



[Visit Our Website](#)

[View Our News](#)

Dahlia Talk *from tubers to blooms*

February is for Patience



Dahlia Electro Pink, compliments of PlantHaven and Keith Hammett

In Northern Virginia we tend to get some warmer days in February that turn our thoughts to tubers. Today it was in the 60s and I could not resist opening a bag of divided tubers. The tubers were firm, the stems a bit dry, but no eyes (shoots). I

sprayed a little water on the tubers and vermiculite, but I did not close the bag. Over the next several weeks I will open about 40 other bags, check the tubers, look for eyes, and add a spray of water. I am not certain that the moisture is actually helpful because the eyes will receive all their nourishment from the tuber.

Even after the sprout forms, the tuber typically will not develop rootlets for weeks. I have found no serious science about what wakes up the tuber. (There are plant hormones such as auxin that stimulate growth. I have not yet found the trigger. Occasionally I have had tuber rot in a bag, and the remaining tubers sprouted eyes. Another idea comes from those who force dahlias to grow out of season by a combination of temperature and light. In my imagination I think it is the change of seasons.)

Eventually you will begin to see eyes, and the eyes will develop shoots and then leaves. Move the tuber from its container to a 4–8 inch pot. Now it is time to treat the dahlia as a plant: Water it modestly and put it under lights or on a sunny windowsill, or outdoors. If there is a threat of frost, move any pots outside to the inside for the night.



Iris Wallace, with her ADS Largest Dahlia in the World Contest winner, 14 5/8" bloom, Maki.

Photo by Deborah Dietz.

[More info](#) about the contest.

If you buy boxed pot root tubers, trim off the broken parts, and pot it up. This gives the small clump a chance to develop eyes and shoots. Dahlia societies usually sell tubers

with eyes. It is prudent to pot those up as well. If you care to know what you are growing, wooden or plastic labels are inexpensive, and an indelible marker should last the season. Some tubers from a clump may not make eyes. Remember some tubers will not wake up for months. I have seen too many shoots growing in the garbage can during May. However, if the tuber has no collar/crown or bit of stalk, they will make good compost - they will not make sprouts. If you aren't sure about the terminology sprout and crown, investigate this Dahlia University [document](#).

I attended a zoom call sponsored by our local society about soil. There were a lot of opinions, as you might expect. Most of the folks are into no-till gardening to preserve the web of life in the soil. A covering of compost is a useful addition, and a soil test is informative about every two years. Beyond that, it is each to his or her own.

February is a good month to catch up on your reading. I recommend a small publication called "*Garden Prints*" that has been around for decades. It is a small journal filled with short essays about gardening. Some are informative, others humorous, and few both. See www.greenprints.com for details.

Enjoy February,

Harry Rissetto

More Information

[Dahlia Tubers - Finding the eyes](#)

[Sprouting Dahlia Tubers Before Planting - Planting Dahlia Tubers in Trays](#)

American Dahlia Society

Contact Us



Archive of previous emails [here](#).



American Dahlia Society | 38430 Piggott Bottom Road | Hamilton, VA 20158 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!