

2007 Dahlia Judging Seminar

August 25, 2007
Mahoning Valley Dahlia Society
Annual Dahlia Show
And Youngstown Trial Garden

Overview

- Emphasis on Trial Garden Judging
- Knowledge and Demeanor
- Attributes and their Values
- Questions from the Show
- Summary
- Trial Garden Judging

Sources of Information and Disclaimer

All of the material in this presentation is based on the 2002 ADS Publication, the “Guide to Judging Dahlias,” the 2007 version of the “Classification and Handbook of Dahlias,” and the ADS Seedling Score Sheets. Be aware, however, that parts of the material reflect my interpretation of those publications. I have tried to mark all of those areas with an *asterisk* (*) to underscore the fact that the information so marked is *my (Ron Miner’s – REM) interpretation*, not “official” ADS wisdom.

Judging Scenarios

- Seedling Bench Evaluation
 - Quantitative score sheet assessment
 - Classification Required
 - Selected blooms, perhaps (probably!) from many
- Trial Garden Judging
 - Quantitative score sheet assessment
 - Classification Required
 - Plants grown and groomed by a 3rd party
- Show Judging
 - Relative (De!)Merits
 - Discipline Required!

Trial Garden Judging

- Follow Guidance of TG Director
- Evaluation of Potential
 - Focus on Attribute Qualities
 - Ignore Cultural Issues
 - Insect damage
 - Disbudding, disbranching problems
 - Inadequate tying
- Numerical Evaluation (Floriferousness)

Attitude and Demeanor

- Judging Mindset, Attitude
 - Set Aside Prejudices, Preferences, and Favorites
 - Depend on Knowledge Base
 - Guide to Judging Dahlias
 - Classification and Handbook of Dahlias
 - Seedling Score Sheet
 - Encourage Discussion Based on Knowledge
 - Listen Well; Respect Others' Inputs; Be Courteous
 - Disagree Based on Knowledge
 - Adopt the Majority View

Approach

- Discuss Approach with TG Director and Your Team
 - “Team Project” is Best Approach*
 - Desert Survival Workshop Example*
 - Open Discussion, Individual Preparation of Scores*
- Encourage Discussion of Observations*
 - Determination of Form and Color
 - Measurements of diameter, depth, and stem
 - Faults and their severity

*REM

First Steps

- Items to Bring Along
 - C & H D
 - Judging Manual
 - Color Chart
 - Tape Measure

First Steps, cont.

- TG Director May Provide Guidance on Which Entries Need to be Judged
- If not, Choose Entries with a Large Number of Blooms (Perhaps 6 or more)
- Determine the Form, the Color, the Size, and the Average Stem Length of the Entry
- Discuss Faults Observed, Strengths, and Weaknesses of the Entry

Classification

- Key Part of Seedling Evaluation
- Ideal Form Listed in C&HD
 - Pull a floret to check shape*
 - With TG Director's approval
 - Confirm no change in shape!
 - Identify closest match to ideal
- Identify Closest Match to ADS Color Chart
- Confirm Conclusions with Team

*REM

Classification

Floret Shape - Key to Form

- Involute
- Flat
- Twisted, Curled, Wavy
- Revolute
- Split
- Incurved
- Straight
- Recurved

