



News from ADS!

Is It Time to Plant? Yes and No

April 7, 2018

The weather here in Washington, DC has been a like a roller coaster. After a week of moderate temperatures, this morning there were snow flurries in the air. I looked at the North American weather map, and the low temperatures dipped into Texas. We are all experiencing the fickle finger of Mother Nature.

I have bought some dahlia tubers from our specialty suppliers and several Dutch imports from a garden center. When the thermometer nudges 80 °F, I am tempted to plant some tubers to get an early start. Experience, however, is blinking red. The cold, damp ground is not a good environment for a tuber. It may rot!

A better plan, used by many growers, is to plant the tubers in pots or containers out of the elements. This lets the tubers settle in, developing roots that will give them a head start when they are planted in the garden later in the month. Do not use a dense soil in the pots, and water sparingly. The shoot will draw sustenance from the tuber while it develops roots.

I was disappointed with the imported dahlia packages. The pot roots had been abused in transit, and most of the necks were broken. I put them in containers and each of the clumps is putting up a shoot. Good news.

I have included below a photo of my containers, and a YouTube video about starting dahlias. If you haven't thought about your dahlias yet - it is tax time - do not fret. The season is still around the corner. You can safely plant into early June.



Tubers develop leaves when the temperature is 70 degrees F. You may need to use a heat pad with a thermostat, or wait for the room temperature to warm.

[YouTube video on starting dahlias](#)

Please note: Depending on your location, even the end of April may be too early to plant in your garden. My friends in the Midwest often don't plant until late May. Wherever you are, wait until the soil has warmed up a bit and is not too wet.

Also we'd like to draw your attention to the new ADS website url: <https://dahlia.org> You will find your favorite information from the previous site, but reformatted and reorganized for your ease of use. Check it out.

From the dahlia patch,
Harry Risetto

American Dahlia Society | <https://dahlia.org>

