

Dahlias

Planting

Plant in well-drained soil amended with compost. Full sun is preferable, but dahlias will tolerate some shade. Dry tubers can be planted in May or started in pots in March or April.

Dig a hole four to seven inches deep. Lay the dahlia tubers in the hole with buds facing upward. Cover with about two inches of soil. As the plants develop add soil to the hole until level with the surface.

Space large types three feet apart; small types two feet apart.

Culture

For the greatest number of blooms pinch out the tip of each plant when it reaches one foot tall. Mulch the soil in July to control weeds, conserve moisture and keep the soil cool.

Dahlias like lots of water. Keep the soil moist but not saturated. When the soil is slightly dry water thoroughly enough to wet the soil to a depth of three inches.

Fertilize regularly to promote blooms.

Fall Lifting

When the tops are blackened by a hard frost, cut the stems to within two inches of the soil surface. On a sunny day dig up the dahlia clumps taking care not to bruise the tubers. Also be careful not to injure the roots or break them off the crown. Remove as much soil as possible by hand or wash with a hose.

Soak tubers in a solution of one cup household bleach to two gallons of water or in a commercial fungicide. Let the roots dry in the air for a few hours. Store tubers in -a box filled with dry sand, peat moss, sawdust, wood shavings or shredded newspaper. The box should be in a dry, cool, dark, frost-proof location. An unheated garage generally makes a good storage place if the air temperature stays above freezing. If freezing temperatures are a concern a cool basement or root cellar might offer a safer storage area.



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