



Weatherlow Farms Dahlia Growing Guide

Preparing Beds: Dahlias want to be in full sun and in rich, well drained soil. Loosen the soil with a pitchfork prior to planting your tubers.

Planting Tubers: We like to get our tubers in the ground by Mother's Day as a general rule of thumb to ensure that the soil is warm enough. If you happen to have a soil thermometer lying around at home, dahlias prefer that the soil be at least 55 degrees. Dig holes 4-6" deep and put a scoop of compost into each hole to amend the soil. Place your tuber in each hole with the eye facing up. Each hole should be 18-24" apart to ensure the plants have enough space to fill out. Once your tubers are planted, it is important that you do not water your tubers until you start to see sprouts - spring rain will be sufficient to keep them hydrated!

Stakes: Our favorite method of staking is to use 1 inch square, 5 foot tall stakes, but any sturdy stake will do. We find it best, so we don't lose track of time, to place your stakes around your plants at the time of planting. (This is also a great way to label your plants, as you can put a tag on the stake associated with that plant.)

Water: Although you don't need to worry about watering until you see sprouts, when you plant your tubers is a good time to start thinking about how you will water your dahlias. They will need 1 inch of water per week once they start sprouting (and even more once summer becomes hot and dry). We recommend drip irrigation or soaker hoses.

Pinching/Trimming: Once dahlias have sprouted and have reached a height of at least 12 inches, cut back the plant to four sets of leaves. This always seems a bit cruel, but will mean that you will have a much fuller plant that will bloom much more heavily and will be easier to stake and control!

Harvest: Once your dahlias start to bloom, it is important to cut the flowers early in the day, while the weather is still cool. Cut blooms that are fully open, but whose back petals are not yet papery. In order to keep your dahlia plant covered with blooms, it is important to cut the blooms with generous stems, as cutting deep into the plant will promote more growth and flowering.

Fertilizer: Once plants are blooming heavily, we like to use a liquid fish fertilizer, diluted in a watering can every other week to keep them looking their best. (If you are fertilizing, it is important to stop fertilizing by the middle of September so that tubers can cure properly before the last frost, which for us is October 15th).



After Frost: After the first frost, cut back plants, leaving 6” of stem (this is a great time to attach some marking tape to the stem to remind yourself what variety this is). Then, let the tubers stay in the ground for another two weeks to cure.

Digging Tubers: To dig up the tubers, put a pitchfork in the soil in a 8” radius around the tuber (to avoid puncturing the tubers) and gently loosen the soil and lift the pitchfork to gently pull the tuber clumps out of the soil. Remove any extra clumps of soil from the tubers at this point, but leave a generous soil coating on each clump. We have found that this helps them hold well in storage.

Storing: We store our tubers in a cool (no warmer than 45 degrees), humid environment for the winter (most basements are too warm, but garages tend to be an ideal climate). We like to store our tubers in burlap bags, but a cardboard box filled with wood shavings will also work well. Check in on them periodically to make sure they are not rotting or withering.



Cafe Au Lait

Cafe Au Lait is one of the most sought-after dahlia varieties because of its beautiful peachy, creamy color and delicate petals - often referred to as a dinnerplate dahlia for its 8” larger than life blooms. Plants grow to 4+ feet.



Black Satin

Black Satin is sure to add mystery and depth to your garden with their rich chocolate-y red velvet color. 4” blooms with great long stems for cutting are well supported on a 5 foot bush.



Fleurel

Fleurel is another wonderful dinnerplate dahlia. Fleurel have impressive 8” white blooms with thick petals and a creamy center. The well proportioned 4 foot bushy plants are up to the challenge of holding up these large blooms.