

DAHLIAS OF TODAY

NORTH CENTRAL TRIAL GARDEN-2023

2023 was a season of extremes for the North Central Trial Garden. When winter FINALLY let up its grip resulting in the second highest snowfall on record, we plunged into a major drought with a 6" moisture deficit. Our water source is a nearby swamp with depleting water levels and an abundance of healthy algae growth. Our devoted volunteers could easily be singled out by the stench of their swamp water perfume after irrigating the garden! We believe it's the high phosphorous content of the swamp water that also produces our abnormally large-to-gigantic tubers every year.

Our TG Director has been successful in easily signing up and procuring e-passes for our volunteers at the Arboretum, and the word is out that all the fun and best info on growing and caring for dahlias happens right in the Trial Garden!

The garden was planted May 27 with 22 entries and the buffers planted a week later. A thick layer of straw mulch was added to the *entire* garden covering up the heavy, black weed mats around the plants to mitigate heat and improve water retention. We also added new and improved rodent protection buying cases of small waste baskets at the Dollar Store to cover the newly planted entries. The season came full circle as we found ourselves digging the garden in the snow Nov 1st following a week-long hard freeze snap. The remaining garden chores were completed, and the garden officially put to bed on a lovely and snowless fall day November 14th.

Top-scoring dahlias in NCTG:

Irish Moon MB Y Boley 89.5; **River's Can't Elope** ST OR[DP] Kenyon 89.43; **Sandia Ruthie** ST DB Boley 88; **River's Snowcone** ST WH Kenyon 87.43; **Allen's Candyland** BB IC LB Manual 87.6; **Gemini** BB FD LV Gitts 87.21; **Clearview Ginger** M SC DP Parshall 86.43;