



# Dahlia Care



**PLANTING** - Plant dahlias after all **DANGER** of frost has past and the soil has begun to warm. Make sure soil is not water logged. Tubers will rot in cold wet soil! A good rule of thumb is to plant at the same time you would plant peppers or tomatoes in the garden.

**LOCATION** - Dahlias need a spot with free draining soil and at least 6 hours of sunlight. A spot with late afternoon shade can be helpful in areas with extreme summer heat.

**TUBER DEPTH** - Lay tubers on their side (flat) with the growth eye facing up if visible. The planting holes depth should be 4-6 inch's. Planting time is a great time to add a stake for plants that grow over 3 feet tall. Sticking the stake into the hole before adding the tuber will help prevent damage to the tuber. Dahlias do best when planted at least two foot apart.

**PLANT FOOD** - Before adding the tuber to the planting hole, it would be a good time to add some slow release fertilizer and mix it in the bottom of the hole. There are lots of options and opinions, I use 10-10-10 and the plants love it. Later in the year we use a water soluble fertilizer and once the buds start to show we only feed with low nitrogen fertilizers 0-10-10. This helps with the blooms as well as tuber production.

**WATER** - **NO** water is generally needed at planting time, unless the soil is very dry. (If dahlia tubers are in wet soil before the little feeder roots start to grow chances are they will **ROT** and never come up or worse come up a few inches then die!) It's best to begin watering once the plants are a couple inches tall. Once growing—dahlias love water , somewhere around an inch a week depending on local weather conditions. The best way to supply dahlias with the water they need is a drip irrigation system, but at the very least a deep watering 2-3 times a week.

**PEST** - Slugs and snails are the young dahlias worst enemy. If you live in an area that has these guys you will need to protect your young plant especially when they are first coming up. Young dahlia sprouts are like candy and these pests will know the sprouts are coming even before you. It's best to use whatever protection you choose starting at planting time! There is nothing worse then waiting for your prized dahlia to appear only to find a trail of snail slime.

**WEEDS** - Keep the area around your dahlias free of weeds, this will do two things. One—it'll help your young plants get off to a healthy start. Two— it'll prevent the pest from having a place to hide. Do Not use Herbicides near your Dahlias, they do not tolerate herbicides at all.

As with all garden plants, there are endless options and opinions on how to care for your plants. These general steps will help with getting your dahlias off to a great growing season.

For more detailed growing instructions follow us on Facebook under River's Dahlias this season. we will be sharing our growing techniques as well as another season of **KEEP** or **CULL** in the seedling Patch.