

Dahlias take spotlight in September shows

BY MARTY FIGLEY
STAFF WRITER

Two dahlia shows will take place in September.

The first is the 64th annual show sponsored by the Michigan Dahlia Association, at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Diabolo Road in Ann Arbor. Times are noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 3, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 4. Admission is free.

The second is the 42nd show sponsored by the Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society at Meadow Brook Mall, 82 N. Adams in Rochester Hills. Times are noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11. Admission is free.

Two enthusiastic members shared their techniques.

Wilson Garner of Auburn Hills, president of the Southeastern Michigan Dahlia Society, is also a member of the Michigan Dahlia and American Dahlia Societies and has won numerous awards. He has been growing dahlias since 1981.

His sunny gardens are filled with dahlias. One hundred plants grow in one, while the other, covered with shade cloth, contains 125 plants. The cloth

helps keep insects away and gives about 33 percent shade, which dahlias appreciate. Garner has found that the foliage of the plants grown here is finer textured.

Harold Burton of Garden City has been growing dahlias just four years and now wants the first year he entered his flowers.

His garden, a mix of sun and shade, is also rectangular and contains 64 plants standing in soldier-like rows as do Garner's dahlias like six to eight hours of sun each day, but some varieties do well in less sun, just as long as the light is good and the soil is warm. Burton has a row of these near the house.

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Now each spring he applies a granular fertilizer 12-12-12, then when the plants are larger he uses Rapid-Gro. In August they receive 6-24-24 granular fertilizer for strong roots and tubers. Grass clippings and shredded leaves are used as mulch.

Water watch

Both men agree that although foliage may wilt on a hot afternoon, they may not need water.

"Look at the plants either sun-drown or the morning if the leaves are drooping, they need water. If the leaves are sticking straight out and are a nice rich color, then you know they're all right," Burton said.

He mostly waters close to the roots and believes rain is the best. Dahlias like water, but not wet feet.

Garner has installed soaker hoses in both beds.

"I let the water run 2-1/4 to three hours at each watering, which wets a strip through the garden a few inches," Garner said.

Both men use binder twine to tie the plants to 4- to 5-1/2-inch wooden or metal stakes.

Color and care

Dahlias can provide color to a

garden from July until frost.

Memorial Day is planting time (unless frost is predicted). All plants are labeled. The tubers are planted six inches deep and stakes are put in at that time.

Soon the general care of the flowers begins, with August being a very busy time. Side buds are pinched out to allow the central bud to produce large flower heads.

This is especially important for show flowers. Garner allows only four flowers per plant.

Flowering is gauged to come in so the best blossoms appear the first part of September. Some plants aren't disbudded, especially those with small blooms. This is the time to re-tie broken plants, and be especially watchful for insects.

Earwigs, red spider and spider mites are enemies of dahlias and at the first sign of them spraying is begun. Dahlias grow best like to spray more than is necessary because the insects become immune to the chemicals and it also kills the good bugs.

At the end of the season, when frost has killed the foliage, the plants are cut down to three inches, which provides a "handle"

with which to hold them. Around the first of November, before the ground freezes, the tubers are dug, washed and laid out to dry for about three days.

Garner stores his in vermiculite in wax-coated boxes that contained chickens, while Burton uses vermiculite or a mixture of humus, vermiculite and Canadian peat in apple boxes. All must be dry, the ideal temperature for winter storage is between 40 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Variety

Dahlias can be propagated by seeds, which rest in pots in the middle of the flower, visible after the petals fall off. They are hung to dry and the long narrow seeds MAY produce a new variety.

These are planted indoors in the winter and, because they are bee-pollinated, one never knows what will be the result.

Identical plants can only be obtained from tubers or cuttings. Cuttings grow from the eyes of a tuber, Garner explained. A tuber with three to five eyes is planted under fluorescent lights indoors in February and March so two-

thirds of the bottom is in the potting medium.

In about 10 to 14 days the eyes will sprout. When it grows to about three inches it is carefully cut away from the tuber, just slightly above a node. The skin mustn't be cut. The cutting is dipped lightly in rooting hormone and replanted. If all goes well, the cutting will be about 12 inches high by Memorial Day and ready for its garden location. A tuber will form in the ground by fall.

