

Learn more about Dahlias

PART 1



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Classifying Dahlias

- ▶ The ADS (American Society of Dahlias) Classification and Handbook Guide currently lists approximately 1800 varieties that have won at least one blue ribbon in the last 2 years
- ▶ Over 55,000 varieties have been introduced



Classification System

The ADS categorizes today's dahlias into various groups based on:

- ▶ Size
- ▶ Form
- ▶ Color

All dahlias classified receive a 4-digit number indicating their size, form and color

- ▶ Zorro 0107
- ▶ Hollyhill Electra 1403
- ▶ Lakeview Glow 4302



Classification System

SIZED DAHLIAS

- Size (5 sizes) - 1st digit (0-4)
- Form (6 forms) - 2nd digit (0-5)



Zorro 0107

“0”- AA

“1”- ID

Table 1

SIZED DAHLIAS			
Size	1 ST #	Form	2 ND #
AA	0	FD	0
A	1	ID	1
B	2	SC	2
BB	3	C	3
M	4	IC	4
		LC	5



Classification System

SIZE (5 CATEGORIES) - 1st digit (0-4)

- ▶ AA (#0), over 10 inches in diameter
- ▶ A (#1), over 8 to 10 inches in diameter
- ▶ B (#2), over 6 to 8 inches in diameter
- ▶ BB (#3), over 4 to 6 inches in diameter
- ▶ M (#4), up to 4 inches in diameter

AA



A



B



BB



M



For more information go to www.SEMDS.org



SEMDS.org

Classification System

COLOR

- Color (many) - Last two digits



Zorro 0107

“0”- AA

“1”- ID

“07” - Dark Red

COLOR	Last 2 #'S
White	01
Yellow	02
Orange	03
Pink	04
Dark Pink	05
Red	06
Dark Red	07
Lavender	08
Purple/Black	09
Light blend	10
Bronze	11
Flame	12
Dark Blend	13
Variegated	14
Bicolor	15



Classification System

OTHER FORMS

- ▶ Form - 1st two digits
- ▶ Color - Last two digits



Red Velvet 7306
“73” - Waterlily
“06” - Red

OTHER FORMS	
Form	1 ST 2 #'s
BA	60
MB	61
P	62
ST	70
WL	73
NX	76
PE	80
AN	82
NO	86
CO	90
O	92
OT	94
S	96
MS	97



PART 2

Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Get a head start on the growing season

Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

When to bring your tubers out of storage

- ▶ Some gardeners start tubers indoors to get a jump on the season
- ▶ Target planting in pots about 6 weeks prior to planting outdoors
- ▶ In Southeastern Michigan the last frost is typically sometime in mid-May. We suggest you begin to warm up your tubers in March.
- ▶ Bring tubers in from cold storage and let them acclimate to 60° - 70°F



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Bring your tubers out of winter storage

- ▶ Supplies you will need:
 - ▶ LC1 professional growing mix - sungro is a recommended brand carried by Telly's Greenhouse
 - ▶ Shallow plastic tray
- ▶ Moisten your soil mix. I mix soil and water in a 5 gallon bucket to achieve the correct moisture level.
 - ▶ You don't want the soil too wet. Moisten until the soil holds together when you squeeze in your hand. If water drips from soil it is too wet.
- ▶ Place moistened soil in tray



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Let your tubers warm up

- ▶ Lay tubers in moistened soil
 - ▶ Make sure tubers are clearly labeled [tags, permanent marker, ink pencil]
- ▶ Place in warm area to allow tubers to sprout and grow roots
 - ▶ 60° - 70°F



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Divide tubers and prepare to plant in individual pots

- ▶ If your tubers are in clumps and there are multiple sprouts, now is the time to divide
 - ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0icqxGVnOII> Dividing tubers
- ▶ Supplies you will need:
 - ▶ Moistened LC1 professional growing mix
 - ▶ Individual pots [garden pots, Gordon Foods quart deli containers]
 - ▶ Labels



