



Dahlia Deep Dive

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for the Buck Mountain Garden Club

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Dahlia basics

Sizes, forms, colors

Cactus



Ball



Anemone



Dahlia basics

Sizes, forms, colors

Stellar



Pompon



Waterlily



Grow

From tubers

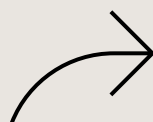


From seeds



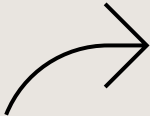
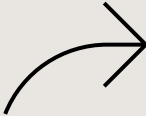
What is the difference?

A tuber produces the same variety - a clone of the 'mother plant'



What is the difference?

Dahlias grown from seed will not be identical to the 'mother plant' and will result in a mix of shapes, colors, and sizes rather than a specific variety



More on seed dahlias



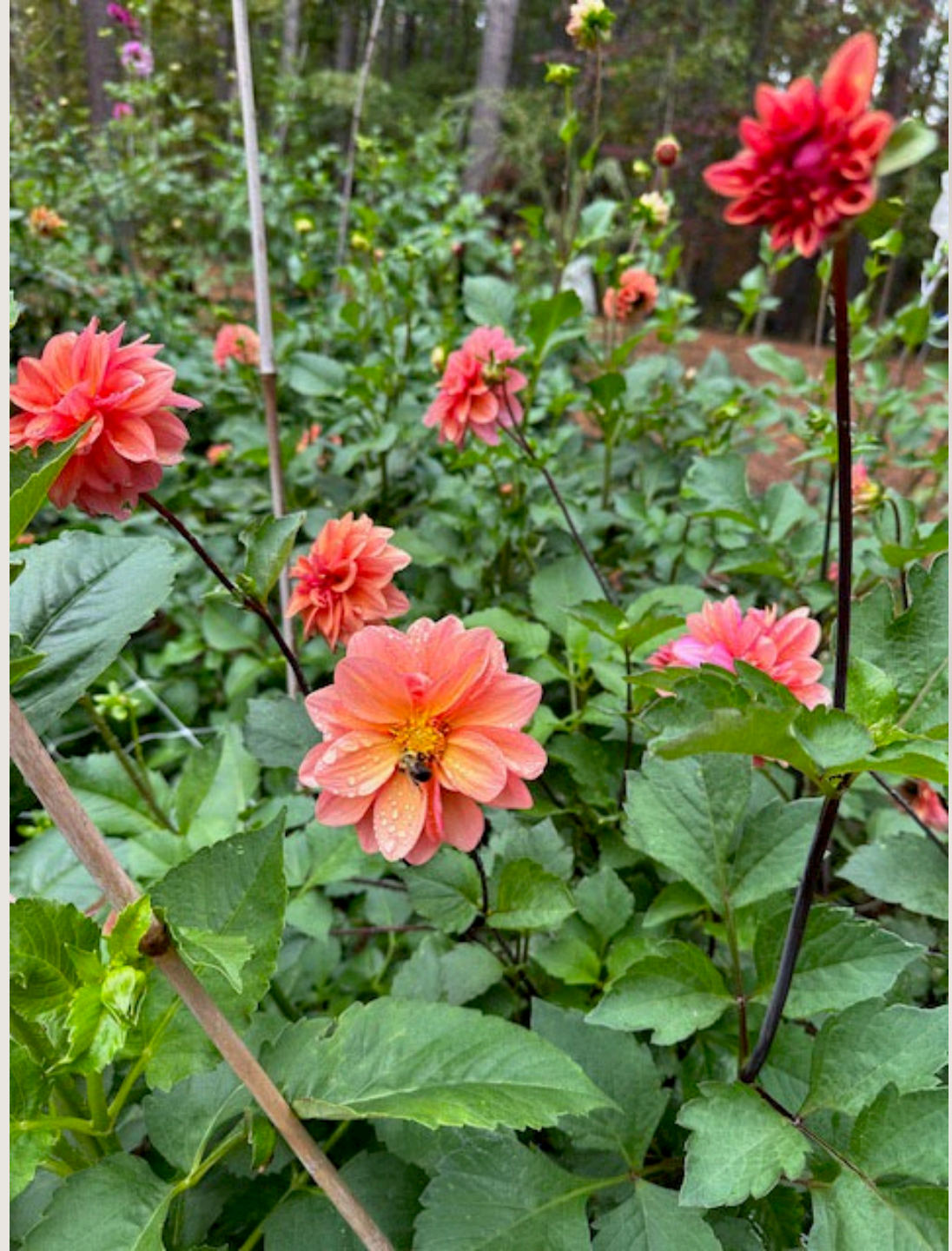
Growing conditions

Sun & soil

- Dahlias are cold sensitive - plant only after all danger of frost has passed
- At least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day
- Amend soil with organic matter (compost, natural fertilizer)
- Plant in area where soil drains well; tubers can rot if left in standing water

Spacing

- In the landscape, allow for 3 feet on each side for the dahlia to spread out
- If growing in rows, allow at least 12" between plants



Plant



How to plant (tubers)

- Plant 4-6 inches deep
- Lay tuber horizontally with growing eye (if visible) facing up
- Cover with soil
- Label!

Watering

- Start watering after first green shoots appear above soil (usually a month after planting)
- Overwatering before dahlia sprouts can lead to tuber rot
- Add mulch around young plants after they emerge from the soil
- Once plants are actively growing, water deeply once or week or more frequently in the heat of summer

