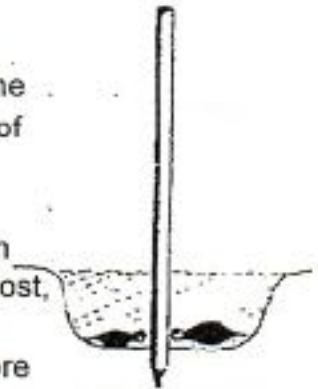


Growing Great Dahlias
Snohomish County Dahlia Society
www.scdahlias.org

Anyone can grow dahlias, but by following the techniques outlined below you can grow great dahlias.

Location: The ideal location for dahlias is one in full sun; however the plants will tolerate some shade. They prefer 6 to 8 hours of sun when possible.

Soil Preparation: The soil must be well drained and should contain as much organic material as possible. Amendments such as compost, well-rotted manures, leaf mold, and peat moss help add nutrients and tilth to the soil. Thoroughly turn the soil before planting.



Planting with stake

Planting: Dahlias should be planted when the soil warms up, usually late April to mid-May in the Pacific Northwest. Dahlias vary in height so it is best to arrange your garden with taller varieties toward the back of your beds. As a general rule allow 2 to 3 feet between plants. When planting the tubers, place a stake in the ground and dig a hole about 6" deep on each side of the stake. Place the tuber flat with the eye upward near the stake and cover loosely with soil. (See illustration)



Pinching the top

Fertilizing: A tablespoon of a good time release fertilizer such as Osmocote can be placed in the hole with the tuber at planting time. You can use a general, all-purpose fertilizer in July to enhance bloom and tuber growth. Avoid late application of time release fertilizer.

Topping: To have a compact, bushy plant with more flowers, pinch out the center growing tip when the plant is about one foot high. (See illustration)

Disbudding: For bigger blooms and better stems, pinch off the side buds at the end of each growing branch. (See illustration)



Disbudding

Pest Control: Slugs love dahlias in the spring so surround young plants with slug bait. Aphids and earwigs will attack almost any time. Insecticide soap works well on aphids.

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Watering: A thorough, deep watering is better than frequent light watering. During summer heat water every four to five days.

Cutting: Cut early in the morning or late at night. To properly condition the blooms, place them in water away from drafts for 8 to 12 hours. Display your flowers in a cool part of your home. You can add a couple of drops of bleach or liquid dishwashing soap to the water to prevent bacterial growth.

**Digging,
Dividing, and
Storing:**

Around November 1st, cut dahlias down and lift the roots carefully with a spade by digging around the entire plant about one foot from the stalk. Use care to prevent "broken necks" when lifting clumps out of the ground. Wash clumps, trim stalks a few inches above root level, and divide. Remove tubers from clump using a knife or sharp pair of clippers. Make sure each tuber has an eye or it will not grow the next year. (See illustration) Most growers store tubers in a medium such as vermiculite, potting soil or sawdust in order to prevent shriveling. Put tubers in a plastic bag with medium and place bags in a storage container. Place containers in a storage area that is cool but always above freezing. Check tubers twice during the winter and discard any that show rot.



*Dividing a
dahlia clump*

Dahlia roots left in the ground will survive cold winter days if kept from freezing. This usually is accomplished by heaping straw or mulch over the roots. However, the risk remains that a cool, wet spring will encourage roots to rot. Good drainage is essential for roots to be kept successfully in this manner.

Questions: The Snohomish County Dahlia Society meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:00pm at Legion Hall in Legion Park in Everett. Everyone is welcome to attend. Detailed articles with pictures on a variety of topics are included on our website (www.scdahlias.org) or you may contact a Snohomish County Dahlia Society member in your area.

Marysville: Hills Collins 360.659.8687
Stanwood/Camano Is.: Dick Ambrose 360.387.2374
Bothell/Snohomish: Dick Parshall 425.486.6163

Bloom Size

AA (giant).....	over 10"
A (large).....	8" to 10"
B (medium).....	6" to 8"
BB (small).....	4" to 6"
MIN (miniature).....	up to 4"
BA (ball).....	over 3.5"
MB (miniature ball).....	over 2" to 3.5"
P (pompon).....	up to 2"
MS (mignon single).....	up to 2"
S (single).....	over 2"

Colors

BI Bicolor	LB Light Blend
BK Black	OR Orange
BR Bronze	PK Pink
DB Dark Blend	PR Purple
DP Dark Pink	R Red
DR Dark Red	V Variegated
FL Flame (Y/R/OR)	W White
L Lavender	Y Yellow

Forms

AN Anemone-flowering	NO Novelty Open (Disc) Center
BA Ball	NX Novelty Double Center
C Straight Cactus	O Orchid-flowering
CO Collarette	OT Orchette
FD Formal Decorative	P Pompon
IC Incurved Cactus	PE Peony-flowering
ID Informal Decorative	S Single
LC Lacinated	SC Semi-Cactus
MB Miniature Ball	ST Stellar
MS Mignon Single	WL Waterlily