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

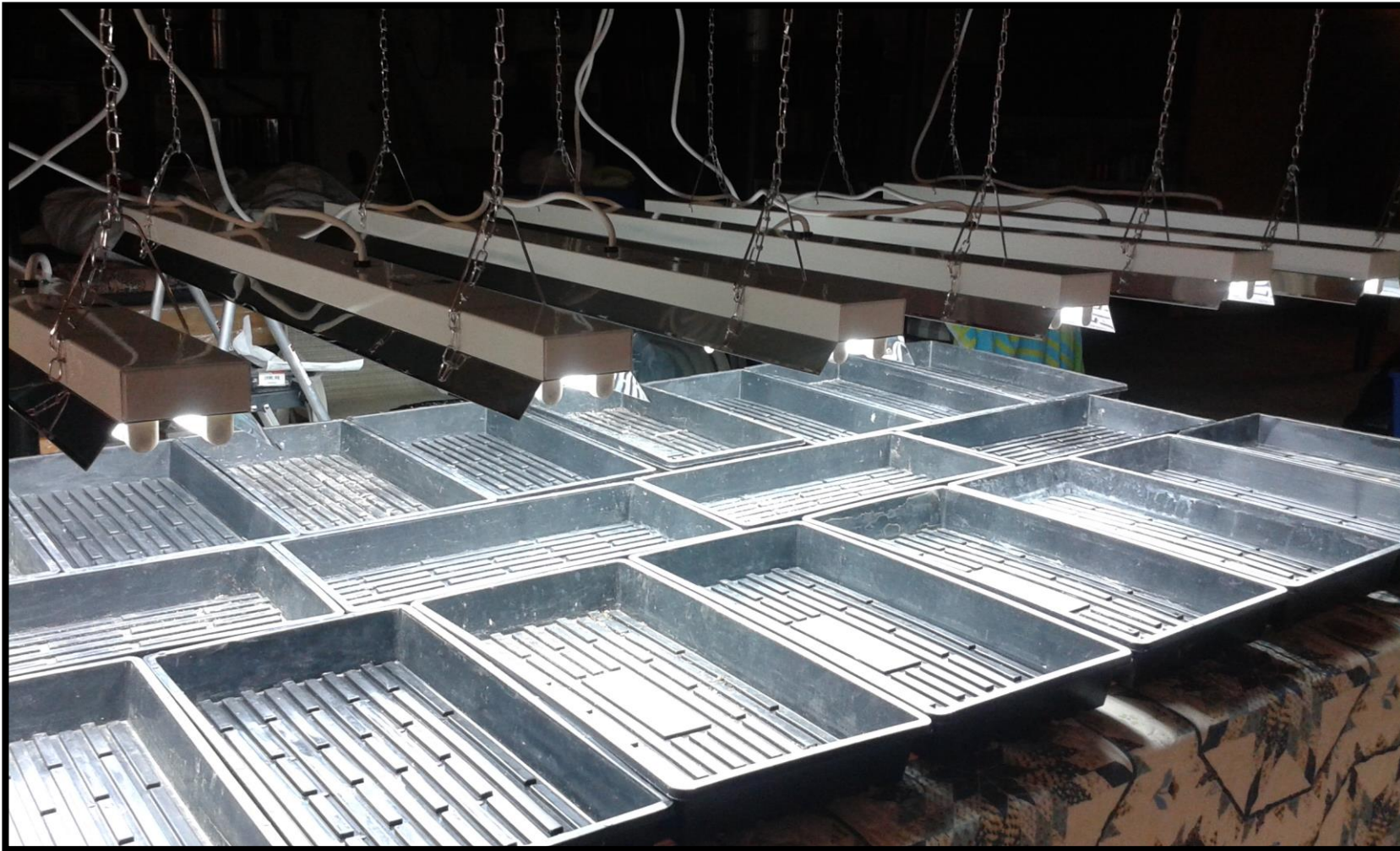
Plant in individual pots

- ▶ Place the soil in pot sized to hold the tuber. Make sure pot has drainage holes.
 - ▶ I like using 1 quart clear plastic deli containers to plant my tubers. Drill holes in bottom. You can purchase at Gordon Foods.
- ▶ Plant as you would in the ground with eye pointing up with crown at soil level.
 - ▶ Don't forget to label pots
- ▶ Place pots in a bright, sunny location. You can put under grow lights.



