



Dahlias for Allie

My good friend Allie is getting married July 18 in the Rocky Mountains and I simply must have dahlias in time for her wedding. I'm not only doing her wedding flowers but she has asked me to officiate their ceremony in front a several hundred people. No issue there, as I was a Division Governor for Toastmaster International and earned their highest honor of Distinguished Toastmaster well over twenty years ago. While I'm quite confident on a platform having spent thousands of hours giving trainings and presentations, I'm less certain about having dahlias a month ahead of when I usually have these gorgeous blooms.

Allie's pastel color scheme means Cafe au Lait, Ryecroft Brenda T, Ryecroft Jan, Tahoma Kelli, and of course, the Allie White dahlia - a gorgeous white dinner plate! Fortunately, I got this variety several years ago when I knew a wedding was coming in the future and I wanted this bride to have a dahlia with her name in it for her special day.



**Allie White Dahlia**  
**Photo: Floret Flower Farm**

When I started growing dahlias in summer 2021, my very first dahlia bouquet was given to Allie on her birthday. And the following year, the dahlias first bloomed again - on her birthday! Always, my dahlias flower the second week of August regardless of when I plant, early May, mid May or late May around Memorial Day. I've got a Plan B as Calvin Cook from Arrowhead Dahlias told me he has my back in case my dahlias come up later than I need them to. Calvin has been growing dahlias many years longer than I have and his dahlia farm is several thousand feet lower than mine.

I've always put my sprouted tubers directly in the ground and I have no experience personally of starting tubers early. But this is the year that I must wake up my tubers and get them going in some sort of a container even if I wait to put these starters in the ground at 60 degrees. Harry Rissetto sent me this article, [When is the Best Time to Plant Dahlias?](#)



I've been conversing about this subject of starting tubers with Robert Fackovec, Middle Island Dahlia Society Garden Director. His society in Long Island, New York uses Pro - Mix BX, General Purpose growing medium almost exclusively to start up their spring tubers. It is a reliable product, seems to work best for them and is cost effective. It is a greenhouse grower mix, contains nutrients, beneficial fungi and a wetting agent. The wetting agent allows easy water absorption and distribution. Most importantly it is ready to use. I'm going to follow his suggestion as he thinks I will really like it. I have used mycorrhizae with my vegetables at my community garden but I never thought to use it with tubers.

In the past I have used [Cow Pots](#) for seedlings I started for vegetables and I'm going to call the company directly and see about putting in an order of pots for my tubers. I may not do all 2,000 of my dahlia plants this way but definitely the bridal flowers. I like the idea that the pots are manure based although I have been warned to keep an eye more closely on the watering as they do tend to dry out a bit more. I've seen many other gardeners use the plastic or peat containers and had great results, too - I just wanted to try and eliminate the extra step of removing the tubers from the container before they go into the ground. Larry Smith has shared two videos with me about starting dahlias: [Waking Up Your Dahlia Tubers](#) and [A Lesson on Taking Dahlia Cuttings](#), both with Mark Oldenkamp, our current ADS President. Swan Island Dahlias also has a great [video](#) on how to start tubers early.





Photos courtesy of Robert Fackovec.

On a side note, both [ADS](#) and the book [Discovering Dahlias](#) suggest using plastic wrap to store tubers and I've been quite pleased with the results for me personally. As I unwrap my tubers this month, I'm relieved to see so many beautiful 'eyes'. I'm also pleased to share with you a recycling resource should you cringe at the thought of using a not-so-green method. Trex needs your stretchy plastic to create beautiful and environmentally responsible outdoor products and they make the process easy. My woman's club has been doing this as a group for years and this is a simple thing dahlia societies could do together. Watch the [video](#) and learn how your recyclables can become a composite deck with NexTrex.



**Dahlia Talk Co-Authors  
Martin Kral and Dianne Reitan  
at the Rocky Reach Dam in Wenatchee, WA**



[American Dahlia Society](#)



American Dahlia Society | 16816 County Road 10 | Bristol, IN 46507 US