

## How to Grow Dahlias from Tubers

### Storage Until Planting

Tubers must be stored in a cool dry place, in a medium that will keep them moist but not wet. They CANNOT freeze, or they will die! We recommend plastic bags full of lightly moistened peat moss or wood shavings (available as animal bedding), and storing in a cool place like a closet, basement, or insulated garage. The ideal temperature for storage is 40°- 50°F.

### Planting

Plant up to two weeks before your last frost date. In Boulder County and most of the Front Range, the last frost is usually around Mother's Day or mid-May. We plant in the first week of May. To be on the safe side, wait until after the last frost to plant.

1. Choose a sunny spot, with at least 6 hours of sun, for your dahlia plant.
2. Dig a hole no deeper than 6 inches, and as long as the tuber.
3. Add compost or natural fertilizer if available, and moisten the soil if dry.
4. Find the tuber's eye: the growing point that looks like a sprout or a swollen bump.
5. Lay the tuber lengthwise into the hole, facing the eye or eyes up.
6. Cover with soil.
7. DO NOT WATER until you see the green sprout emerging from the soil.

### Watering

Once the tuber has sprouted, water your dahlia regularly. 2-3 times per week is sufficient if you water deeply; once the hottest days of summer hit, you may need to water daily.

### Pinching

Pinching or topping your dahlia will lead to strong side shoots and more blooms. When the dahlia is about 12" tall, take a pair of sharp scissors or gardening shears and cut off the growing point. Leave at least 3 pairs of leaves on the plant.

### Staking

Dahlias may need support from a tomato cage, stake, or twine. On the farm, we use corrals made of T-posts and baling twine to keep long rows of dahlias supported. Dahlias that are left without support may break or fall over in strong winds or rain.

### Harvesting

When cutting a dahlia flower, always use sharp, clean scissors or garden shears. Cut the stem at 45° angle. Cut deeply into the plant - the more you cut, the more it will produce, and the longer your stems will be!

### Post-Harvest

Display your cut dahlias in clean water, and change the water often. Adding a drop of bleach plus a pinch of sugar to the water will significantly increase the vase life of your flower.