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Dahlia Talk *from tubers to blooms*



Photo Generated with Artificial Intelligence

How AI Will Change the Dahlia World

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has penetrated so much of our lives as we begin 2024. My husband, Dave, has decided to retire after 44+ years in the property and casualty insurance business. One of the reasons he is closing out his long career is due to the insurance underwriting field letting AI make decisions that were made before by humans. Dave says, "I was trained to listen to a client describe their unique business and then I would design a custom program to protect their buildings and assets. Now, it's sometimes hard to find coverage for a client if they don't fit inside one of the underwriter's AI boxes." A recent SHRMM TV commercial emphasized their use of Artificial Intelligence *and* Human Intelligence (AI + HI). More and more companies who share that they use AI are quick to point out the personal touch that humans crave will still be a part of their offerings to customers.

While AI has its limits, many businesses like its strengths and are planning or are already using AI to generate text or images to save time (the two images I used in this newsletter were purchased from my Adobe Stock account and were generated by AI). Conducting research to gain a competitive edge reportedly is done less on Google Search and Duck Duck Go and more on software programs like ChatGPT, Microsoft's Copilot, and Google Bard.

Ah, research. So many of us who grow dahlias rely on the internet for information on varieties, diseases, and trends. More and more we buy our seeds, cuttings and tubers online rather than through catalogs or by placing an order over the phone. When I asked ChatGPT how AI will change the dahlia world, here is the response I got:

- **Breeding and Genetics:** AI can be employed in the field of plant breeding to analyze genetic data and optimize breeding programs. This could lead to the development of new dahlia varieties with enhanced traits such as color, size, and resistance to diseases.

- **Predictive Analytics for Growth Conditions:** AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data related to weather patterns, soil conditions, and other environmental factors. This information can be used to predict optimal growth conditions for dahlias, helping farmers and gardeners optimize cultivation practices.
- **Precision Agriculture:** AI-driven technologies, such as drones and sensors, can be used for precision agriculture. This allows for more efficient monitoring of dahlia crops, ensuring that resources like water and fertilizers are used optimally. AI can also provide insights into pest and disease management.
- **Automated Harvesting:** AI-powered robotic systems could be developed to automate the harvesting process, improving efficiency and reducing labor costs in dahlia cultivation.
- **Customer Engagement and Personalization:** In the retail sector, AI can be utilized to enhance customer engagement. This might involve AI-driven applications for identifying and recommending specific dahlia varieties based on customer preferences, providing a more personalized shopping experience.
- **Disease Detection:** AI can be employed to identify early signs of diseases or pest infestations in dahlia plants through image recognition and analysis. This early detection can aid in timely intervention to prevent the spread of diseases.
- **Supply Chain Optimization:** AI can help optimize the entire supply chain for dahlia flowers, from production to distribution. This includes forecasting demand, managing inventory, and improving logistics to reduce waste and costs.
- **Research and Innovation:** AI can accelerate research in the field of floriculture, enabling scientists and researchers to analyze large datasets and discover new insights into dahlia biology, genetics, and cultivation techniques.



Painting Generated by Artificial Intelligence

I must admit when I created an account in ChatGPT, I was a bit uneasy. I'm somewhat versed in technology having recently graduated with my degree in multimedia graphic design. But there is something otherworldly and eerie about using AI and I would be quite fine with no AI presence in my personal life or in my dahlia endeavors. But, AI is here and to quote the Los Angeles Times, "One thing both skeptics and enthusiasts can agree on: artificial intelligence will have a banner year in 2024."

So, I guess I'll get on the AI bandwagon and use it to try and help me predict dahlia trends and perfect a methodology of my inventory as I grow my dahlia business. Maybe I'll even buy one of those new fancy laptops with an integrated AI button that comes out this month. One thing I know for sure. My customers who buy my dahlias like the act of driving up to my flower farm in the picturesque Rocky Mountains, picking out their bouquet at the on-site farmer's market and chatting with me about our lives. People are craving real connections and this is so evident by

folks who are slowing down their schedules, lingering to talk to locals and making more of an effort to support small businesses in their areas. While AI is pushing me out of my comfort zone, I take solace knowing that the old-fashioned activities of real people buying real flowers is here to stay. Indeed, AI + HI.

Here's to a fabulous 2024 for us all!

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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