There are thousands of blooms and hundreds of varieties of dahlias. Colors ranged from pale yellow to deep red. Some are one color.

Judges look for bright and clear colors, blended colors and variegated ones (bicolors with distinct separations of color), the width, depth of the bloom as well as the foliage. Sizes range from one-inch pompoms to large blooms up to 15 inches across.

If a new dahlia receives more than 85 points and it grows successfully the next year or two, the grower has the privilege of naming it.

For more information, all Henry Lemhoff at (810) 788-9354.

Tomoe from page 1D

look easy.

Tomoe paints on handmade mulberry paper that is specially made in Nava, Japan.

Tomoe outlines the images in ink — never penciling them in first or crossing out lines — and then colors them with watercolor. She works rapidly and smoothly. She draws from models before her, but sets them down the way she would like them to be. After the painting dries, she adds the poetry.

At her little house in Japan, Tomoe usually works at a low table so small that the paper covers it and has to be laid across in sections. She sits with her legs under the table. Her room is big enough for only one water bucket, so she uses one color of paint at a time.

For the demonstration at the Birmingham gallery, Tomoe knelt before a low platform. It was big enough so that the entire sheet of paper was in front of her. She painted a bouquet of soft pink Japanese anemones or windflowers from the Cranbrook Gardens. The work was complete in one hour.

Imagery

Tomoe's art is her activity, as other youngsters play an instrument or take part in a sport.

The works on display include a golden tiger that is accompanied by the poem "I spot/My dream/And hunt it down." A tiger lily is a "heart of flame." Rabbits hobnob in a field.

A painting of straw sandals features verse that compares them to life. The sandals are "stiff and hard to get into at first," but the more they are worn the better they feel and fit. "Writing and painting and walks of life/Are all the same way."

"Tomoe's paintings are bright and strong and they're moving but her words are even more moving," Shimada said. "She is an excellent painter but maybe a better poet."

Also exhibited at the gallery are books by Tomoe that

unfold to 30 feet in length. They stretch across a counter like a giant caterpillar.

Background

Tomoe has been composing words and images since she started elementary school, making one "painted poem" daily. She has produced more than 2,000 works in six years.

"Two thousand days of doing/My favorite things/So much to be thankful for/I'll keep working on/My favorite things," one poem gently declares.

Born in Mitaka, a city in the west environs of Tokyo, Tomoe showed a strong interest in picture books from an early age. She and her mother read books together every evening and after the story was finished, Tomoe would draw her favorite scene on a card and write a title or line.

Tomoe sent postcards of her art to calligrapher and painter Kunio Koike, who originated form of art called "eteganji" (picture-letter). He sent back words of encouragement.

The young artist became skilled in markers and crayons. Instead of copying words from stories, she wrote her own compositions and painted animals, plants, fruit, vegetables, landscapes and portraits from life.

Tomoe hasn't really decided yet what she wants to do.

"I want to live in the country someplace and make something, probably writing or painting," she said.

Her trip to this area included visiting Cedar Point (which she described as "great"), fishing on the Au Sable River (where she hooked one but it got away), and visiting Ypsilanti (where she has a show at Eastern Michigan University to Sept. 15). The artist had to be back home in time to start school Sept. 1.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Call (810) 647-7040.

EXHIBITIONS

Send announcements of Oakland County and Wayne County art gallery exhibitions to: Creative Living Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009; fax (810) 644-1314. Our complete listing of current area exhibitions is available by fax or mail for \$4.95. If paying by VISA or MasterCard, call (313) 953-2022, order document 7301 and leave your name and mailing address and your VISA or MasterCard number and expiration date. If paying by check or money order, write: Bryan Waser, information systems coordinator, O&E, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, and order document 7301. With either method, leave a daytime telephone number and indicate if you want delivery by fax or mail. The listing is updated weekly.

■ FIRST THURSDAY

Today is the "First Thursday" of the month. The North Woodward and Townsend Street art galleries in Birmingham will have extended hours tonight. Call the individual galleries for more information.

