

**THE DAHLIA SOCIETY OF GEORGIA  
JUNE 2011  
MEETING NOTICE EMAIL**

**JUNE MEETING**

**MONDAY, JUNE 20**

**7:30 PM**

**ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN BASEMENT  
CLASSROOM**

**THE PROGRAM WILL BE A POWERPOINT  
PRESENTATION ABOUT SUMMER CARE OF YOUR  
DAHLIAS IN ALL OF THIS HEAT.**

**BRIAN KILLINGSWORTH WILL ALSO GIVE US A SHORT  
PRESENTATION WITH PICTURES ABOUT DAHLIA  
VIRUS.**

**IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HAVE A VIRUSED PLANT  
BRING IT OR PART OF IT TO THE MEETING FOR  
IDENTIFICATION.**

**COME AND LEARN SOME OF THOSE SECRETS FOR  
KEEPING YOUR DAHLIAS ALIVE & GROWING DURING  
THIS ATLANTA SUMMER.**

**(PLAN TO COME EARLY IF YOU WOULD LIKE FREE  
DAHLIAS AS SOME GROWERS WILL BRING LEFTOVER  
TUBERS & GROWER OVERRUNS FOR THE TAKING)**

**ANNUAL PICNIC**

**Our picnic this year will be held on July 30 at the home of Henry Everett  
and Jesse Usleton in Tucker. The address is 2690 Gleneagles Drive. Phone #  
770-938-3134 We are going to try and beat the heat some this year by moving**

the starting time from the middle of the afternoon to 5:30 with a closing time of 7:30 PM. You can stay later if you want, and we usually do.

Everyone will enjoy seeing their lovely yard full of dahlias, roses and many other interesting plants & flowers. Make sure you see their orchids blooming up on the hill behind the house.

Members please bring a veggie, salad or dessert and the Society will provide the meat and drinks.

Make sure you save the date to come and enjoy seeing and being with your fellow dahlia growers. A map to their home will be included in the July newsletter.



Badger Twinkle M-SC-DB PR/WH

### WATERING DURING THIS HEAT

One of our members sent me an email a few days ago that is really appropriate for this hot start to the summer when many of us are not fully planted yet. The answer provided is what I do in my garden.

During this HOT weather, how much should you water your Dahlias?

Here is what I do: Cuttings I water every day or every other day.

Tubers--Newly planted naked (no roots) tubers, no water until 3"- 4" tall. If we haven't seen any rain for two weeks and you know the soil is dry below the planted tuber, give the tuber(s) a shower but not a soaking. Still no rain for a week plus give the tuber(s) another shower.

Tubers planted with roots, water them in and then again in a few days if no rain. Again, don't over water.

If they are 3" - 4" tall or taller I will water them once or twice a week being careful not to over water them to the point they may rot.

If a plant wilts for no reason take your foot and compact the soil around the base of the plant. Then give the plant 1-2 gallons of water in one pouring. Pour slowly as it will be hard for the soil to absorb the water. Hopefully, in a couple of days it will start taking up water again. If it doesn't, then pour about 1 quart-1/2 gallon of a fungicide properly mixed on and around the base that will kill soil fungus. You want to make sure you soak the soil 3-4" down. You can try this first if you have the fungicide. Some examples of fungicide to use include Banrot and Terraclor. Most of these products are expensive and will last a long time.

### GROWING TIP OF THE MONTH

As you have noticed during this month of heat, our dahlia plants have a difficult time combating these 90 degree temperatures every day. So what can you do to help them out? Give them a shot of Liquid Kelp/Seaweed every week to two weeks. How do you do that? A soil drench is one way, or as a foliar spray; as either way will work. If you use it as a soil drench give each plant about 1/2 -3/4 of a cup.

What does the Kelp do? First it helps expand the root zone so the plant will take up more nutrients thus making your plant healthier, and it just looks better. No—it won't keep it from wilting under the brutal sun but it helps. Secondly, Kelp provides micro nutrients to the plant that it might not be getting from any other source. By using liquid kelp or seaweed extract, you are introducing substances into the plant that will make it stronger, healthier and increase it's resistance to sap sucking pests and diseases.

Although it isn't known yet why kelp products give some kind of biological control over many plant diseases, plants fed with liquid kelp develop a resistance to many diseases and pests. They become much stronger plants as noted above. Its use is highly recommended.

Where can you buy it? Maxicrop is one of the most popular brands and you can go to their website [www.maxicrop.com/pages/products\\_main.html](http://www.maxicrop.com/pages/products_main.html)



PAUL'S POINT B-LC-DR A 2011 RELEASE FROM JS DAHLIAS  
(PICTURE COLOR MAY NOT BE ACCURATE)

### THE DIRT ON DIRT

This article is taken by permission from the June newsletter of the Dahlia Society of California.

Guy Chibante, our Light Brown Apple Moth Sheriff, comes to dirt almost genetically. His father was president of the San Leandro Society for many years and his brother owns Mountain Valley Dahlias in the Shasta Area, Mountainvalleydahlias.com. Guy's biggest admonition: know what kind of soil you have BEFORE you begin altering it. For example, if you want to check the ph of your dirt, wait 20 minutes after watering so the moisture interacts with the soil before testing. Mike Schelp had his "soil tested this year and got back the same formatted report that Guy showed. The testing was done by Peaceful Valley Farm Supply. Turns out that my soil was very alkaline and needed some acidification – solved with sulfur pellets–along with nitrogen. Tests run \$30 to \$50 depending on the degree of testing. You take the sample and mail it in. They even provide the bag. You should have results within two weeks. 5% and 10% discounts are available if multiple tests are done. Here is the web site: <http://www.groworganic.com/fertilizers/soil-test/soil-testing.html> Guy passed out a Soil Quality Card whereby you can evaluate your own dirt before sprucing it up. He also gave us a Soil Texture by Feel Flow chart to determine whether your dirt tends to loam, clay or sand. Guy pointed out that when you add water to sand and clay you get bricks; when you add hay to the same sand and clay mixture, you get adobe. Adding lime or

sulphur will raise or lower the ph. Bloodmeal adds readily available nitrogen and is practically neutral ph. Most commercially purchased compost clocks in right around 7. Guy surprised everyone when he asked, "What is the ph of City water?" We were astounded to learn that it varies and can get as high as 9! Moreover, ideally one would allow the heavily chlorinated water to sit overnight until the chlorine gas dissipates . Ultimately one wants a good balance of NPK. The nitrogen aids in synthesis of amino acids and chlorophyll. Phosphorus helps with photosynthesis. Potassium promotes sugar and starch formation such as tubers. But who knew about the 3 secondary nutrients: Calcium, Magnesium and Sulfur. Calcium promotes stronger cell walls (think stems). Magnesium is essential for seed germination. Sulphur keeps leaves nice and green, being an essential ingredient in amino acids. One of the biggest problems with soil is compaction. The spaces between the particles gets too small and even water (let alone roots) has a hard time seeping downwards. The solution for some people is adding little gravel; of course for others, sifting out the pesky rocks proves the solution. Guy advocates a "living" compost pile: brown matter like stems, green matter like leaves or grass clippings, veggie stuff from the kitchen and some dirt. Keeping your heap a little damp insures that all sorts of microscopic critters create a haven. Worms excrete worm castings. A well maintained compost hill will NOT smell. Guy further recommends making compost tea which makes plants heartier and reduces the need for costly sprays.



ORANGE ICE BB-FD-BI OR/W 2011 RELEASE FROM HOLLYHILL DAHLIAS

