

## The JUDGE's Corner

Ron Miner - [baronminer@aol.com](mailto:baronminer@aol.com)

A number of you now have a couple anemone dahlia seedlings. I hope they are doing well! Remember that they need to be "hardened off" before you plant them in your garden. Basically, that means gradually introduce them to the full sun conditions in your garden. The germination rate for the anemone seeds was low, about 8%. My usual experience with seeds (that haven't made that long trip from Australia!) is about 80%. As a consequence, I concluded we needed to supplement the anemone project with another group of open-centered seedlings from my garden. I still have some of those seedling packs available. Send me an email if you would like one or two. We can make arrangements to get them to you.

The big event at Petitti's this year will, therefore, consist of four special classes. The first will be a triple entry for those open-centered seedlings we did for the Petitti's seminar in 2009. They are ready for the show bench and trial gardens this year! (Did anybody else send one of those seedlings to the trial gardens? There were several that were worthy! The one at the right is an excellent example. :-))



*Petitti Special Seedling Class 1*

The second special class will be a single entry of the stellar seedlings we grew from Steve Boley's seeds in 2010. The third class will be for the new anemone and open-centered seedlings from this year. In this class, we will again pick the best and the worst of the entries. Remember that the determination of the worst entry will be based on the poorest adherence to the judging criteria, not the



*Petitti Special Seedling Class 2*

fact that there is a stem but no bloom, for example. In any case, bring as many of those new first-year seedlings to the show as you can. We will also have a fourth, open class for any seedling you would like to show.

Our discussion and our evaluation of these special classes after judging the regular show qualify as a judging seminar but you do not need to be a judge to join the fun! Just stay around for a simple lunch and enjoy the conversation about our favorite flower! October 6/

Did you take a look at the current definition of the anemone form yet? It is on page 5 of the 2012 Classification and Handbook of Dahlias. Keep in mind that the definition describes our current perception of the ideal anemone form, not the basic requirements to classify a new cultivar as an anemone. Until 2002, when the ADS published the new judging manual, "Guide to Judging Dahlias," the earlier definitions described the general characteristics expected to be found in the various forms. The best analogy for the current definitions, as I see it, is to mountain tops. The definitions describe the pinnacle of the mountain of dahlias that comprise the anemone dahlia mountain, for example. There are lots of dahlias on that anemone mountain, but few or none are at the form summit! In that context, the elevation of a dahlia you are judging should go a long way to determining its score for form.



*Bill J seedling "a"*

Let's take another look at one of Bill Johnson's AN seedlings ('a'). It pretty clearly fulfills the expectation, in the first part of the definition, of displaying elongated and tubular disc florets surrounded by ray florets.

The next part of the definition addresses the uniformity and the arrangement of the ray florets. It is hard to tell from this picture how uniform and how uniformly arranged the ray florets are. We can't even see the ray florets at 9 o'clock and there appears to be an extra ray floret at 3 o'clock. The expectation to be able to see the ray florets "from the face of the bloom" follows from the problematic situation where the dome is so dominant that the ray florets are pushed out to the back of the bloom. That defect is illustrated in another of Bill's seedlings, 'b' shown on the next page. Seedling 'a' does a comparatively good job of having visible ray florets from the front of the bloom. The last portion of the definition



addresses the extent to which the disc florets are uniform and tubular and exhibit a fringed tip. Those criteria are also very difficult to accurately assess from a picture. The yellow tips on the disc florets in ‘a’ suggest, however, that they are tubular and, perhaps, not entirely uniform in length.

*Bill J seedling “b”*

More on scoring these anemone cultivars next month!