

## **DAHLIA**

Dahlias come in all colors of the rainbow (except for blue) and range in height from 8" to 4 feet. Some of the varieties of Dahlias are: Star, Dinnerplate or Decorative, Cactus, Border Dahlia, Ball or PomPom and Windowbox. Dahlias should be planted with tubers pointed down and stem portion up. Plant in a sunny spot, 4-5" deep and 12-36" apart depending on variety. Plant when all danger of frost has past. Be sure to improve your soil with Peat Moss and compost since Dahlias do best in well-drained soil. Mix in Super Phosphate to aid in rooting and flowering.

For best results, Dahlia tubers can be planted in pots 6-8 weeks before planting time and kept indoors until time to plant them outside. This will give you a good head start.

Dahlias bloom from late July into October until the first freeze. Be sure to remove faded and spent flowers. Dahlia buds grow in threes, for larger flowers, remove the two side buds. Fertilize with a high phosphorous fertilizer for prolonged health of the plant.

After the first frost, when the foliage has blackened, carefully lift the tubers with a pitchfork. Prune the foliage, leaving 2" of stem attached to the root and remove any shriveled or damaged tubers. Hose off the soil and while tubers are still slightly damp, place tubers in a box or plastic bag with vermiculite surrounding them. Top with a layer of newspaper and store in a dark, cool (40-45 degrees) place for the winter. Be sure to check them periodically and sprinkle a little water on the vermiculite if the tubers start to shrivel. Divide tubers in the spring if necessary.