

## Helpful Hints for Dahlia Culture

### A. **Supports** - Installed when you plant tubers

1. Metal or Wood
2. Rebar (6 ' long- 1/2 inch)
3. Vinyl coated adjustable metal supports ([www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com))

### B. **Planting** - May to June on a site that receives 8 hours of sunlight

1. Prepare soil with an organic soil additive
2. Space tubers 18-24 inches apart in a four-inch deep hole
3. Place tuber horizontally in the hole and do not water until sprouts appear
4. After leaf sprouts appear watering should be about twice a week

### C. **Fertilizing**

1. High-phosphorus, water-soluble fertilizer is recommended every two weeks beginning a month after planting

### D. **Weed Control**

1. Remove weeds by pulling or cutting
2. Use a salt hay mulch for control

### E. **Pests and Diseases**

1. Slugs, snails, aphids, white flies, Japanese beetles, stink bugs, spider mites and others
2. Fungus

### F. **Types of Pruning**

1. Topping — Pinching out the center shoot to produce multiple blooms
2. Disbudding — Pinching out the two side buds on a stem of three to produce the bigger blooms
3. Deadheading - Essential removal of all dead or dying blooms

## **G. Cutting**

1. Try to cut in the morning
2. Place blooms in hot water for 30 minutes and then change to cold

## **H. Digging for storage in the fall**

1. After a killing frost remove the supports and cut your dahlias about 4" from the ground.
2. Wait a week or so and then dig then up
3. Let them dry for a few days before storing

## **I. Storage**

1. Store your tubers in a cool dry place over the winter
2. Place them in a box or plastic bag of perlite, vermiculite, peat moss, small animal litter or a combination of these.
3. I store my tubers in a large box that gallon water jugs come in. I line the box with a garbage bag, place the tubers in the box, and then pour in vermiculite, perlite, and peat moss.
4. A temperature of 45-55 degrees is ideal. I don't close the plastic bag but instead allow some air to the mix

## **J. Dividing**

1. Tubers can be divided in spring by separating new tubers from the main stem for planting. I have never divided my dahlias. I noticed that they "divide themselves" either in the box or the drying process and when spring comes the little tubers are loose or become loose when I replant the tuber.

## Guide for Dahlia Information

Sources for purchasing dahlias:

1) **Breck's**: Dahlias and Dahlia Collections with prices to entice beginners

[www.Brecks.com](http://www.Brecks.com); 513-354-1511

2) **Dan's Dahlias**: Specialty tubers and collections

[www.dansdahlias.com](http://www.dansdahlias.com); 360-482-2406

3) **Swan Island Dahlias**: A wonderful source for tubers and collections with many to choose from

[www.dahlias.com](http://www.dahlias.com); 503-266-7711

There are videos on the following at this site:

*Topping your dahlias*

*Caring for your dahlias*

*Digging your dahlias*

*Dividing your dahlias*

*Storing your dahlias*

## Information on Dahlia Cultivation

### 1) The Greater Philadelphia Dahlia Society

[www.philadahlia.org](http://www.philadahlia.org)

Information on Sources, Supports, Planting, Culture, Pruning, Cutting Blooms, Harvesting and Dividing

### 2) The American Dahlia Society

[www.dahlia.org](http://www.dahlia.org)

Informative articles about growing and showing dahlias in a quarterly bulletin

### 3) National Capital Dahlia Society

[www.nationalcapitaldahlia.org](http://www.nationalcapitaldahlia.org)

Our area source of all things dahlia including informative articles and helpful links for successful dahlia cultivation

### 4) Fine Gardening Magazine

[www.finegardening.com/video-how-dig-divide-and-store-dahlia-tubers](http://www.finegardening.com/video-how-dig-divide-and-store-dahlia-tubers)

Video on digging, dividing, and storing tubers