

The JUDGE's Corner

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Digging and Dividing

I've completed the process of digging and dividing in my garden; I imagine many of our DSO members are still working on that project. Please remember that it is a critical time for controlling the spread of virus. 1) Sterilize your cutting tools with a 10% bleach solution as you cut down the plants. 2) Take care to minimize cutting into the tubers when you dig. If you cut into a tuber when you dig, be sure to cut the wound again, with sterilized tools, as soon as you can. 3) When you trim your clumps and divide them into tubers, sterilize those tools between each clump. 4) Before you even start cutting plants, make sure that you're not investing time and effort into a plant that shows clear signs of virus. Pull it and put it somewhere that it won't end up back in your garden.

Judging Status

I'd like to recognize the official promotion of Tony Evangelista from an Accredited Judge to a Senior Judge. Tony was a Senior Judge a number of years ago and took several years off while his kids were involved in athletics and academics. Since they became empty nesters, Tony and Jackie have gotten back into growing and showing and judging dahlias in a big way. He has functioned as a Senior Judge for most of that period. When it came time to do his judging test, he did the Senior test rather than the Accredited test and, of course, he passed with flying colors. The other criteria were easily met. Thanks and congratulations, Tony! I encourage all of our AC judges to review the SR judging requirements and consider following Tony's example. I also encourage our CN judges to work on the AC tests over the winter. Let me know what I can do to help you meet the AC requirements.

Petitti's Seminar

I hope you all enjoyed the Petitti's Show and the afternoon seminar as much as I did. Dave and Jim deserve our thanks and appreciation for another great job on the show. Sharon, Marilyn, Sara, Barbara, Bill, ... deserve our thanks for providing lunch; it makes it practical to have the seminar after judging the show. I also want to

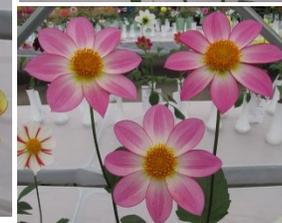
thank the exhibitors who brought Blossom Gulch (BG) seedlings to the show. That brings to mind the only thing that Kathy Iler asked of us when she gave us the wonderful gift of thousands of seeds in the spring of 2013. She said please just send me tubers of the introductions that come from the seeds. I will certainly do that next spring. I will be happy to include your tubers in the same package, if you would like me to do that.

I was disappointed to have to withdraw Kathy's Favorite from the TG and SBE evaluation for 2017 introduction. I had a lot of trouble with it in my own garden so it didn't make sense to plan to introduce it next year. Its future is still uncertain.

In the Judging Seminar, three teams of three judges each scored two BG entries, then discussed their scores with the other judging teams. The AC judges took the lead in the evaluations.

Several of the entries are shown in the pictures on the right and below. There was a great mix of open-centered forms and colors represented. In fact there were more entries than we could evaluate in the time available, so we ended up not picking a best in show among the BG triple entries.

Perhaps the most interesting discussion



during the afternoon was on the subject of petaloids. We were talking about Form penalties on one of the collarettes. The discussion inspired me to take some pictures of ray florets and their petaloids.

Baron Aunt Dorothy is at the right. If you were to enlarge and print the petaloid inset, you would find that the petaloids are 48% of the length of the ray florets. (They look smaller, particularly on the bloom, don't they?) What is ideal according to the definition of a Collarette? "... approximately one-half to two-thirds the length of the ray florets." (CHD, p. 5) I would argue that 48% fits that definition.

The bicolor on the right has relatively longer petaloids. If you were to follow a similar procedure to measure its petaloids, you would find that they are 80% of the length of the ray florets. I would argue here, too, that 80% fits the definition.

There are a couple more examples of ray florets and petaloids from collarettes on the right. The variegated one on the far right may be the one that we were discussing in the seminar. It measures out at 48%, too.

I've had "collarette" seedlings with petaloids so tiny that it was questionable how to classify it. In that case, a "True Form" penalty of a couple points would probably be appropriate. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that it is pretty unlikely that we would find that severe a case on the bench or in a show. Most petaloids will fall within the range of "approximately 1/2 to 3/4" the length of the ray florets



A more difficult question might be determining the penalties that should follow from other petaloid issues, like a lack of uniformity in the shape or the color of the petaloids. We are talking about an area where there is not a lot of guidance from the Guide to Judging Dahlias (GJD). In the petaloid definition on p. 62, the GJD says that petaloids are sometimes misshapen or twisted but it does not comment on whether those characteristics are faults. In addition, it does not tell us the value of the various elements of Form for an open-centered cultivar. (See p. 40 for fully double cultivars.)

The Form issue that is most likely to cause a Collarette to succeed or to fail is Symmetry. In the bloom above, the petaloids probably meet the length requirement; but they are less disciplined than those in the previous examples. Compare the ray florets and petaloids near noon and 3 o'clock, for example. The petaloids appear to be different in length; that is probably a result of the fact that those at noon are sticking out of the plane of the bloom more than those at 3 o'clock. In either case, the petaloids are not uniform around the bloom. This lack of symmetry is a more serious fault than the petaloid length issue we have been discussing. Does it have 'passing' form? Maybe.

October Quiz

Last month I asked you about the color of the seedling on the right. What is the problem? I didn't keep the seedling because it was more clearly gray than any other cultivar I've seen. The presence of gray in the color of a dahlia is a significant fault and decreases its value.



November Quiz

You may think you know the name of the cultivar on the right—but that is not likely since it is new this year. What is its classification??



Ron

