



News from ADS!

THINK SPRING!



Coming to a dahlia garden near you?

Here in Northern Virginia we have had a mild winter, so far. The snowdrops and miniature daffodils are blooming. When you can go outside with a light jacket, you begin to think about dahlias. But don't rush ahead. Dahlias have their own schedules. My tubers are currently hibernating in a closet where it is an almost constant 50 ° F with the same humidity. If I emptied several of the bags, I doubt that I would see a single active eye. To start the tubers, I would have to put them in soil-filled flats on a heating pad set to hold a temperature at 70 ° F. An occasional misting would help. During mid-April the tubers with eyes will begin to sprout naturally.

If your garden soil is not frozen solid, this is a good time to take a soil test. Rather than using a store-bought kit or meter, contact your local Extension Service or garden center to get a sophisticated analysis. Their form will tell you which fertilizers are needed and in what quantity. Over-fertilizing will do no good and can harm your plants and the environment



Mystic Illusion
Good for containers

If you find some "must-have" dahlias in a garden center or Costco, they will probably be small clumps or pot-roots. Plant them with potting soil, in six inch pots with the stem at soil level. Sprinkle sparingly if the soil is dry, and just leave them to develop shoots. I planted a small clump about a month ago; I now have a two-inch shoot with one pair of leaves. As the shoot begins to develop treat it like a house plant with some light and occasional water. If the plant gets leggy,

snip off the growing tip and try to increase the light.

Once the danger of frost passes, you can move the pots outside to prepare the dahlias for planting. Frost dates are variable. Rules of thumb, regarding last frost dates, are listed on [The Spuce](#) .

The local dahlia societies are also coming alive. They are listed by state, with contact information, on the [ADS site](#). Local societies

are good sources of advice, tubers, and friendship. The ADS site is starting to list local tuber sales. Look for one in your area.

Check out this [video](#) on starting dahlias for inspiration. Contemplate dahlias in containers, like the one above, for this season. Container dahlias are now appearing in gardening catalogs, and will soon be available at garden centers. Containers make great and **movable** pops of color in your landscaping.

Think about your garden from your easy chair for now. Spring is on the way!

Rockin' and dreamin',
Harry Risetto

American Dahlia Society | www.dahlia.org

