

The Little Dahlia That Could – An Interesting Virus Story

Once upon a time, there was a pretty little dahlia seedling growing in a garden far, far away. Its name was BGG140. Its color was a very nice bright yellow, although it had some white petals on occasion. Its form was pretty much like an Anemone but it was not near the top of that Form mountain.

Despite its shortcomings, BGG140 was free of virus in 2015 and was carried over into the summer of 2016. (I certainly seem to keep more first year seedlings than I should!) BGG 140 was grown in a new “virus” garden that was isolated from the other gardens. It didn’t matter much if it caught virus from its neighbors because it wasn’t likely to be a big winner anyway.

I wish I could say that the “little dahlia that could” turned into a wonderful seedling in 2016 – but it only seemed to get worse – lumpy domes and more wolf petals. On the other hand, it did manage to get through the summer without getting any of the viruses even though its branches intermingled with plants that were positive for TMV and DMV.

That same experiment was performed in 2017 and 2018. BGG140 avoided catching a virus everywhere it was planted, including in the middle of an isolated patch full of plants with virus. Could it be resistant to virus??

Near the end of the summer, I purposely trimmed laterals on two of the virus-free BGG140 plants with cutting tools that were left uncleaned after cutting an infected plant! About a month after exposure to the tools, both plants were positive for virus!

Disinfect your tools, my friends!

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