

The JUDGE's Corner

Ron Miner - baronminer@aol.com

Determination of a seedling's color can be a complicated subject even for fully double cultivars. This seedling is a case in point. It is one of Steve and Sandy Boley's. Steve and I have discussed it via email on a couple occasions. The basic question is whether or not our current color system can capture the colors in this seedling. What do you think about that question? What colors do you see? White tips may be your first observation. The bases of the florets are also clearly purple. Don't miss, however, the red flecks in the purple. The complication in the determination of the color is that, at least in some cases, the red variegation extends into the white tips. Let's consider, for a moment, the results in the case if the white tips were as thoroughly variegated as the bases of the florets.

You can see some examples of that situation around 11 o'clock near the center of the bloom. What would you conclude? My conclusion would be that the cultivar is variegated. That part was easy, eh? What, now are the two colors involved in the variegation? I hope you would say that the first color is a Bicolor of purple with white tips. The second color is red or dark red. Thus, if the variegation persisted right to the tips of the florets, we would determine the color to be V Bi(P/W)/DR.



Irish Mystic

My impression, however, is that the best characterization of the variegation is that it ends with the purple. Look at the more mature florets around the equator. Those florets are pretty much pure white. That leaves us with an entirely different situation, right? Our florets have a variegated base and white tips. So, how do we characterize the color - BI, V, DB, ... ? In my view, bicolor is the description that best captures the whole floret. What is the next question? What are the two colors that comprise the bicolor? They are (1) variegated and (2) white. The two colors in the variegation are purple and red. I think, therefore, that the cultivar is Bi V(P/DR)/W and that our current system is able to determine and to classify the color of the cultivar.

Are you ready now to give the cultivar a score for color? Remember that we can only really be expected to be able to do that if we had three plants in a Trial Garden or three blooms on the Seedling Bench! Nevertheless, it is a very interesting cultivar and we can talk about some of the considerations that would go into the determination of a score. You would probably want to start with the issue we already discussed regarding the extent of the variegation in the florets. There is some non-uniformity in the extent of that variegation and that would be considered a fault. How severe is that fault? I would start by suggesting that the florets around 11 or 12 o'clock near the center aren't as important as those at the equator. That is, I would recommend that you focus on the florets at or near the equator to evaluate the uniformity of the variegation. In that context, there are florets at 3 o'clock, just short of 6 o'clock, and at 9 o'clock that have larger areas of red than the others. Inasmuch as the extent (number of instances) of that fault and the degree (the amount of red present or white missing) of the fault are both small, I would argue that the nonuniformity fault is minor.

What other color faults do you see? While there are no wolf petals, the red in a couple of the florets at 2 and 3 o'clock and the one at 9 o'clock is greater than most of the other florets. Here again, the extent and the degree of that fault is small, so I would call it another minor fault. Do you remember the bottom line for "minor faults" from last month's column? It was 85%. I would suggest, therefore, that the color penalty (based solely and inappropriately on one picture!) would be of the order of 3 points.



Daffy 10

In closing, I want to let you know Steve's perspective on his seedling. While he largely agrees with the foregoing analysis, he argues that it would be better to create a new color class for multi-colored dahlias. He and I agree 100% that it is very important to encourage the development and commercialization of this kind of cultivar. It is

clear, I think, that our typical John Q. Public would be a lot more thrilled with this cultivar than he would be with even a perfect Hamari Accord. When we discussed this column, Steve volunteered more examples that would help fill up the class. Your assignment for next month (smile!) is to come up with the best characterization of these additional examples. Have fun!



F Daffy (2nd year)



Be-a-Sport

After you've figured out the best color classification, go ahead and determine the form of Be-a-Sport. After you've done that, take a look in the Classification Handbook of Dahlias (CHD) and see what it says about form and color. Do you agree with the CHD? Neither Steve, nor I, do. Perhaps it will be up for reclassification next year.



I can't resist the opportunity to add Neil Evan's picture of (my) Rembrandt at the Petitti Show. It is very unusual for a MS to win out over fully double candidates for Reserve Champion. It was, however, the best Rembrandt I've ever noticed in my garden and it probably deserved the award. The point is that it is a perfect example of how easy it can be to grow and enter show flowers. That plant and that bloom got zero attention from the time it was planted until I noticed it and brought it to the show. If you have an interest in judging, here is a very easy way to meet that part of our judging requirements! Speaking of judging requirements, if you are a SR or an AC judge, you

need to complete the appropriate judge's test and get it to me as soon as possible. Thanks!