Nurture

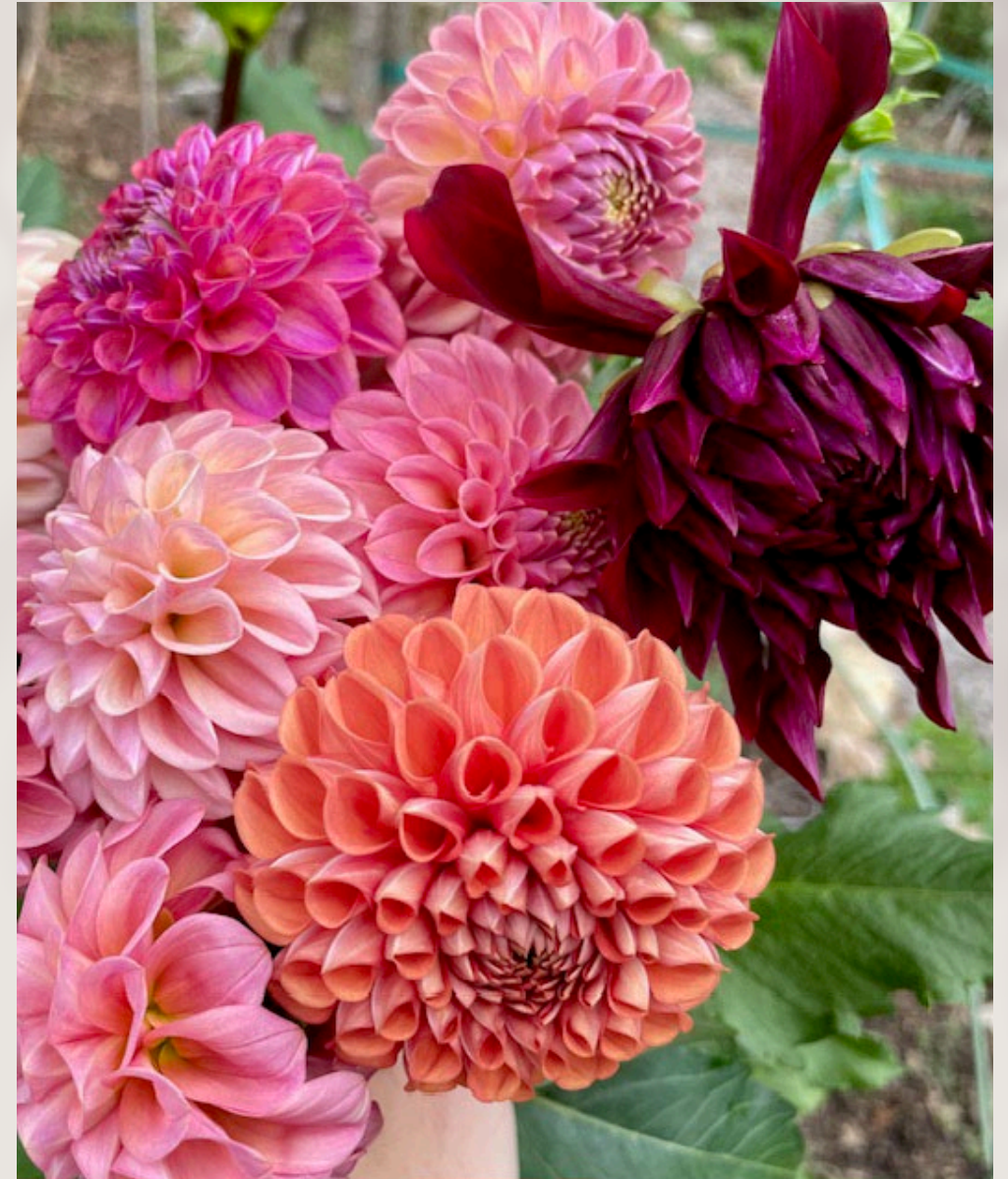
Pinch, stake, & protect

- Once plant is between 8-12", use pruners to snip the top 3-4" off the plant, just above a set of leaves to encourage growth
- Dahlia plants can grow to be very tall and heavy. Install stakes next to the tuber, use twine or sisal to tie and/or corral stems
- Protect emerging blooms from pests by placing organza bags on new blooms



Nurture (con't)

- Pick regularly - cut when just about fully open
- Harvest during coolest hours of the day; cut long stems
- Remove stems/leaves around base to promote airflow
- Allow seedpods to fully dry before saving



Dig, divide, & store

- Depending on conditions, dahlias *may* overwinter in our zone
- If lifting tubers, cut plants down to the ground and wait at least 10-14 days after first frost before digging to allow them to harden
- Use a pitchfork to gently loosen soil and remove tuber clump
- Divide tubers, wash, label, and store in a space ideally between 40-50°F with proper humidity
- Storage techniques include bins with 2-3 holes drilled in the side filled with wood shavings or vermiculite



Timing for Central VA – Zone 7



In early spring, start dahlia seeds indoors. Check any stored tubers for moisture or drying out. Pot up tubers in a warm spot if taking cuttings.

Pinch dahlia plants. Water regularly. Remove dead leaves at the base of plant.

