



Team Work Makes the Dream Work

By Dianne Reitan



Clockwise: Jillian, Allie, Maribeth and Dianne

When I started Dianne's Dahlias in 2023, the men in my family built my two 20' x 100' hoop houses - thank you hubby Dave, uncle Ron and cousin Wayne! I started out with around 300 tubers but ended up with only 200 or so flowering plants due to an unusual deluge that wiped out 1/3 of what I planted. The second year went much better with over 900 plants giving me lot of dahlias but running a commercial farm with just my husband by my side was not a viable strategy long-term.

As I spent the winter dividing the crowns by myself, I was unsure how I was going to manage the third year of my business. My husband's shingles episode in January took him down for

months. When spring came, I taught my two growing dahlias classes and sold my excess tubers, but I was getting nervous that I had gotten in over my head with everything it was going to take to run my dahlia farm and plant 2,000 tubers in May.



Maribeth cutting for a bridal customer

Then I get an email out of the blue from a repeat customer's girlfriend wanting a coffee meeting. Maribeth was mesmerized by these dahlias she was getting from her boyfriend and since she was moving from Denver to Colorado Springs to be with him, she wanted to come work for me. I responded, "Huh? You want to come work in a flower farm? Do you really understand what you are saying?" I was stunned and elated that my first employee was sitting right in front of me but I was hesitant because, well, did she really understand what she was signing up for? The rhythm of a dahlia business means a quieter first quarter, a second quarter busy with tuber sales and planting, a third quarter that means very little sleep six days a week and then a fourth quarter that leaves you wondering whether you are coming or going processing more tubers than you can count yourself. Maribeth wasn't daunted.



Jillian on the Fox21 set with me



Allie with a bouquet she designed for a friend

Then a few weeks later, a distant cousin, Jillian, whom I had only met a few times, was sitting at a dinner function with our aunt Lois. Not wanting to return to nursing after having her first child, Lois suggests that she contact me about helping me with the farm. I knew I needed help with social media marketing and sales in general, and I have to say, it is quite lovely having someone else who is half my age, handle all things online!

Then, finally, there is Allie, whom you have been reading about these past few months here with Dahlia Talk. Allie and I were co-workers at a previous employer and we used to dream about working together at a flower farm. Allie has a very high work ethic just like Maribeth and Jillian. While Allie was excited about coming onboard, she made it quite clear that my branding needed an update. What - it was only two years old?! No matter, all three employees staged a logo coup and took this 53 year old into 2025 with a more refined image that matched the bridal and floral industry that was starting to buy dahlias from us. I still love my old pink and blue logo but I must admit it did reflect someone who grew up in the 80s!



My heart is full of gratitude and I'm in awe of how easily my new team was assembled and how hard the four of us ladies work to bring beauty to others along the Front Range. It takes some effort to grow dahlias and it takes even more effort to get them in the hands of folks

who love the dahlia as much as we do. You might have even caught the social media post showing the employees wearing head lamps while cutting in the dark - and in the rain - so that a bride could have her dahlias in time for her special day! Flower farming is a gorgeous vocation but every day has a long to-do list and by week's end I'm usually asking my husband, "What date is it?"

You know how they say the month of August is the epitome of the hot and slow 'dog days of summer?' Well, last month was anything but lazy for Team DD. Between a 6:30 am arrival on the local [Fox21 morning show talking about high desert dahlias](#), filming for an esteemed [podcast for Slow Flowers](#) out of Seattle, and coordinating professional photographers curating shots of over 250 different varieties we grow for our online tuber catalog - whew.

What's the point of me telling you all this? Because most of the time, we really do need other people to help us achieve our goals. Some of us get mentored by other dahlia growers in our circle of friends or in a [local dahlia society chapter](#). Some of us learn how to grow the diva of the garden in our local community garden as I did. Many of us have other people helping us with our planting, pinching, disbudding, cutting and digging. We can't thank them enough. I also tell you my story to give hope to my fellow dahlia enthusiast. Sometimes dahlia projects we take on don't go as planned or something serendipitous happens that takes us in a whole different direction. Trusting and enjoying the process is very much a part of growing dahlias whether it's for the show bench, in a container on our patio or as a business. The dahlia expects to be tended to, and if we persevere over time, we will be rewarded for our efforts.



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