

## The JUDGE's Corner

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### Blossom Gulch Seedlings

Our first set of Blossom Gulch seedlings are now in their 4th year where they can be considered for introduction as official ADS cultivars. Now is the time to submit them to the Trial Gardens for evaluation. Take a look at the list of Trial Gardens on the ADS website. You will find that the dates for submission of tubers and/or plants vary from one garden to another from April 1 to May 1. I would recommend sending an entry to at least 5 gardens in order to have the best chance to qualify for a medal. I would also be inclined to include the Smoky Mountain Trial Garden among the set because one of the field trips from the National Show will be to that Trial Garden and many ADS members will have a chance to see your entry!



There are no set rules for the number of tubers you should have available in order to make a Trial Garden entry. Ideally, you (and your commercial supplier who will introduce the new cultivar—nice, but not necessary) would have enough plants to meet the demand for tubers if your entry wins a medal. That could be a large number for the larger, fully double cultivars, perhaps 50. The bottom line for our open-centered BG seedlings would be less. I will keep enough tubers to grow something of the order of 15 or 20 plants. That is, I figure I need to have about 30 tubers in order to be able to submit 3 tubers each to 5 Trial Gardens.

Let me know if you need help with the process. Remember that Kathy Iler only asked us to send her a couple tubers of our successful cultivars as they are accepted by the ADS. What a great trade, eh?! Thanks again, Kathy!

### **Virus Update**

It appears that with Jim Chuey's financial support, Washington State University will be able to provide a testing service for ADS members to evaluate plants for the presence of virus. At this writing, we are still in the process of working out the details of the project and just beginning to identify approaches to encourage growers to take advantage of the opportunity to better understand the extent of occurrence of virus in their gardens.

One concept that may help promote the testing project comes from the idea that the tubers that come from plants that were tested and determined to be free of virus should produce plants that are also free of virus. That assumes, of course, that care was taken in digging and dividing the tubers to keep the tools clean (cleaning in a 10% bleach solution between each plant, etc.). The tubers from those plants will be known as "G1" tubers, tubers that are the first generation descendants of plants known to be virus free. Those G1 tubers should be able to command enough added value to cover the cost of testing the parent plant. That cost is anticipated to be \$15 for individual tests or as low as \$10 for bulk testing. The full cost of testing would ordinarily be more like \$70. The greatly reduced rate is simply a consequence of the generosity and the commitment of our friend and member, Jim Chuey and the Scheetz-Chuey Foundation. Thanks, Jim! Watch for more info on this opportunity in the June Bulletin of the ADS.

### **Classification Challenge**

The classification challenge for you this month was to classify the cultivar pictured below. The form of this new cultivar is pretty



clear. The split tips are immediately apparent and they do combine to achieve a fringed effect. Take a look at the definition of the Lacinated Form on page 4 of the 2016 Classification and Handbook of Dahlias (CHD). Split tips and achieving the fringed appearance are key elements of the definition for Lacinated dahlias.



The better, or tougher, question on this cultivar may be its color. The Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD), p. 13, indicates that the judge should examine the color from a distance of about 3 feet: “if it is a blend, it will possess two or more distinct colors that are not a part of the same color class.”

Glenn Ruth used to tell us to look for color from a distance of at least an arm’s length. (The GJD says that, too, on p. 12.) The point is that the colors need to continue to be clear and distinct from a few feet from the bloom. It is clear in the picture, I hope, that the two colors would continue to be clearly visible at that distance.

Assume that the colors determined on the ray florets (closely observed, in this case) were DP19 and YL9. Is the cultivar a light blend or a dark blend? The first step in that process is to determine the dominant color in the bloom; the dark pink or the yellow. It is, no doubt, clear that the DP19 dominates over the yellow. The next step to answer that question, is to go to page 7 in the CHD and find which blend contains the dominant color, DP19. You will find that it is in the Light Blend list. The bloom is B sized (6” to 8” in diameter), so we end up with B LC LB DP19/YL9.

This new cultivar is Mt. View Neeser B. It scored in three Trial Gardens and in three Shows. Although the originator entered it as a Pink, it was scored three times as a Light Blend, twice as a Dark Pink and once as a Dark Blend. The majority prevailed to yield B LC LB.

Editor: As an aside, other cultivars in this 2510 B LC LB class are Jennie Pk/Wh,

Just Married Pk/YL

Nenekazi DP/YL

Pinelands Princess LV/WH.

## The Judging Challenge

Your judging challenge for this month was to identify the Form faults in the bloom at the right. I can't resist digressing for some comments on the color. It is really attractive, isn't it! What do you think about its color classification? We just went through a discussion of blends. Is this a blend, or not? We would use the same criterion as above. Can you see two colors at a distance of 3 feet? The answer is a little tougher here than it was above, right? The originator entered it as a Light Blend and two of the four Trial Gardens that scored it agreed. One of the others had it as a Dark Blend with a dominant color of BR20 (note that the BR20 falls in the Dark Blend list). The fourth Trial Garden classified it as a Flame Blend with colors of YL11 and RD5.



The lower picture on the right is of the same cultivar from the TG that ended up with a Flame Blend classification. Interesting, isn't it, that the cultivar showed more yellow and less pink (red) in this fourth Trial Garden. While the red does not show up very well in this picture, the combination of YL11 with RD5 does yield a Flame Blend. This cultivar also had five scores in Seedling Bench Evaluation; three were Light Blend and two were Bronze. We thus ended up with a Light Blend classification for the CHD.



I need to apologize for misleading you last month. I said the cultivar was classified as a Pom; that is incorrect. It is a M FD.



Sorry! If you said that the ray florets at the equator were insufficiently involute to be a Pom, you were absolutely correct! (Would you believe that I was just checking to see if you were really looking? (Not!:))



In any case, the bloom is an example of the overlap between Formal Decorative cultivars and Ball/MBa/Pom cultivars. The form of an entry is basically determined by the shape of the ray florets at the equator of the bloom (GJD, p. 25). In these blooms, the florets near the center of the bloom are involute over most of their length but become less involute towards the equator and the back of the bloom. It is time to get out the CHD and check on the definitions. The Formal Decorative definition calls for florets that are generally flat, broad, and smooth. The BA/MBa/P definition calls for florets that are involute for most of their length and fully involute for “more than half their length.” The fourth Trial Garden (lower picture) came up with MBa for their classification; all the rest, including the SBE results, came up with what became the final classification: M FD.

One form fault for this entry would be, therefore, at least a subtle lack of conformance to the ideal definition. In a TG or SBE setting, the quantitative penalty for that fault should be a small portion of the 5 points (see p. 40, GJD) for conformance to the ideal. Why not a large portion? As I see it, the arrangement of the florets corresponds very well to the regular and uniform expectation specified in the FD definition. In addition, the florets are only slightly involute at the equator of the bloom. A 1.5 or 2 point penalty might be appropriate.

The lower bloom has another clear form fault across its center; but what about the upper bloom? In a show setting, I would want to look at the center of the bloom at a distance less than arms length. The bloom is past its peak of maturity and is close to blown. It is not “tight.” (GCD, p. 17, 35). In a show

setting, the upper bloom would be competitive, but could come in second against a bloom with a better center.

This new cultivar is Clearview Butterscotch, M FD LB OR17/YL16. It averaged over 87 both in the TGs and on the bench.

**Challenge for next month**

For next month, classify this bloom and list some of the faults you can identify.

*Ron*

