



News from ADS!

Potted (Container) Dahlias



Lucas Greenhouses, New Jersey

When you imagine dahlias, "dinner plates" come to mind. For generations hybridizers sought to develop bigger and deeper blooms. Small dahlias such as poms and open-centers were frequently relegated to the back of the show and sometimes were not included in the schedule. At one show I entered a small peony and it was put back as "NAS" not according to schedule. These small, open centered flowers were often found as potted flowers at florists during the weeks before Mother's Day. Some were collarettes, and many of were "semi-doubles" - a few rows of petals (florets) around an open center.



Gardenetta Passion Fruit,
Photo Ball Horticulture



Gallery Vermeer,
Photo Verwer Dahlias

In recent years a new wind has begun to blow from the West and exhibition interest grew in small and even tiny flowers in a variety of forms. At the same time, the commercial hybridizers, who breed and produce dahlia plants by the tens of thousands for florists, big-box stores and supermarket displays, began to chase the holy grail-a three inch fully- double bloom on an 18 inch plant. Now they are here; are they more than a novelty?

- As the value of real estate has increased bigger and bigger houses are being built on smaller lots with less space for gardens.

- More and more would-be gardeners are living in, townhouses, apartments and condominiums where gardening is limited to a patio.

Imagine now, who now will gravitate toward a brightly colored dahlia plant that will provide color from June to frost, and will never outgrow an eight inch container. I am one of those. We live in a condominium and I have four dahlia plants planted in a container on the patio.

Even in a home garden there are plenty of sunny places that would look better with a small brightly colored dahlia plant.

Culture. These potted dahlias are easy to grow. Put them in the ground at soil level, or move them into a larger pot or container. Water regularly and do not fertilize them. They are bred to hold their height. Occasionally snip off a branch that is no longer developing buds. This will allow airflow. After frost, which last year was in December on my patio in Northern Virginia, you might want to try to store the clump of tubers. But to be honest, it is best to think of these plants as annuals.



Karma Pink Corona®,
Photo Vertengenwoordiger Dahlias

Look around when you go shopping. If you see a potted dahlia that says, "buy me," do not hesitate.

Harry Risetto



"Hypnotica Bronze", Photo Dümmer Orange

American Dahlia Society | www.dahlia.org