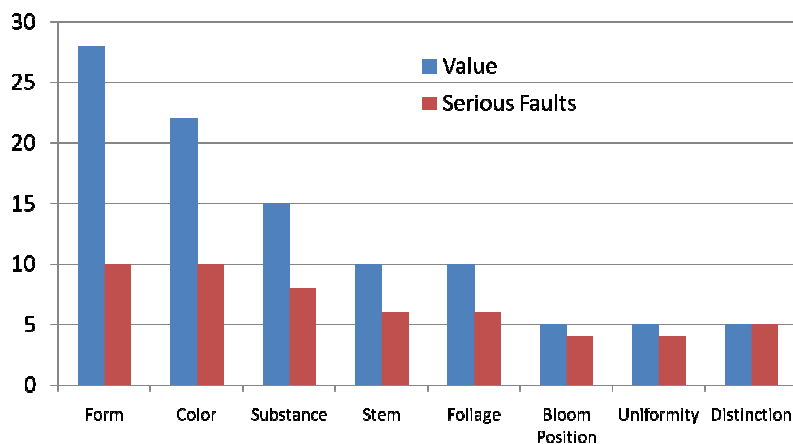
Classification - Color

- Dominant color on the face of the ray florets determines color class on all but Orchids, where reverse determines classification
- Classification capitalized: YL, RD, DB OR/RD, etc.
- Second color, lower case, describes AN domes, CO petaloids, O face color, or eye zones
 - Alpen Cherub is now CO W WH1/wh1
 - Marie Schnugg is now O R RD9/rd24

Point Scoring

- 85 Out of 100 Points Required to “Score”
- Major and Minor Faults and Suggested Penalty Values Listed on Score Sheet
 - Experience required!
 - All faults have broad range of severity
 - Treat each attribute independently
 - 85% guide
 - Manual requires careful interpretation
 - Check bottom line

Dahlia Judging Attributes



Point Scoring Suggestion*

(Remember - * means my suggestion!)

<u>Attribute</u> Observation	Rating	Score
No Faults	Perfect	100%
A Minor Fault	Excellent	90%
Minor Faults	Passing	85%
A Major or Many Minor Faults	Failing	80%
One Severe or Several Major Faults	Very Poor	70%

Deduction Suggestion*

Rating	Score	28	22	15	10	5
Perfect	100%	0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	90%	-2.8	-2.2	-1.5	-1	-.5
Passing	85%	-4.2	-3.3	-2.25	-1.5	-.75
Failing	80%	-5.6	-4.4	-3	-2	-1
Very Poor	70%	-8.4	-6.6	-4.5	-3	-1.5

*REM

Form – General Considerations

- Circular, Symmetrical Outline
- Contour (Fully Double Blooms)
 - Circular Cross-sections
 - Small, Closed Center
 - Spiral Arrangement of Ray Florets
- Peak of Development (In Shows!)
- True to Form
- Depth (Fully Double Blooms)

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*REM

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Form – General Considerations

Suggested* Distribution of the 28 Points

Characteristic	Fully Double Cultivars	Open-Centered Cultivars
Symmetry	5	12*
Contour	5	NA
Development	5	7*
True to Form	5	9*
Depth	8	NA

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Form – Symmetry

- Symmetrical, Circular Outline
 - Florets of equal length around the center of the bloom (No bearding (longer florets at bottom))
 - Similar spacing of florets at top and bottom of bloom
- Center Round and Tight on Fully Double Cultivars
- Bloom Centered on Stem
- Open-Centered Cultivars Should be Symmetrical in Each Characteristics (Ray floret length and spacing, disk florets, pollen-bearing florets, ...)

Form - Contour

- Fully Double Cultivars Only
- Round Cross-Sections in Each Plane above Center
- Slightly Flattened to Spherical Shape Transverse to Center
- Small, Closed Center Well-Proportioned to Bloom Size
- Developing Florets Spiral around Center
- Uniform Distribution of Ray Florets – No Gaps

Form - Development

- Peak of Development is not Relevant to Trial Garden Judging
 - Choose as many blooms as possible to evaluate
 - Immaturity and over maturity is not a fault in a Trial Garden
 - Extrapolate to “Peak!”

Form- True to Form

- “Ideal” Forms Described in CH&D and Guide to Judging Dahlias
 - Compare Observations to “Ideal”
 - Mountain-Top Analogy*
- Penalize Mixed Form and Recognize Dilemmas*
 - Formal Decorative vs. Ball, e.g.
 - Stellar vs. Formal Decorative, e.g.

