



Sow it Grow it

How-to Guide: How to Plant a Dahlia

Dahlias are one of the most rewarding flowers to grow, providing stunning blooms from summer until the first frost. Follow this simple step-by-step guide to plant and care for your dahlias successfully.

Step-by-Step Guide to Planting Dahlias

1. Choosing the Right Spot

- Dahlias thrive in full sun. Choose a spot that gets **at least 6-8 hours of sunlight daily**.
- Ensure the soil is well-draining and rich in organic matter. Avoid areas with heavy clay or standing water.

2. Preparing the Soil

- Loosen the soil to a depth of at least **30 cm (12 inches)** to encourage strong root growth.
- Mix in compost or aged manure to improve soil structure and fertility.

3. Planting the Dahlia Tubers

- **Planting Time:** After the danger of frost has passed and soil temperatures are **above 15°C (60°F)**.
- **Planting Depth:** Place the tuber **5-10 cm (2-4 inches)** deep with the **eye (bud) facing up**.
- **Spacing:** Keep tubers **30-45 cm (12-18 inches)** apart for proper air circulation and healthy growth.
- **For a strong head start:** Plant dahlias in **pots from early April** in a frost-free spot. Avoid watering until at least **four leaves** have developed to **prevent rot**. Snails and insects love young leaves, so allowing the plant to establish first helps it thrive.

4. Watering & Mulching

- Do **not** water immediately after planting to prevent rot. Start watering **once sprouts appear** (usually in 2-3 weeks).
- Water deeply **1-2 times per week**, ensuring the soil stays moist but not soggy.
- Apply a **thin layer of mulch** to retain moisture and suppress weeds, but keep it away from the stem to prevent rot.



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5. Supporting Tall Varieties

- Some dahlias grow **over 1 meter (3 feet) tall** and need support.
- Install **stakes or cages at planting time** to avoid damaging roots later.

6. Fertilizing for Healthy Blooms

- Use a **low-nitrogen fertilizer (e.g., 5-10-10)** every **3-4 weeks** to encourage blooming rather than excessive foliage.
- Avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers, as they promote leaf growth at the expense of flowers.

7. Encouraging More Blooms

- **Deadhead spent flowers** regularly to encourage continuous blooming.
- **Pinch off the first flower bud** when the plant is 30 cm (12 inches) tall to promote bushier growth.

8. Overwintering Your Dahlias (In Cold Climates)

- After the first frost, **cut back stems**, dig up tubers, and store them in a cool, dry place (5-10°C or 40-50°F).

Do's and Don'ts for Growing Dahlias

✓ Do's:

- ✓ Plant in **full sun** for best flower production.
- ✓ Ensure **well-draining soil** to prevent tuber rot.
- ✓ Water **deeply but infrequently** once growth starts.
- ✓ Stake **tall varieties early** to prevent wind damage.
- ✓ Deadhead **regularly** to keep plants blooming all season.
- ✓ Lift and store tubers **in colder climates** to reuse them next year.

✗ Don'ts:

- ✗ Don't **plant too early**—cold, wet soil will rot the tubers.
- ✗ Don't **water immediately after planting**—wait for growth to appear.
- ✗ Don't **use high-nitrogen fertilizers**—it encourages leaves over flowers.
- ✗ Don't **plant too close together**—this reduces airflow and increases disease risk.
- ✗ Don't **leave tubers in the ground over winter** if you live in a cold climate.

By following these simple steps, you'll enjoy **beautiful dahlias** throughout the season! 🌸