



Organic Newsletter

Spring Edition 2015

Dahlias

One of the darlings of the summer garden is the dahlia. These beautiful flowers come in many different shapes, sizes and colors. Some are great for cutting and others for containers or borders. To grow them successfully, aside from choosing the right spot in your garden, they do require some

maintenance to help achieve those beautiful blooms.

There are many different ways to classify types of dahlias, for instance by the type of flower or its size. (Please see chart to left for types of flowers) In regards to size of flowers they are classified as follows:

- ❖ AA-10" or greater
- ❖ A- 8"-10" across
- ❖ B-6"-8" across
- ❖ BB-4"-6" across
- ❖ M-4" across
- ❖ P-2" across

Next, you want to pick a spot in your garden that receives 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight, planting them in less than that will result in taller plants and less flowers. You should plant your dahlia tubers in May around the same time as you would plant your tomatoes. Dahlias require a soil with a ph of 6.5-7.0 and that is also well-drained. If your soil is heavy, add peat moss, sand or manure.

Dig your planting hole from 4 to 8 inches deep and plant them 18 to 24 inches apart if they are going to be 3 feet or more in height. If they are small bedding dahlias plant them 9 to 12 inches apart. When selecting your tubers avoid any that are wrinkled or rotted. Next, before placing the tuber in the planting hole add a handful of bone meal and work into the soil. Place your tuber with an "eye" facing upwards and also add a stake at this time if the plant is going to be 3' or taller. Adding your



AN - Anemone



BA - Ball



C - Straight Cactus



CO - Collarete



FD - Formal Decorative



IC - Incurved Cactus



ID - Informal Decorative



LC - Lacinated



MB - Miniature Ball



NX - Novelty Double Center



P - Pompon



PE - Peony



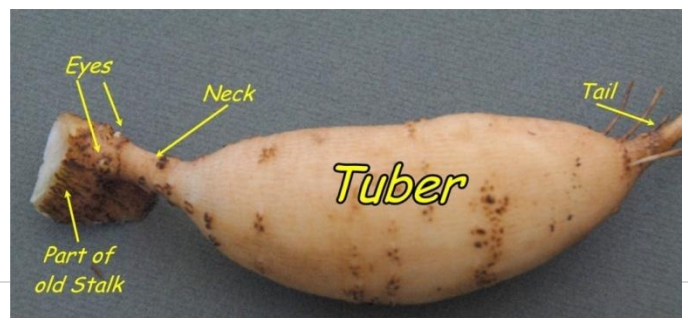
SC - Semi Cactus



ST - Stellar



WL - Waterlily



stake or tomato cage while planting avoids accidentally piercing the tuber later.

After covering the tubers, **do not water!** This goes against most gardeners' instincts, but watering can cause the tubers to rot. Instead wait for some shoots to peek above the soil before watering. During the season water your dahlias 2-3 times a week for 30 minutes, possibly more if the weather is warm and dry.

Also hold off on fertilizing until about 30 days after planting and again 3-4 weeks after that. Dahlias don't like a high nitrogen fertilizer; instead use one that is higher in potassium and/or phosphorus, like a 5-10-10 or 10-20-20. Avoiding the high nitrogen compost and fertilizer helps to guard against weak stems, small or no blooms and rotting/shriveled tubers during their winter storage.

In addition to the fertilizer, you may want to apply slug and snail bait after planting and throughout the growing season as dahlias are a favored foods of theirs. They also can get spider mites- which will cause yellowing or browning leaves-, earwigs and cucumber beetles-which tend to eat the flower petals but don't really harm the plant itself and are hard to control- and mildew which appears as silvery white spots on the leaves.