Open-Centered True to Form

- No Depth, No Contour – but still 28 points!
- Asymmetry or Deviation from Ideal Form are important, high penalty faults*
- Peak of Development includes pollen development*

*REM

Form – Depth in Fully Double Cultivars

Type	Depth
Waterlily	Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ Diameter
Incurved Cactus	$\frac{1}{2}$ Diameter
Stellar	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ Diameter
All Other Fully Double	$\frac{3}{4}$ Diameter; More is Better, but not $> 1/1$
Poms and Balls	Spherical

Color

- Color Classes (15) Are of Equal Merit
- Admixture of White:
 - Reduce intensity of color
 - Retains purity and clarity and merit
- Admixture of Gray:
 - Reduces the intensity, purity, clarity
 - Reduces the merit of the color

Color - Merits

- Clear, Clean, Vibrant, Bright, Lustrous
- Sparkling, Silky Texture
- Uniform Color from Tip to Base of Ray Floret
- Conformance to Characteristics
Important for Blushes, Blends, Bicolors,
and Variegated Cultivars

Color - Blushes

- Judged in the Dominant Color Class
- Light, uniformly tinged coloration of florets
- Leniency is the rule in judging blushes in solid color classes
- White Classes
 - Blushes with Y, Pk, L may enhance color
 - Green blush is a negative

Color - Blends

- Two or more colors apparent
 - Colors from different color classes
 - Colors distinguishable at 6 feet
- Light blends consist of lighter tones and tints of Pk, Y, L
- Dark blends include DR, P, etc
- C&HD contains a specific list of colors for LB, DB and Flame Blends

Color – Bicolors

- Distinct, sharp separation of colors differentiates bicolors from blends
- All florets should be uniformly marked
- Substantial region (1/6 to 1/4) of the floret should exhibit the second color
- Bleeding or self-colored florets are faults

Color - Variegated

- Two or more distinct, sharply separated colors mixed across florets
- Substantial portion of each color
- Evenly distributed variegations better than large blotchy spots

The Other Half

- Substance
- Stem
- Foliage
- Bloom Position
- Floriferousness / Uniformity
- Distinction

Substance

- Floret Firmness, Stiffness, Springiness
- Positives
 - Thick, heavy ray florets devoid of coarseness
 - Crisp, firm ray florets, uniformly good to back
- Faults
 - Droopy condition, lacking springiness
 - Ray florets lost on the show table
- Compare to “Standard” Cultivar*

Stem

- Between Bloom and First Full Leaf (ves)
- Positives
 - Strong and straight
 - Length at Least 1 X Diameter for large blooms
 - Should meet the bloom squarely
- Faults
 - Too Long or Too Short, Crooked
 - Too Large or Too Small in Diameter

Foliage

- Frames the Bloom
- Positives
 - Provides pleasing proportion to the entry
 - Good color, formation, texture, and substance
 - Nodes opposite and perpendicular to bloom
 - Equal patterns of leaves on each side of stalk
- Faults
 - Too large or too small, non-uniform
 - Folded, crinkled

Bloom Position

- Positives
 - About 45 degrees between bloom and stem
 - Top facing OK for WL, Ba, MBa, and P
- Faults
 - Down facing, serious fault
 - Side facing and top facing, less serious

Floriferousness

- Expectations Decrease with Increasing Bloom Size
- Check for Spent Blooms and Buds
- Penalize for Blooms Way too Early or Way too Late

Distinction

- Generally an Attribute of a Cultivar, not a Bloom
- Synergistic Combination of Features
 - Demands attention in the garden
 - Rates highly on all characteristics
- Estimate of Show Bench Performance

Last Steps

- Add up your Scores and Compare them to the rest of your team
- If Little Disparity, Check Reasonableness against Quality of Entry*
- If Big Disparities,
 - Review and Discuss Individual Attribute Scores*
 - Re-examine Faults*
 - Resolve Differences if Possible*
- Submit Results to TG Director

*REM

Summary

- Trial Garden Judging Evaluates the Potential of the Cultivar to Win*
 - Insect damage is not important
 - Slightly immature or overly mature blooms should be extrapolated to their peak
 - Faults should be averaged over the blooms
- Keep Point Scoring Perspective in Mind*
- Use a Team Approach when Possible*

Summary, cont.

- Treat Each Judging Experience as a Learning Process and an Enjoyable Process!*

Examples from Show

- Questions?
- Discussion

Trial Garden Judging

- Divide into Teams of Three
- Pick an Entry
- Determine Form, Size, and Stem Length
- Discuss Faults Observed
- Complete Judging Forms
- Compare Scores
- Time Permitting, Present Results to Group