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Planting time is near April 2021



Maybe not for the show table – but great fun in the garden
Harvey Koop – photo by Tom Sopczak

Last month we discussed late frosts. In large parts of North America the ground will be warm enough (55-60f) by late April to plant dahlias.

If you are using tubers, lay them flat two or three inches below soil level with the eye pointing up. If the shoots have developed leaves, do not bury the foliage.

If you are using plants or tubers with two or three pairs of leaves, let them adjust to the outside for a week. This is called “hardening off” and applies to all plants moving from inside to out of doors. I like to put in stakes when I plant and attach the tag. This morning there were three relatively large deer in our backyard. They reminded me that I should also make a map of what I plant.



Karma Choc
Photo ADS Library

You can make the process more complicated...see the links at the bottom of this message. Most of our readers, however, do not raise large numbers of dahlias. The basic technique is to grow dahlias as you would tomatoes. Fundamentally they need soil, sun, and water to thrive. The tuber is like the starter in your auto. It provides nourishment to the tuber/plant until it puts down some roots, then Mother Nature takes over with a little help from the gardener.



U2 Fire

Retired professor Allan Armitage is a renowned horticulturist and a columnist for *Greenhouse Gardener*. He recently wrote an article about the increased interest in gardening during COVID. He observes that everyone is getting older. They are focused on plants and vegetables for containers, as well as the containers themselves. There is a low maintenance trend toward compact plants that do not need staking. The dahlia hybridizers are responding, and the garden centers are just receiving dozens of compact and attractive dahlias in virtually every form.

Try one of the new micros, such as U2 Fire pictured above left. The bloom is about 2" across with a slim, 24" high plant. Looks great in a large flower pot.

Design tip: Make an artistic statement anywhere. Group together an odd number of pots, with plants of different heights, one variety (can be multiple plants) per pot.

Have fun and a great dahlia season,
Harry Rissetto

Some fun and instructional videos:

Finally Planting Dahlias

Taking Dahlia Cuttings

Planting dinnerplate dahlias - The Impatient Gardener

How to support dahlias (using netting)

How to support dahlias (using stakes)