



Dahlias

Often featured at exhibitions for their spectacular dahlias are great for home gardens, too. Although they are best known for their dinner plate-sized blossoms, dahlia flowers come in many sizes, from less than 2 inches wide on nearly a foot across, and they bloom in every color except blue. Plants range in size, too, from diminutive miniatures less than a foot tall to garden giants up to 6 feet in height, so you can find one to brighten nearly any sunny spot, from a petite patio container to the back of the garden border.

feature burgundy or dark colored flower foliage that provides contrast to green garden border and transitions nicely into autumn dahlias are great for home gardens and containers—by no means should dahlias be limited to the cutting garden.

Dahlia flowers are as diverse in shape as they are in color: they may be single or double, flat or round, with petals that might be twisted or curled—or not. Varieties are classified by their flower types, including peony-flowered, ball, double, semi-double, cactus, semi-cactus and decorative. Regardless of type, flowers are produced on strong stems that make them excellent for cutting. Dahlias begin flowering in midsummer and continue to bloom right up until frost, long after many other plants have quit for the season. As an added bonus, many varieties

feature burgundy or dark colored flower foliage that provides contrast to green garden border and transitions nicely into autumn dahlias are great for home gardens and containers—by no means should dahlias be limited to the cutting garden.

In our area, Dahlias are grown as annuals (or dug up for the winter). Most often, they are started from dormant tubers that are perfect for the mid border. Bishop of Llandaff is a colorful miniature-flowered peony dahlia growing 2 to 4 feet tall, and featuring dazzling scarlet flowers with black centers and attractive bronze-red foliage. Little Tiger is a 24" decorative type with rosy red flowers tipped in white. Fascination grows 18-20" tall and features small, deep pink flowers with lighter edges over bronze foliage. Purple Gem features large, intense purple cactus-type flowers on 36 to 40" plants. Its color would be set off nicely with a companion planting of the huge, bright yellow dinner plate flowers of Kelvin Floodlight. If softer shades are more your style, try Kogane Fubuki, a unique, pastel pink and yellow decorative. Those who want deep, dramatic flower color may want to try Arabian Night for its dark burgundy decorative blooms on 40" plants.

If you have plenty of space, and you're looking for lots of impact and color, try some of the taller, large-flowered dahlia varieties. Purple Gem features large, intense purple cactus-type flowers on 36 to 40" plants. Its color would be set off nicely with a companion planting of the huge, bright yellow dinner plate flowers of Kelvin Floodlight. If softer shades are more your style, try Kogane Fubuki, a unique, pastel pink and yellow decorative. Those who want deep, dramatic flower color may want to try Arabian Night for its dark burgundy decorative blooms on 40" plants.



Dahlia 'Kogane Fubuki'

Many dahlias grow to a medium height and have smaller flowers that are perfect for the mid border. Bishop of Llandaff is a colorful miniature-flowered peony dahlia growing 2 to 4 feet tall, and featuring dazzling scarlet flowers with black centers and attractive bronze-red foliage. Little Tiger is a 24" decorative type with rosy red flowers tipped in white. Fascination grows 18-20" tall and features small, deep pink flowers with lighter edges over bronze foliage. Purple Gem features large, intense purple cactus-type flowers on 36 to 40" plants. Its color would be set off nicely with a companion planting of the huge, bright yellow dinner plate flowers of Kelvin Floodlight. If softer shades are more your style, try Kogane Fubuki, a unique, pastel pink and yellow decorative. Those who want deep, dramatic flower color may want to try Arabian Night for its dark burgundy decorative blooms on 40" plants.

For containers or border edging, consider planting Figaro Mix. Although it grows only 12 to 14" tall, it features an abundance of flowers in a bright mix of yellow, orange, pink and red. Sunshine is another dwarf that sports delightful, golden yellow, single flowers with contrasting red centers over dark foliage. Those who love rose shades will adore the double flowers of Hello Rose.

If you want to save your dahlias Whether they are miniature, a high nitrogen fertilizer and in for another season, cut the mid-sized or mammoth, all midsummer switch to a high foliage back to about 6" in the dahlias prefer a site in full sun. If potassium fertilizer to encourage fall after the plants have been you are starting with dormant flowering. Stake the taller touched by frost. Dig up the tubers, plant them 3 to 5" deep varieties. Deadheading regularly tubers and allow them to dry, and in good, well-drained garden soil. will encourage more flowers. dust them with fungicide before Larger varieties should be Cut some blossoms for bouquets, storing them in sand or spaced up to 3 feet apart; too, as the show-stopping blooms vermiculite in a cool, well- mid-sized varieties at 1 ½ to 2 make a fabulous focal point in ventilated, frost-free location until feet, and bedding types 10 to 12 arrangements and will last for up Spring. inches. Begin feeding them with to a week after harvested.