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Dahlia Talk *from tubers to blooms*

Happy Fibonacci Day
&
Happy Thanksgiving



Little Beeswing dahlia, shows us a Fibonacci sequence
and is the oldest American origination still in trade.

Happy Fibonacci Day and Happy Thanksgiving!

Huh, you say? Indulge me for a minute while I geek out on a date that is pertinent to the dahlia and also happens to lands on the upcoming holiday. November 23 is celebrated as Fibonacci Day because when the date is written in the mm/dd format (11/23), the digits in the date form a Fibonacci sequence: 1,1,2,3.

Naomi Slade, author of *Dahlias, Beautiful Varieties for the Home and Garden*, explains in her gorgeous book that the pattern of cell division in a classic Ball dahlia follows the Fibonacci sequence: each number is the sum of the two that precede it, so you get 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, etc. Here are two fun YouTube videos that explain the sequence.

[What is the Fibonacci Sequence and the Golden Ratio?](#)

[Fibonacci Sequence in Nature](#)

Fibonacci (c. 1170 – c. 1240–50) was considered to be the most talented Western mathematician of the Middle Ages. Often called ‘Nature’s Universal Rule’, he invented a sequence of numbers that shows up constantly in nature, physics, and design. The Fibonacci sequence, also known as the golden ratio or divine proportion, is said to be a mathematical connection between two aspects of an object. It can be found across all of nature: plants, animals, weather structures, human anatomy, waves, star systems, dahlias – it is ever-present in the universe. Because the human eye can process it faster, the sequence can cause our brain to feel satisfied or pleased because of the simplicity and orderliness. For dahlia growers it is an indication how we value the regular pattern of Fibonacci in blooms.

Ball dahlias...”are a joy to an ordered mind. The tight twist of petals emerges from the center in an expanding spiral, reflexing ever backwards to disappear towards the stem. Their show-bench heritage is clear and as a group, they are still popular with exhibitors, while florists find their erect stems and strong shape useful in arrangements.” Naomi Slade

Cat Haglund from the Montana Natural History Center explains the benefit of this distinctive pattern in her blog, [Flowers & the Fibonacci Sequence](#). “Well, by packing as many petals, leaves, and seeds into the available space, plants maximize their exposure to the sun. But plants can’t arrange their parts the way we’d pack a box of fruit, starting at one corner and working in rows, left to right. They grow outward from a central point, a tiny cluster of cells at the tip of each growing shoot called the meristem. To complicate matters, the meristem can’t expand in all directions at once. Instead it produces new cells one at a time in a spiral pattern. The new cells grow radially away from the meristem as the meristem grows upward.”



Valley Tawny from Dianne's Dahlias

The Valley Tawny dahlia I grew last summer is a small formal decorative and much like a ball form, the petals are arranged so that each one gets optimal sunlight and nutrients. In addition to being one of the first varieties to bloom for me this season, it was also one of the most productive in my hoop house with well over 50 blooms for the season! The bronzy butterscotch color was a hit with brides and farmer's market customers looking for a harvest bouquet. This variety brought a lot of joy during one of the most difficult garden seasons Colorado Springs has ever experienced. The spring and early summer deluge would dump so much rain that I lost 1/3 of the 380+ dahlia tubers we planted on May 23. The constant wetness and lightening delayed the [building of my two 20' x 100' hoop houses](#) that were started in April and were finally completed just after the 4th of July.

No matter how long we have been growing dahlias, we learn so much each season and H2O seemed to be the theme for my first year as a commercial grower. As my husband, Dave, and I dug up 225+ dahlia crowns and over 160 different varieties, I was happy to see such stellar tuber production despite the colder start to the season. But it was clear with the lenticels on some of my tubers that I was overwatering. I tend to think my flowers need more hydration than they really need! We decided to install wobblers instead of drip irrigation inside my hoop houses and so next year I am hoping a more systematic system will be helpful.

Like most dahlia growers, I have lots of varieties I want to explore and I can't wait to attend the ADS show in 2024! The Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers will host in Wenatchee, WA., September 5th – 9th, with the actual show on the 7th and 8th. You can follow the [Facebook page for the event here](#). You can also view Larry Smith's [terrific video highlighting the 2023 show in Portland a few months ago](#).

Here's hoping you had a dahlia season that brought you some joy and more knowledge.

If you have any questions, you can email me at dianne@diannedahlias.com or Martin Kral at buessi@msn.com.

Enjoy the holidays!

Dianne Reitan



Dahlia Talk Co-Authors Martin Kral and Dianne Reitan
at the 2023 ADS Show in Portland

American Dahlia Society

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