As nights become cooler, dahlia blooms will increase, and colors may change slightly.

Mar/Apr

May

June/July

Aug

Sept/Oct

Nov

Plant out dahlia tubers and seedlings after chance of frost has passed. Stake dahlias. Water only after green shoots appear.

Cut blooms regularly to encourage more! Use mesh bags to protect buds from pests if cutting for design work.

Following first frost, lift tubers (or prepare for overwintering), divide, and store.

A few of my favorite varieties

Rock Run Ashley



Cornel Bronze



Café au Lait



Diva



In the garden



Design





Creative

Flat lay



Resources & Inspiration

To purchase dahlia tubers

- Five Fork Farms - Upton, MA
 - <https://www.fiveforkfarms.com/>
- Petal Pickers - Greenville, SC
 - <https://petalpickers.com/>
- Coseytown Flowers - Greencastle, PA
 - <https://coseytownflowers.com/>
- The Farm at Oxford - Oxford, PA
 - <https://www.thefarmatoxford.com/>
- 3 Porch Farm - Comer, GA
 - <https://3porchfarm.com/>

To learn more about dahlias

- Discovering Dahlias by Erin Benzakein from Floret
 - <https://www.floretflowers.com/>
 - Includes an extensive digital cut flower library with a section on dahlias
- Dahlias Seed to Bloom by Kristine Albrecht, Santa Cruz Dahlias
 - <https://www.santacruzdahlias.com/>
- The Complete Gardener by Monty Don

Thank you

