

2018

NORTH CENTRAL TRIAL GARDEN

After several disappointing years struggling with virus/disease transmission, water & soil Ph, irrigation systems and Japanese beetle devastation our garden exploded with vigorous plants and quality show blooms with almost 80% of the entries passing! We have been moving toward minimal till and less disturbance of micro organisms in the soil. For the third year the stakes, weed mats and walking planks remained in place. Our buffers have been rows of dahlia seed rather than member-donated plants in a continuing effort to reduce a possible source of virus contamination. The addition of organic crushed rock has seemingly provided all the necessary minerals needed for optimal plant growth. We observed *pristine* foliage difficult to find any fault. Hollyhill Tangelo thrived so well it grew over 9 feet tall making a stepladder necessary for tying, pruning & judging!

Sadly, we may have to give up this prime garden space. A policy change this year for the U of MN Landscape Arboretum where the North Central TG operates has become a deterrent in securing help for TG maintenance. Where our dahlia society volunteers were previously given free admission when working at the garden, workers are now asked to buy a membership, take a training course and undergo a background check. This has been another barrier to obtaining work teams in addition to mileage & travel time. The garden can't continue on the backs of a few and our "Over-the-Hill Gang" has definitely seen better days! The Society decided to commit to the garden one more year to see if new involvement of members will make the trial garden manageable within this policy.

Top-scoring dahlias in NCTG:

KA's Khaleesi AA ID WH Albrecht 92.7; **Clearview Jennae** M FD PR Parshall 91.9; **Kelsey Betelgeuse** O PR Walker 90.5; **20th Ave Estrella** O DR Gibson 89.5
20th Ave Morning Mist BA PR Gibson 89.0; **Hollyhill Tangelo** BB SC OR Kennedy 88.8; **My Hero** AA ID PR Gitts 87.4; **Allen's Moonstone** A LC YL Manuel 87.1