

Easy Dahlia Instructions

Plant tubers after all danger of frost, traditionally, Memorial Day weekend in northeastern Ohio. Do not plant if it is cold and wet. The tubers will rot. It is ok to wait a week or even two.

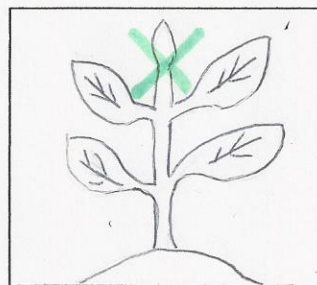
Find a location with at least ½ day of sun...more is better. Dahlias like slightly acid, well-drained soil.

Space tubers at least 2 feet apart.

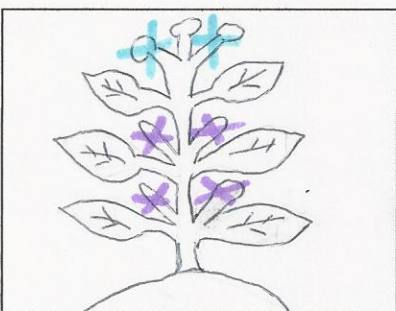
Dig a hole about 6" deep and wider than the tuber. Put half the soil back in and then lay the tuber in the hole with the "eye" up (the plant comes out of the eye) and cover gently with soil. Put a 4-6' stake in at the time of planting, placing it near the neck (where the eye is) of the tuber. Fertilize with a 5-5-5 or 12-12-12 fertilizer. Do not water directly on or over the dahlia tuber. Water sparingly or not at all until the plant comes up (the tuber can rot).

If more than one stem comes up from the tuber, remove all but one.

When the plant has about 2-4 pairs of leaves you need to **pinch out the middle stem**. For size A and AA do this at 2-3 pairs, for B, BB, M, Ba do this at 3-4 pairs. Do not count the lowest layer of leaves. This is called topping and will cause lateral/side stems to grow giving you more flowers and a more compact plant. (Laterals are branches that come out at each leaf pair/node and will eventually produce flowers.) As the plants grow, you can remove 1-2 pairs of lower leaves for neatness but be sure to stay below the laterals.



When the plant is about 1' high start tying it gently to the stake. Tie about every foot as it grows.



When the buds start coming out they will usually come in threes. **Pinch the outer two, leaving the middle bud.**

You can also **"disbranch"** (pinch them off) some of the laterals as the plant grows. Limiting the potential number of flowers will produce larger, more robust flowers. Just go down the stem/stalk beneath a bud removing the laterals at each pair of leaves. Remove laterals for 3-4 leaf pairs/nodes below the bud. If you are growing for fun don't worry about this!

Throughout the growing season, water regularly and deeply but never let the ground be soggy. You can fertilize once a month with the 5-5-5, 12-12-12 or something with a little higher 2nd and 3rd number.

After the hard frost your plants will turn black. Sad day. If you want to save your tubers, cut the stems to about 6". Let sit for a week. Dig and store. See other articles on this site for detailed digging and storing information.