

**Master Gardener Volunteer
Horticulture Happy Hour**

Session will begin at 4:00 PM

**Dealing with the Divas of the Garden: A New Dahlia
Grower's Experience**



Tara Harper
2022 Ambassador of the Growing Kindness Project


Mr. Dick Westfall
Past President of the Greater Columbus Dahlia Society
Past President of the Midwest Dahlia Society

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Housekeeping

- Schedule, registration, recordings and handouts available: go.osu.edu/mgvlearn
- Scheduled through end of June 2023
- One (1) hour of Continuing Education

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Housekeeping


- Next Horticulture Lunch and Learn
- March 1 from 12:00-1:00
- "Flower Talk: How Plants use Color as Communication" with Ann Chanon

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Friendly Reminders!

- Please use Q&A box (not chat) to ask questions which will be addressed at the end of the presentation
- Would really appreciate your responses to the poll at the very end!!

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Horticulture Happy Hour February 22, 2023

Tara Harper

- Lifelong gardener and flower farmer
- 2022 Ambassador of the Growing Kindness Project, 2023 Alumni
- Active member of the Greater Columbus Dahlia Society
- Member of Progressive Buds Garden Club, Richwood, Ohio
- Ohio Association of Garden Clubs member
- Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers

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Horticulture Happy Hour February 22, 2023

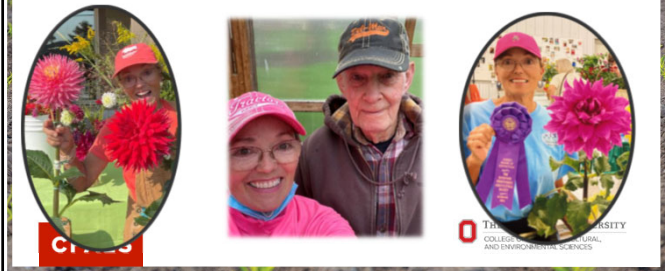
Mr. Dick Westfall

- 33 years with Scotts Miracle Grow, Research in lawn and ornamental fertilizer development
- Nationally known dahlia grower for over 60 years
- Started showing in 1962 and is still competing today
- One of the top 5 growers in the country
- So many distinguished awards throughout the country, too many to list here
- Most recently awarded national champion in 2021

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Dealing with the Divas of the Garden: A New Dahlia Grower's Experience



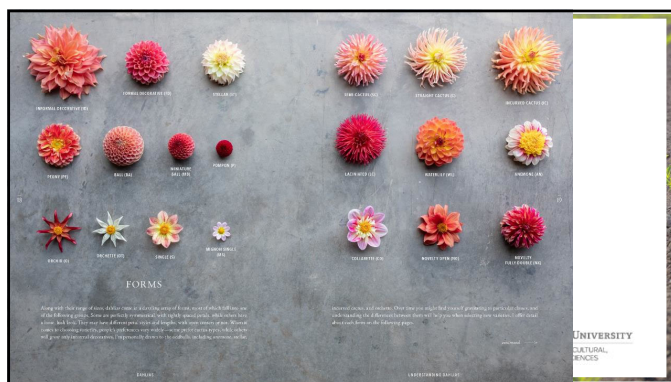
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Let's Get Started

- 26 days until spring!!



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Buying / Acquiring Dahlias

- Purchase from a reputable source
- Preferably locally

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Tara and Dick's Recommended Sources

- Ferncliff Gardens – ferncliffgardens.com (British Columbia)
- Cowlitz River Dahlias – dahlias4u.com
- Lobaugh's Dahlias – lobaughsdahlias.com (PNW)
- J.S. Dahlias – jsdahlias.com (Middlebury, IN)

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Tara and Dick's Recommended Sources - Local

- Greater Columbus Dahlia Society

- Root Sale (Oakland Nursery, Oakland Park Ave)
- April 15, 10 am – 1 pm
- Plant Sale/Auction (Carsonies Restaurant, Westerville)
- May 21, 2 - 4 pm

columbusdahlias.com



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Tara and Dick's Recommended Sources - Local

- Sunny Meadows Flower Farm (Watkins Road)
- Local Garden Centers

Cheaper, older varieties to try out

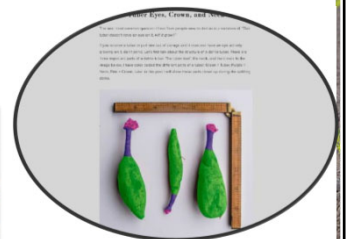
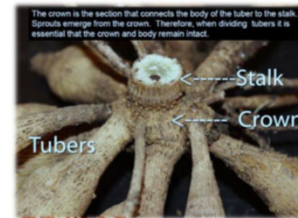
- Box Stores
- Walmart

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A bit of Anatomy



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Getting Started: Prep

- Always label every tuber
- Examine for overall health
- Eyes, crown, neck
- Ensure you have necessary supplies



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Benching/Potting up

- Waking up your tubers
- ~4-inch pots
- Aluminum loaf pans for thinner longer tubers
- Moist medium

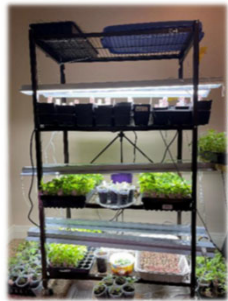


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Benching/Potting up Cont.

