling Bench! Please "pencil in" September 14 as the target date for that seedling bed judging project. I will confirm that date later in the season.

We will change our usual Petitti seminar a bit this year. I did not get any new seeds to share and to generate more 1st year seedlings for 2014, at least in part because I don't have room for more seedlings! The plan for Petitti's seminar will be to focus on the second year BG seedlings. Hopefully, everyone saved the best of their seedlings from last year. We should, then, be able to have a number of entries in each of the open-centered forms. If you didn't grow those seedlings last year and/or you lost the ones you kept, we will have replacements available at the tuber sale. I saved a lot of tubers of BG plants that did not bloom in 2013. (Some originators claim that their best seedlings don't bloom the first year. :-))

In last month's column, we talked about one of the most important characteristics of our dahlias, both from the point of view of evaluation and from the point of view of public interest—color! Did you all get out your 2014 Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD) and look at the new ADS procedure for classifying open-centered dahlias on pages 6 and 7? Following that procedure, I asked you to generate the classification of the seedling on the right. The bloom shows the characteristics of



both an orchid and a collarette; i.e., it has both fully involute ray florets and petaloids. This year, that makes it an Orchette (OT), the newest of the ADS' various forms. Until this year, the cultivar would have been classified as a novelty, NO, and the color class would have been problematic! Even as an OT, the color required a new system to classify the color, a procedure that Lou Paradise describes on pages 6 and 7 of the CHD. We start with the fact that the color class is determined on the basis of the reverse of the ray florets, as it does in orchids. I would like to be able to take a look at the back of the flower in the picture, but without being able to do that, what would you call the color class for this seedling? We can see both red and white, so the options are probably DB or BI. The transition between the colors is not sharp, so I would opt for DB W/R, suggesting that the majority of the ray floret we can see is white, not red. Next comes the color of the face of the ray florets (just like in an orchid), preceded by a "/" and in lower case letters; i.e., DB W/R / r. Finally, we need to capture the color(s) of the petaloids. Those color(s) are preceded by a dash (-): DB W/R/r-w. It is a complicated process that we will get more used to using as we work through our BG seedlings! I've already kidded Lou about how we are supposed to treat an eye zone at the base of the ray florets. I know that we do have BG seedlings with colors at least that complicated. At some point we will no doubt conclude that the added complications of capturing the colors can't be justified on the basis of better characterization of the seedling.

This variegated collarette, for example, has a yellow eye zone. The current color nomenclature doesn't let you add an eye zone on a collarette. How important is it for us to be able to do it? There will certainly be discussion within the ADS Classi-



fication Committee on that topic in the future.

That seedling makes a great segue to the other topic I wanted to include in this column. While its color puts it right at the top of my seedling “keeper” list, it has some characteristics that are pretty troubling.

Take another look here; what do you think about Form? That ray floret at noon is a big problem; isn't it! I hope that it is not typical of the other blooms to come from that cultivar next year; but let's pretend they all look pretty much like that one. Let's also pretend that you have three blooms like that sitting on the Seedling Bench for numerical evaluation. Color is a strong attribute that would also contribute to Distinction for the entry, but even the color has some substantial flaws. Check those streaks on the 7 o'clock and 2 o'clock ray florets. Nevertheless, I think you would agree that the color is passing, i.e., better than 85%.



OK, but what about Form? How much are you going to deduct for Form? (That is definitely not an easy question to answer!) The first question to ask is whether or not it has “Passing” Form. One way to relate it to our more frequently encountered fully double cultivars is to envision that non-uniformity at noon carried right through the middle of a formal decorative bloom. I hope that image helps make it even more clear that the answer is that it is not passing Form!

I remember Jerry asking me about whether or not it was appropriate to deduct enough points to flunk an entry just on the basis of one attribute, like Form or Color. In general, it is not appropriate because typically an originator will not enter a cultivar with attributes that are so severely faulted that it deserves to be flunked on the basis of a single attribute. This “pretend” entry we're talking about, however, just might have had enough Form to deserve that treatment.

The point to take away from this discussion is one that we have discussed before: in Open-Centered cultivar (that have no Depth), Symmetry, Contour, and Trueness to Form (and Development in SBE) become the basis on which to distribute 28 points. Said another way, you need to place very high expectations on Symmetry, Contour, and Trueness to Form in the judging of Open-Centered cultivars. Compare the Form of the seedling above to the one at the top of the next page. This yellow CO obviously has basically better form than the variegat-



ed seedling. This one is probably in the passing category, but if you compare the ray florets on the bottom of the bloom to those on the top, it is clear that the ones at the top are larger. You might well conclude that Form on this one is only marginally passing.

The Form on the seedling below is another step forward, isn't it. Assuming that we can arrange the ray florets

so that they overlap in the same direction, there are no major Form faults visible to me. This seedling also presents the judging team with the aforementioned challenge for determining color. You can't include the prominent eye zone. What is the classification, judges?

Probably just CO BI RD/YL / y, right? Would you penalize this one if it were being judged against a bicolor Collarette where the base of the ray floret on the competing entry did not have an eye zone? I would answer that question with a resounding maybe (-:)), depending (1) on whether the eye zone struck me as pleasing or as a distraction and (2) on the uniformity of the eye zone. The former criterion is clearly in the 'eye of the beholder.' (I like it.) The latter is more objective. If you have the eye zone (or a blend or a bicolor), the uniformity of the feature needs to be considered in the judgment between it and a solid-colored entry.



Ron