



Growing Dahlias



General - Dahlia tubers should be stored in a cool (40 to 50 degrees) dry place until they are ready to be planted. Dahlias are native to Central America and Mexico, so they prefer to be planted outside when soil temperature is above 60 degrees and when there is no longer a chance of frost. Our last frost date is typically mid-May.

Tuber Anatomy - Each tuber needs an eye/s, a neck, and a body to grow. The eye will become the sprout and eventual the stalk of the plant. The body is the food and energy source. The neck connects the eye and body. If one part is missing, the tuber is not viable. The size of the tuber does not matter. Some varieties produce very skinny tubers and some are like potatoes.

Planting - Dahlias require a full 8 hours of sunlight to thrive. Be sure to select a location where they will receive enough sun and will have healthy soil that drains well. To plant dahlias, dig down 4 to 6 inches and lay the tuber horizontally with the eye pointing up. I also label the variety with a plant tag when I plant the tuber. I plant tubers 12 to 18 inches apart. Dahlias DO NOT NEED to be watered until green the first green shoots poke through the ground (overwatering at can lead to rot). Once there are visible green shoots the plant will need regular watering.

Support - Dahlias can grow quite tall depending on the variety and may need to be staked by mid summer so they don't topple over. I recommend placing a sturdy post by the tuber at planting time and securing the stem to the stake with twine as the plant grows.

Pinching - If you can force yourself to pinch or cut off the top 3 to 4 inches of the stem once the plant reaches **one foot tall**, it will encourage the plant to branch at the base and produce MORE overall flowers with longer stems.

Harvesting - The gorgeous dahlia blooms will not open much after they have been snipped, so be sure to harvest them when they are fully open, but not losing petals. It is best to snip the blooms during cool parts of the day in morning or evening and place into water immediately. Do not be afraid to cut long stems, because the this will encourage branching and result in longer stems to follow. Dahlias have a vase life of 6 days or more.