- Heat lamps or pads
- Moist medium
- Water after growth starts



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Bed Prep (if needed)

- Use Cardboard to kill turf quickly
- Tiller
- Amend soil



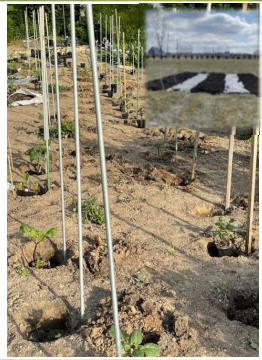
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Planting

- After danger of frost in spring (late May-early June)
- Fertilizer (organic or synthetic)
- Stake now prior to planting
- 2-3 feet spacing
- Mulch or straw around base

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Maintenance

- Weeds
- Insects
- Disease
- Watering
- Fertilizer

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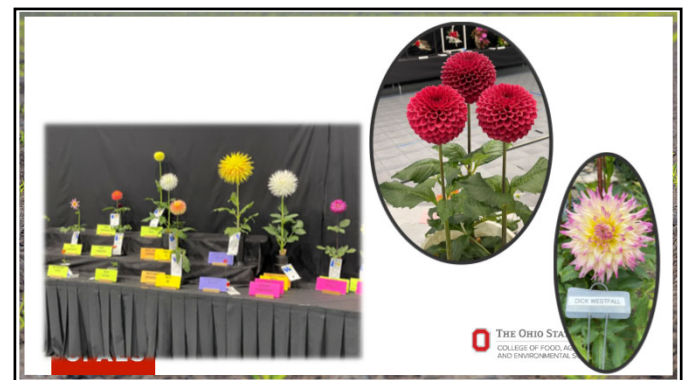
Topping – Disbranching - Disbudding

- What is your objective?
 - Lots of color and blooms for cut flowers
 - Exhibition and shows?
- At 6 inches (2-3 sets of leaves), top out center shoot (recommended for all)
- Disbud for longer stems (recommended for all, but not required)
- Disbranching more for exhibitions and competition to ensure larger flowers

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Cutting and Harvesting

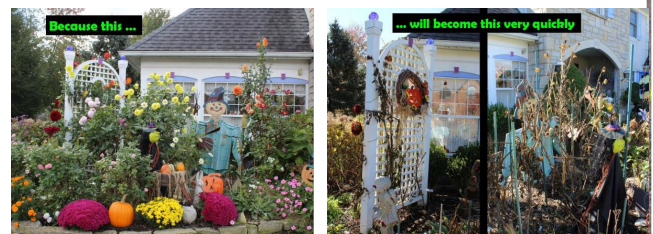
- Clean pruners or snips
- Early morning while sun is lower
- Bucket of hot tap water with flower preservative (Floralife)
- Make cuts at angle
- Place bucket in cool, dark area and let harden off for one hour prior to arranging

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Cutting and Harvesting (prior to first frost)



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Storage and Overwintering

Various methods to overwintering your dahlias!!
Here's what works for me!

1. Cut down
2. Dig up
3. Clean
4. Divide
5. Store



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1. Cutting Dahlias

- Cut when a heavy frost is forecasted and enjoy in your home or gift to a friend
- Cut so you have about 9 inches of stalk above the ground which serves as a handle
- Let plant stay in the ground a few days after cutting to help set the tubers



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2. Digging Up Dahlias

- Dig around plant at least 12-14 inches from stalk
- Gently pry clump of tubers out of ground using stalk to pull up



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3. Cleaning Dahlias

- Gently hose off dirt from tubers
- Remove skinny roots growing out of tubers
- Allow to dry for 24 hours before dividing and storing



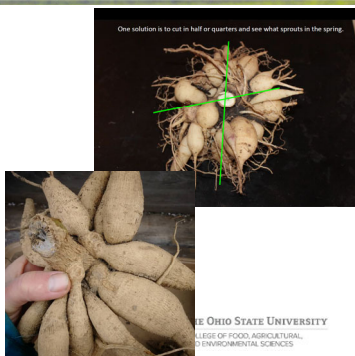
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4. Dividing Dahlias

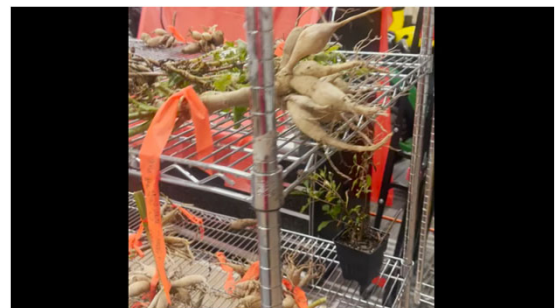
- Use sharp knife or hand pruner to cut stalk just above the crown
- Some tubers may not be easily divided, one solution is to cut in halves or quarters
- Allow to dry for no more than a day before storing



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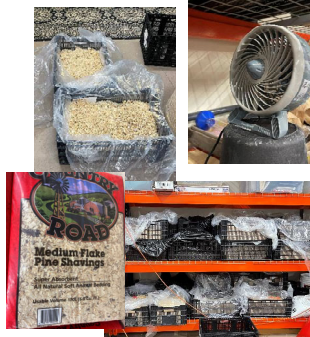
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5. Storing Dahlias

- Store tubers in open bags with pine shavings
- Ideally keep tubers between 40-50 degrees for storage
- Some humidity required



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Help is Available!!

**Learn how to divide and store your dahlias!
Open to the public!**

General Meeting and Inservice
Inniswoods Metro Gardens
October 1, 2023
2-4 pm
<http://columbusdahlias.com/>

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Acknowledgements!

- Jim Harper – total support and patience
- Jeff Laine, newly appointed President of the Greater Columbus Dahlia Society
- Brian and Jan Moody, Progressive Buds Garden Club
- Jason Fairchild, GCDS – gifting me my first dahlias in 2019



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Thank You! Questions??

- Tara Harper
- tara@thymetosprout.com

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