

## The JUDGE's Corner

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It is remarkable, to me at least, that the 2013 Parma show is behind us! Didn't the dahlia season just get started? We all owe Dave Cap another round of applause for pulling it all together once again. It was also great to have so much help in setting up the show and tearing it down. Thank you all for your help! Mike Weber and Jim Thompson get special kudos for helping to haul all that gear around the county.

The good news is that the "Orchette" has been defined by the ADS Classification Committee and will be "official" in 2014. That means that Dave will need to add another class number to our show table and there are lots of other ramifications of the ADS decision.

However, the best news is that this new form fits right into our plan for the Judging Seminar at Petitti's. A number of the seed parents for the seeds Kathy Iler sent us were Novelty Open-Centered (Orchettes!), Orchids, and Collarettes. It is therefore very likely that a number of our seedlings will fall in the new Orchette classification.

In fact, if you've been to visit our DSO website, you have no doubt found that Sharon has put up a section to show off our Blossom Gulch seedlings as they appear. The very first one on the website page is from Bill Takacs' garden and is shown on the right, above. Wouldn't seeing that in your garden be a great way to start the day?! It is, of course, unfair to judge a cultivar on the basis of a single bloom



2013 Seedling from Blossom  
Gulch Seed "N"

*Orchette Dahlias. A bloom combines the involute characteristics of the orchid dahlia form and the petaloid characteristics of the collarette form. Ideally, eight ray florets uniformly surround the disc flowers in a flat, even plane. Ray florets should possess a corresponding petaloid at their base. Petaloids should be of a length which gives visual impact and not so small that they are not easily discernible at arm's length. Petaloids may lie flat within the base of the ray floret or slightly rise and/or cup upward toward the center of the bloom. Disc flowers with 0 to 3 rows of pollen are desirable.*

(particularly its first bloom!); but let's talk a bit about it anyway.

My immediate impression of the color is very positive. Is yours? But wait, shouldn't we start with asking "what is the color?" It is tempting, of course, just to say that it is variegated and that the variegations are fine and fairly uniform. You can see three or four larger red streaks; but they are reasonably subtle. Ok, but back to the question for you judges: what is the color?!

The answer is that it can depend on your decision on its Form. Why? If it is a Collarette, where do you determine the color? How about on an Orchid? How about on an Orchette (the new abbreviation will be OT)? You can only know the answer to that last question if you've read the current ADS Bulletin. The answers are: the face of the ray floret, for the Collarette, and the reverse side of the ray floret for the Orchid and the Orchette.

You can see the color on the face of the ray florets, but can you tell the color on the reverse of those florets? Here's a close up of one of the tip of one of the florets. There is some variegation there; but you would really want to take a look at the



back of the flower to answer the question, right? If we assume that the reverse of the ray florets is the same as the front of the floret and we assume that the best classification of the seedling is Orchette (OT), my assignment for you judges is to read Lou's article in the June Bulletin and write down the classification for this seedling. I get OT V(RD/W)/v/(rd/w)-v/(rd/w). (Do you agree??) Translation: Orchette that has red and white variegation



*Fancy Pants, seedling's seed parent*

on the reverse side of the ray florets, variegated red and white on the face of those ray florets, and variegated red and white petaloids.

I hope you are thinking: Wait! Is it really an OT?? That is a great question. (Good for you!) Take another look at Kathy's Fancy Pants, the seed parent for Bill's seedling. There are a number of big differences, aren't there! Probably the key one, after you re-read the Orchette definition on the pre-

vious page (and then go back to the Orchid definition in the current CHD to check on the “involute characteristics of the orchid dahlia form”) is the extent of the involution on the ray florets. The ray florets on the seedling are not sufficiently involute, right? Right!

Well, then, what is the best classification for the seedling? The petaloids are a very prominent feature of the seedling, so the alternative must be Collarette. Ok, here’s a Collarette that is another one of our Blossom Gulch seed parents: Cinder. How does it compare to our seedling? Big differences here, too. The shape of the ray florets on a Collarette should be “flat or slightly cupped” according to the current CHD. The shape of the ray florets on an Orchid should be “involute for two-thirds or more of their length and fully involute for at least one-third their length.”



*Cinder*

The ray florets on the seedling are involute for perhaps half or two-thirds of their length and fully involute for perhaps one-fourth their length. That is a long way from “flat or slightly cupped,” isn’t it. The petaloids pretty much exclude any other form class, including Orchid.



Do you agree that the involute character of the ray florets is in the spirit of the orchid/orchette ray floret requirements? In terms of the mountain range analogy, I hope we would agree that the seedling is not at the summit of our new Orchette mountain, but it is a lot closer to that summit than it is to “Mount Collarette.”

What else do you see on the seedling relating to Form? About the first thing Barbara said was that there are just seven ray florets. Note that the definition calls for “ideally eight.” Nevertheless, the seven ray florets and the petaloids are uniformly arranged around the center of the bloom.

Well, that adds up to a lot of critical comment on a beautiful new seedling. We can probably conclude that it isn’t likely to score 100% for form (that would be 28 points, right judges?) However, we won’t know its real potential until we see more blooms this year (and next!). It could still be the Gullikson Medal winner in 2016.

I’m very much looking forward to the Petitti show and the

judging seminar following the judging. I hope that many of you will have seedlings that you can bring to the show. Everyone is welcome to exhibit them and to stay for the judging seminar. That is the basic ulterior motive for me to get the seedling projects going, so please stay if you can! :-) The agenda for the seminar is included elsewhere in this Digest.

Please also remember that your seedlings from 2009 and 2010 are now eligible for official evaluation on the Seedling Bench. I know that there are a number of them that are worthy of that evaluation! Get them up on the SBE if you can!

We will include the seedlings as an integral part of the normal show schedule. Get one of our Senior Judges to help you classify it so that you get it in the right class for the show. When the judging is over, we will separate them out for discussion in the seminar. Remember that we will be picking both the best and (technically) the worst of those Iler seedlings, so bring anything blooming. (Steve Boley told me at the National Show that their worst seedling from 2009 was being introduced this year. :-))

The seminar process will start with classifying the entries, so please be prepared by reading the definitions (2013 CHD) of the open-centered cultivars before the show. The Orchette becomes official next summer, so we will be including that class among the set of possible classifications. That definition, from the Bulletin, is on the previous page. The specification of the color of the open-centered cultivars can be confusing (as you might have noted above); we'll talk a bit about that in the seminar. Here again, please read what the CHD has to say about that before the show.

If you were among the fortunate few that succeeded in getting some of the seeds that were distributed from Baron Jeff to germinate this year, please bring those to the show as well. We'll pick the best and worst of those, too.

I'm pleased to report that Sharon is the first among our current great crop of Candidate Judges to complete the requirements to become an Accredited Judge. She recently completed and sent me her AC test—and she did just great on it. Thanks and congratulations, Sharon! If you are interested in judging and you're not a CN judge, please let me know! I'll help you get started. (You'll love it.)

*Ron*