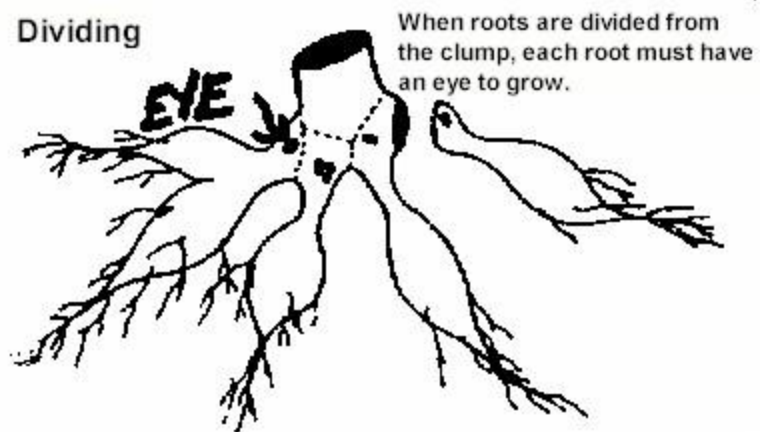
During the growing season you may want to pinch the dahlia to create better stems for cutting as well as more compact and bushier plants. When the dahlias are 18-20 inches tall pinch above the third set of leaves on the center stem. You can also

remove some of the lateral or side flower buds which contribute to a larger flower. Deadheading in general throughout the season is also recommended.

When cutting the flowers be sure to do so on a cool morning and immediately after put stems in 2-3 inches of very hot water and let cool for about an hour. This process helps to set the flower giving you 4-6 days to enjoy its beauty. Also, removing any faded flowers will aid in its longevity.

At the end of the season you must dig and store the tubers for the winter. In the fall, wait for a frost to kill back the foliage then cut back stems to 4-6 inches and leave the tubers in the ground for around 10 days before digging.

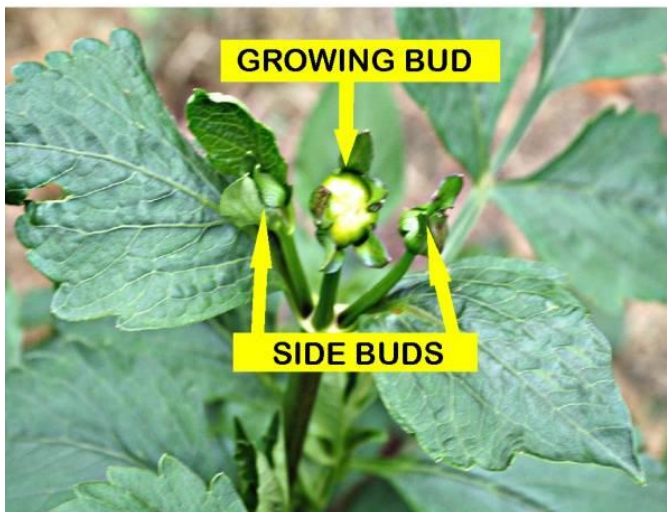
Dividing



When ready to remove the dahlia tubers start by loosening soil about a foot away from the plant to avoid damaging the tuber. Gently, shake excess soil from the clump and hose any excess soil off and allow to dry thoroughly. (Do not leave in the sun.)

Dividing the tubers is recommended and can be done in the fall or the spring, but some prefer the spring because you will be better able to see the "eyes" and if they survived the winter. To have a successful division you need a large tuber that has an "eye"; these are usually seen as white or pinkish spots around the stem. Use a sharp knife to make your cut and place the tuber in a cool area for three days before storing. It's also a good practice to tag or label the individual tubers with the cultivar names.

For winter storage, use cardboard boxes or a crate lined on the sides and bottom with 10-12 sheets of newspapers. Place some slightly moistened peat moss, sand, or vermiculite on newspaper and lay the tubers next to each other



without touching- this helps reduce the chance of fungus spreading- then layer more of the storage medium over the tubers. Continue this layering process until the box is full. Place the box in a cool (50°F) dry place, such as an unheated basement. Make sure to check on the tubers at least once a month, discarding any that have started to rot or show signs of disease.

