

2016

## NORTH CENTRAL TRIAL GARDEN

The North Central Trial Garden was planted May 21, 2016 with 21 entries out of 30 reservations requested. Some tubers submitted were very slow in producing eyes and were planted up to a month later.

This year in an effort to reduce a possible source of virus introduced into the garden the decision was made to eliminate the use of donated plants as buffers. Instead, rows of dahlia seeds were planted with explanatory signage indicating, *“First year seedlings—don’t know what characteristics they will display”*. We also had a section planted with seed collected from three 2015 first-year seedlings. The pictures of these three varieties were posted and challenged visitors to look for similarities to the parent plants. That sign informed, *“Seeds harvested from 1<sup>st</sup>-year seedlings—will look for desired traits from previous generation.”* A few rows of second-year seedlings were also planted explaining, *“2<sup>nd</sup>-year seedlings—genes not stable. Characteristics can still change”*. These sections showed visitors the steps and timelines involved with the trial process and how they contrast from the numbered trial entries grown for 4 years and expected to maintain consistent characteristics.

All the seedlings exhibited healthy foliage, but not so for many of the trial entries. By mid-August virus-like symptoms continued to be seen in many plants. Five of six specimens sent to Dr. Pappu for lab verification came back positive for three of four virus types. With soil amendments, pruning and onset of cool weather the late Sept/Oct garden rebounded to the best it’s been in years. It was also the first Oct. in 58 years without a freeze giving us a 203-day growing season, although the second wettest year on record!

### Top-scoring dahlias in NCTG:

**Allen’s Big Red** A SC RD Manuel 87.3 **Allen’s Smokey Skies** B SC DP Manuel 88.8  
**Clearview Cameron** B C LB Parshall 89.6 **Clearview Mick S** B ID PR Parshall 87.9  
**Hollyhill Code Red** M FD DR Kennedy 89.6 **Sandia Susan** WL YL Boley 88.8