

Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

5-14 days before digging, cut dahlias down to 6-12"

Typically, after 1st frost or in early October

Processing Overview

Note: Clean & disinfect tools between tuber clumps

Step 1 - Dig Up

- Carefully Dig Up Tuber Clump
- Gently Take off Dirt
- Keep Variety Label with Tuber Clump

Step 2 – Initial Clean-Up

- Trim Off Roots
- Brush Away Dirt Using Paintbrush
- Wash with “Shower” Setting
- Set Aside

Step 3 – Dividing & Detail Rinse

- Divide Tubers from Clump
- Gently Wash Off Remaining Dirt
- Put in Well Vented Area to Dry

***Dry to touch for 1-2 days**

Step 4 – Packaging

- Write Variety Code Tubers with Sharpie Marker
- Dust with Cinnamon (optional anti-fungal)
- Wrap Tubers in Plastic wrap
- If Desired, Record # Tubers by Variety

Step 4 – Storing

- Store tubers at 40-50 degrees away from critters and light until spring



Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Step 1 - Dig Up

a. **Dig on all four sides of the plant**, about 12" from the stalk.

When all 4 sides are loose from longer feeder roots, push the garden fork under the clump and lift carefully.

Gently remove large clumps of dirt

Tip the clump upside down to drain out any water in the stem (large stems are hollow).

*I find it helpful to gently move some of the dirt away from the plant base with my hands before digging.



b. **Set Aside for a Bit**

Leave the clumps sitting for 1-2 hours so the tubers will be less likely to be damaged. A tuber's neck is fragile, especially right after digging.

Be sure each tuber clump has a coded tag with the variety name.



Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Step 2 - Rinse

- a) Trim extra stems and roots off each clump
- b) Brush away dirt with a paintbrush and your fingers
- c) Wash clumps using “Shower” Setting
- d) Set aside until ready for dividing

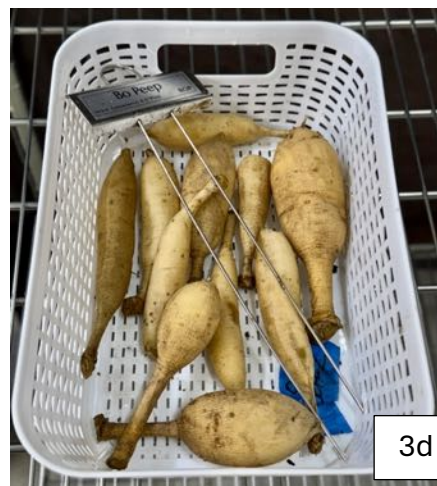
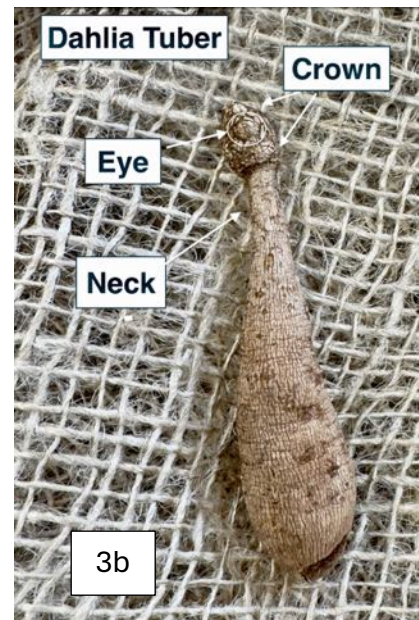
*****Clean & disinfect
tools between
varieties***



Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Step 3 – Dividing & Detail Rinse

- a) Set up an area to divide tuber clumps with cutting tools, running water (a sink is ideal), and cleaning supplies (towels, disinfectant such as Lysol aerosol spray)
- b) Divide Tubers from Clump. Each tuber must have a CROWN, NECK & BODY to form a new plant. Eyes (sprouts) only form on the crown of a tuber. *See next page.
- c) Gently wash off remaining dirt with water and a toothbrush. Clean tools & area with soapy water and disinfectant between varieties.
- d) Put tubers of the same variety together in a well vented area to dry for 1-2 days. Tubers will shrivel and turn hard if left too long. (I use open weave baskets from Dollar Tree).



Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Tuber Dividing Tips



Weak or Broken necks do not store well



Not every tuber can make a new dahlia.

The "Mother" is generally darker and will not produce again. Some tubers do not have crowns. They may be fat/big or very skinny and even.



Tuber Clump before Dividing
Where to Cut in **RED**



Tuber Clump after Dividing

Left: Tubers to Keep. Solid, have good crowns
Right: Toss. No crown, weak/broken neck, etc.



Tuber Eyes become plant stems

Left-Easy to see eyes

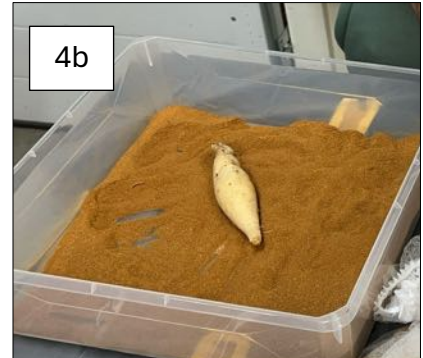
Middle-Can see where eyes will likely form

Right-?May form eyes

Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Step 4 – Packaging

- a) **Write Variety** on each tuber with Sharpie
Be gentle as the tuber skin is still quite thin
- b) **Dust with Cinnamon** to help prevent fungus (Opt)
- c) **Wrap Tubers** in plastic wrap
- d) **Store Tubers** at 40-50 degrees away from critters and light until spring. Find a cold corner in your basement or a closet. Be creative!
**I use a beverage fridge set to 40 degrees*



How to Wrap

- 1) Tear off a sheet of plastic wrap.
(Cling Wrap, Saran Wrap, etc.)
- 2) Place a tuber on one end and roll the plastic wrap over one complete turn, fold in sides and keep wrapping. Kind of like a burrito. You may use a small piece of freezer tape or masking tape to secure &/or write tuber information.
- 3) I prefer to wrap individually, other than very small tubers. However, using a larger piece of plastic, you may wrap up to four in a package. Be sure plastic separates each tuber.



Fall Dahlia Tuber Digging & Storing

Resources

<https://summerdreamsfarm.com/dahlia-tuber-and-splitting-guide>

<https://www.minnesotadahliasociety.org/tutorials>

<https://www.dahlia.org/growing/dahlia-university/>

<https://www.dahlia.org/docsinfo/articles/no-fuss-store-your-tubers-in-plastic-wrap/>

YouTube on Fall Dahlia Care

** <https://thefloweringfarmhouse.com/2023/09/25/5-steps-to-divide-and-store-dahlia-tubers/>

Dividing: https://youtu.be/q4yKfpXZOLk?si=_5nTzH4IZYnwnmbn

<https://youtu.be/j3kBK7xe6el?si=CmsYH5QchlU3qEo3>

<https://youtu.be/7tZWg7PFDxA?si=9I7Ao0QPU7HTC0GK>