

Digging & Storing Dahlias

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Dahlia 101

- Tuberous root
- Hardy to zone 7
- Native to Mexico and Central America
- 10 different groups
- Can plant from seed but not true to parent

The Great Dig

- Dig after foliage turns black from frost
 - This is flexible timing, some people dig before frost but tubers are often more tender.
 - Can let stay in ground a while after foliage dies.
- Cut back foliage to about 1'
 - I like to cut them one day and then dig the next day
 - Inspect foliage before cutting for signs of virus or verticillium wilt
- A pitchfork or broadfork works best
 - A shovel should also be handy for large clumps
- Label tubers



To divide or not to divide

Pros of dividing	Cons of dividing
Tubers take up less space	End of the season tired
Have a better idea of number of stock	Open up wounds before storing
Can check on tubers easier	Have to wash
Can separate tubers for less potential rot?	Store better?

Storage prep

- Wash, or don't...
 - Knock off large clumps if you decide not to wash.
- Divide, or don't...
 - If you decide to divide, leave tubers out in an area with good air circulation to callose for a couple days after dividing.
 - You can dip tubers in a 10% bleach solution after callusing to remove any potential disease from tuber surface.
 - If you wait until spring to divide, let tubers wake up a little to find eye easier.



Storage

- Everyone will store them differently depending on their location
- Ideal storage temps are 35°F - 45°F
 - Never let drop below freezing
 - Higher temps will pull tubers out of dormancy and promote rot
- Media and containers for storage depends on the humidity of the room.
- You can wrap tubers individually to make sure one doesn't rot the other.



Storage

	Low humidity	High humidity
Media type	Saran wrap, damp vermiculite, peat, sphagnum moss	Cedar shavings, vermiculite, newspaper
Container Type	Plastic tote, garbage bags, ziplock bags, Styrofoam	Plastic tote, cardboard box, paper bags,



Disease & Storage Problems

- Look for disease when digging or receiving tubers
 - Crown gall, leafy gall
- Check tubers once a month minimum for signs of rot
 - Gray mold – botrytis
 - Rotting tubers – make sure to check bottom of tote
- Shriveled tubers?
 - Need more humidity
- Sprouts starting?
 - Too warm

Wake Up!

- If you didn't divide at digging, you can divide in late winter or shortly before planting to sell or pre-sprout.
 - Pre-sprout mid-March, early April depending on if you are taking cuttings
- Start to warm tubers at least 2 weeks before planting for best survival rates.



Questions?

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