Even though these colorful annuals require some work and care there is simply no comparison for their beautiful flowers in the summer garden.



Wishing you bright and happy
days, filled with the nicest things
that spring can bring!

~The Organically Green Team

~*~

"One touch of nature makes the
whole world kin."

--William Shakespeare

~*~



Did You Know?

That each strawberry has over
200 seeds!

They are also the only fruit with
their seeds on the outside!



Plants for the Spring!

March:

Brunnera; Siberian
Bugloss
(*Brunnera
macrophylla*)



- ❖ A clump/ mounding perennial that grows 12"-18" in height and 18"-24" in width
- ❖ Leaves are dark green and heart shaped
- ❖ Blooms in April with blue/purple flowers
- ❖ Prefers part shade and moist, well drained soil
- ❖ Slow growing, can form a dense ground cover
- ❖ Can divide in spring
- ❖ Looks great with yellow flower or foliage

April:

Royal Purple
Smokebush
(*Cotinus coggygia*
'Royal Purple')



- ❖ 12'-15' height/width deciduous shrub that can be trained as a small tree
- ❖ Has a rounded to irregular shape; sometimes becoming a bit open and loose
- ❖ Rounded purple leaves
- ❖ Purple/red "smokey" flowers in June
- ❖ Easily transplanted and established
- ❖ Needs full sun but is adaptable to many soils and pHs
- ❖ Very tolerant of hot, dry, gravelly soils and sites

May:

Meyer Lilac
(*Syringa meyeri*)



- ❖ A deciduous, multi-stemmed shrub with a rounded, broad shape
- ❖ Grows to 4' to 8' tall and 6' to 12' wide
- ❖ Blooms heavily in May with pink to pale purple fragrant flowers
- ❖ Prefers full sun to light shade and is easy to grow
- ❖ Does not get mildew or other problems that plague other lilacs

Organically Grown



Grilled Shrimp and Noodle Salad

Ingredients:

- 14 ounces flat rice noodles
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/3 cup fish sauce
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 cloves organic garlic, finely chopped
- 1 to 2 teaspoons Asian chili sauce (such as Sriracha)
- 1 pound medium-large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 medium bunch organic asparagus, trimmed
- 5 ounces organic shiitake mushrooms, trimmed
- 1 medium organic carrot, shredded
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro

Directions:

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the noodles and cook as the label directs; drain and rinse with cold water.

Meanwhile, whisk the lime juice, fish sauce, brown sugar, garlic, chili sauce and 1/3 cup water in a medium bowl. Transfer 1/4 cup of the marinade to another bowl and toss with the shrimp.

Toss another 1/4 cup marinade with the asparagus and mushrooms in a third bowl. Let the shrimp and vegetables marinate 10 minutes at room temperature. Toss the noodles with the remaining marinade.

Heat a grill or grill pan to medium-high. Grill the shrimp, asparagus and mushrooms until the shrimp is just cooked through and the asparagus is slightly tender, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Halve the mushrooms and cut the asparagus into pieces.

Divide the noodles among bowls and top with the shrimp, asparagus, mushrooms, carrot and cilantro.

Total Time: 35 min

Yield: 4 servings

Note: We recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.

Services for 2015:

We offer the following services to help increase the enjoyment and beauty of your property:

Tree / Shrub:

- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
- ❖ Integrated Pest Management
- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
- ❖ Root Growth Enhancement
- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
- ❖ Air Spading
- ❖ Radial Trenching
- ❖ Vertical Mulching
- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance Removal

Turf:

- ❖ Lawn Renovation
- ❖ Fertilization
- ❖ Overseeding
- ❖ Core Aeration
- ❖ Estate / Property Purification

Organic Pest Control:

- ❖ Flying Insect
- ❖ Deer / Geese
- ❖ Rodent Repellent
- ❖ Organic Tick & Flea Control

We also offer Outdoor Holiday Décor.

Call (631) 467-7999 for a free estimate!

