

The JUDGE's Corner...Ron Miner baronminer@aol.com

The "season" is starting! Hooray! My yard is about as dry as I've ever seen it in May, but the garden is still too wet to rototill. I use an old farmer's way to determine that. Turn over a shovel-full of soil. Compact a softball size clump of it from the end of the shovel and drop it on the ground. If it falls apart, you're ready to go. If it stays as a clump, it's too wet. Anybody know a better approach?

I want you to meet a couple people. Bill Johnson is an Australian dahlia hybridizer with a specialty. He only grows anemones. He calls them "pincushions." The other guy you need to know is Loney Kennedy. Loney, from WA, visited Bill in AU and brought home some of Bill's seeds. Loney subsequently sent me a couple packets of those AN seeds. As you can see in Loney's picture, he grows big dahlias as well. Bill graciously sent us more seeds to augment those that Loney provided. These two guys are the foundation for our 2012 seedling project for the Petitti show. Thank you, gentlemen, for your generosity!

Here are a few examples of the seedlings in Bill's garden. The domes on the cultivars in those on the left are very well developed and



have a traditional AN appearance. The seedling on the right has an unusual dome that looks like a cross between the disk florets of a single and the tubular florets of the anemones. As best I can tell from close examination of the



picture, the disc florets are tubular. As usual, the pictures are a poor substitute for actually being able to look at the flower! The ray florets in the seedling on the right are certainly striking! Are they bi-color or an orange with a red eye zone?





These pictures from Bill's garden show a wide range of (guess what) anemones. The yellow and pink cultivars in the first picture sure look good enough to introduce. Let's hope that we find a lot like those in our seedlings!

Our project will work like the previous seedling projects at Petitti's. We'll have a special section for the Johnson AN seedlings and we'll pick the best and the worst anemones among those entries.

We'll also have sections

for open-centered and fully double seedlings from previous projects and your own seedling beds. The evaluations for the best (and worst AN) seedling will be done in the context of a judging seminar. The seminars are fun—and you'll learn some things about a dahlia form we don't often grow and enjoy.

We will distribute the AN seedlings at the next DSO meeting, so be sure to be there! As usual, you will have the right to name and introduce as your own the new cultivars you get from the seeds. Wouldn't it be nice to have a new cultivar to name after your spouse or your grandchild? I've certainly enjoyed doing that. Try it; you'll like it!

Next month's column will cover the criteria for classifying and for judging the form of anemone dahlias. Your assignments in the meantime are to get out your new Classification and Handbook of Dahlias and check out the definition of Anemone, get yourself to the next DSO meeting to collect the seedlings, and start thinking about the name you might want to give that new introduction you could get at the meeting.