■ SAVINO KLEIN GALLERY

Thursday, Sept. 1 — Recent works of Bettina Werner of Italy, who has shown her art extensively throughout Europe, are displayed through Oct. 1. Opening reception 6-8:30 p.m. Thursday. Werner combines salt crystals, resin and industrial pigment on various surfaces. Her provocative manipulation of materials carries the viewer through a minimalist combination of texture and color. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 430 N. 2nd, Woodward, Birmingham, (810) 433-3700.

■ CANNON GALLERY

Thursday, Sept. 1 — A selection of new paintings and works on paper by gallery artists Suzanne McClelland, Will Mestor, Jane Hammond, Stephen Mispig, Todd Waks, Robert Schatzman and Jim Bise, and new work by New York sculptor Lesley Dill, will be exhibited through Oct. 1. Join in an art-fair First Thursday event 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and by appointment; closed Saturday, Sept. 3, and Tuesday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day and Jewish holidays; 630 N. Woodward, Birmingham, (810) 642-6623.

■ GALLERIE PORTIERE

Saturday, Sept. 3 — Works by Beth Le, Carrie Anne Potts and Leah Hardy will be shown, with a solo exhibit of figurative cups and saucers by Wesley Anderson running concurrently, Sept. 3 through Nov. 2. Opening reception for both exhibits and a slide presentation by Potts 4 p.m. Saturday. Le's wall piece incorporates Oriental breakfast and clay on gray abstract board. Potts explores her interest in blended relief and figurative sculpture in her underground earthworks tile wall pieces. Hardy's personal "Tones" abstract the personal narrative through a contrast of Memphis and architectural forms. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10125 E. Jefferson, across from Waterworks Park in Detroit, (313) 823-0864.

■ ARTS AND CRAFTS CENTER

Monday, Sept. 5 — Seventy artists from around Michi-

gan and the country are featured at the juried art fair, part of the 50th annual Franklin Community Association Round-up and Parade. Admission to the art fair is free, and all works are for sale. Art fair hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the green behind the Franklin Library, west of Franklin Road between 13 and 14 Mile in Franklin.

■ OAKLAND COUNTY GALLERY

Wednesday, Sept. 7 — A calligraphy show, "Carpe Annum: A Challenge Met With Pen in Hand," begins Sept. 6. Opening reception 7:30-9 p.m. Wednesday. The show, to continue through Sept. 30, will feature 195 pieces by 26 students who participated in an extended study program with Chicago calligrapher Reggie Esell sponsored by the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association and the Michigan Association of Calligraphers. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, in the Executive Office Building at 1200 N. Telegraph in Pontiac, (810) 858-0415.

■ R. E. WHELAN GALLERY

To Sept. 3 — "Graphics in Color," a print exhibition, continues. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 181 Townsend, Birmingham, (810) 642-2700.

■ UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MUSEUM OF ART

Through Sept. 4 — "The Return to Figurative: 1970s to 1980s," an exhibit of prints and drawings that explores the resurgence of figurative art in the 1970s and 1980s, continues at 625 S. State in Ann Arbor. Call (313) 764-0395.

■ BIRMINGHAM-BLOOMFIELD ART ASSOCIATION

To Sept. 16 — The Palette and Brush Club Fall Show, "Point of View," continues. The exhibit was juried by James Nawara. The club is composed of more than 125 area artists who actively paint and have joined together for the purpose of cultural enrichment and education in the arts. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 1616 S. Cranbrook Road, Birmingham, (810) 644-0866.

■ OBJECTS OF ART

Through Sept. 15 — A show of unusual and contemporary art in a variety of media — including jewelry, pottery, fiber, wall pieces, glass, metal and wood — and featuring several Michigan artists continues at 6243 Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield. Call (810) 639-3332.

■ CIRCLE GALLERY

Through Sept. 30 — The gallery continues its 20th anniversary celebration with "Art of Our Times" as an exhibit featuring several recently released graphics by six internationally renowned artists. Special pre-publication prices are offered on "The Surprise" by Rose Green, "Pumpkin and Flower" by Henriette Wyeth, "Love Makes You Blind" by Jan Baker, "Painted Rain" (a triptych of three lithos) by Carol Jablonsky, "Passion" by singer/songwriter Donna Summer and "A Well-balanced Rock" (featuring the comic strip character Dagwood) by Deon Young.

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