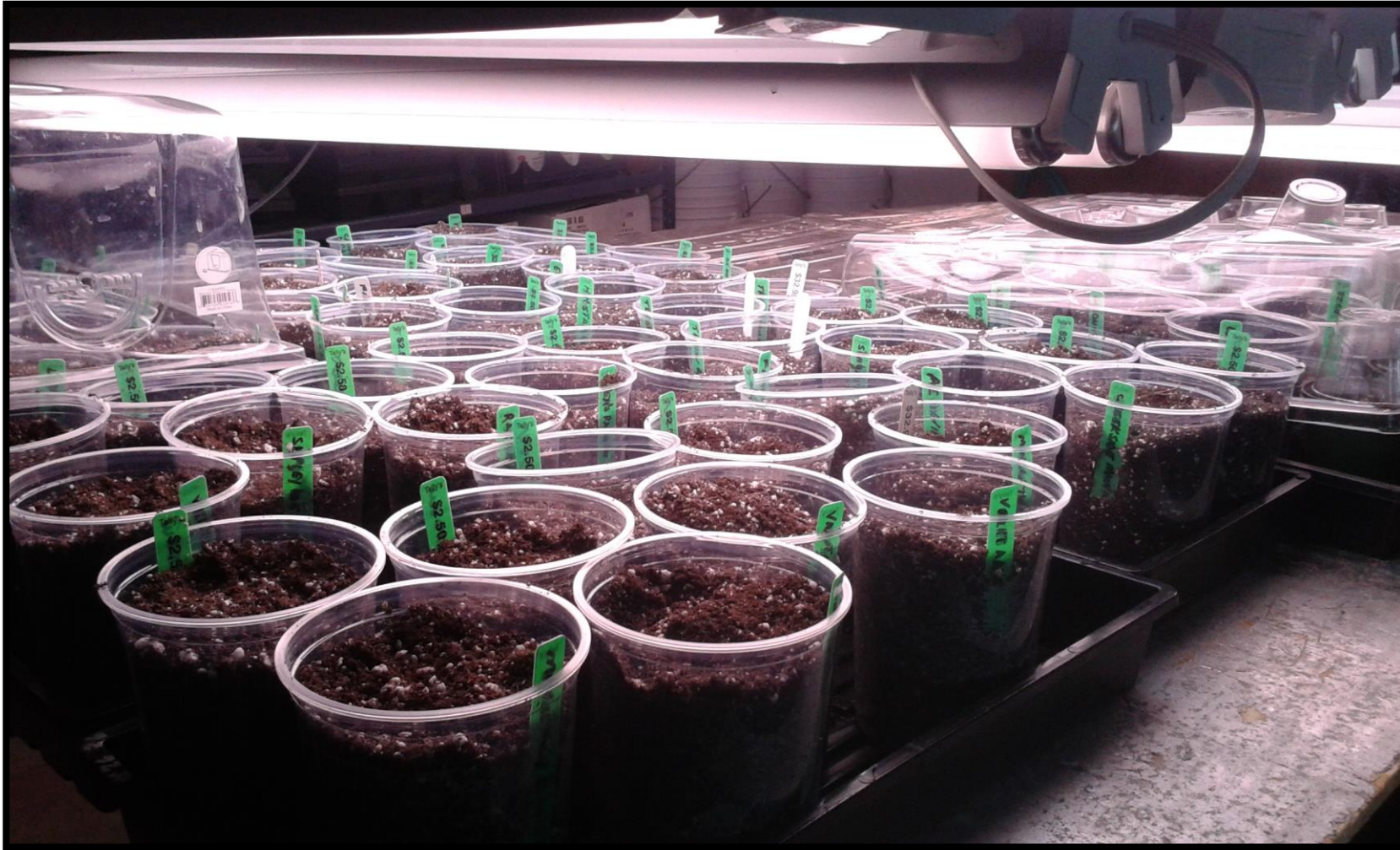
Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Plant in individual pots



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Plant in individual pots



Start Dahlia Tubers Indoors

Care for your plants

- ▶ Don't water during the first few weeks. Too much water will cause tuber to rot.
- ▶ Your potted tubers will grow stem and roots (deli containers let you see the roots)
- ▶ In the warmer weather of May (in Michigan) you can start to acclimate your plants by moving them outside during the day but bring them back in at night (garage works).



PART 3

Time to Plant Outside

Time to Plant Outside

Prepare to plant

- ▶ Plant in the ground when soil outside is 60° F and there is no chance of frost
- ▶ Dahlias grow best planted in the ground vs. planted in pots. Most dahlias grow 4-6 feet in height



Time to Plant Outside

Prepare to plant

- ▶ Select a planting site with full sun. Dahlias grow more blooms with 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight.
- ▶ Dahlias thrive in rich, well-drained soil. The pH level of your soil should be 6.5-7.0, slightly acidic.
- ▶ Plant your dahlias 2-3 feet apart.
- ▶ Plant tuber with the eye facing up, about 6 to 8 inches deep.
The crown should be below soil level.



Time to Plant Outside

Staking

- ▶ Medium to large flowering dahlias will require support. Place stakes (5-6 feet tall) at planting time and tie stems to them as the plants grow. Most dahlias grown for cut flowers reach 4-6 feet so staking is important. Tomato cages also work well.



Time to Plant Outside

Staking



Time to Plant Outside

Care after planting

- ▶ Do not water the tubers right after planting; this encourages rot. Wait until the stems are 4-6" tall before watering.
- ▶ Do not cover the dahlias with mulch or bark.
- ▶ After dahlias are established, provide a deep watering 2 to 3 times a week.
- ▶ Don't forget to label your plantings, or make a map of what dahlia variety is planted where, if you want to keep track of your dahlias. This is good to do if you plan on participating in dahlia exhibitions or sharing your tubers with other growers.



Time to Plant Outside

Fertilizing

- ▶ Some dahlia growers use Osmocote plus Smart-Release (time released fertilizer) when they plant. This is an all-purpose fertilizer that will get your plants off to a healthy start. Do NOT over fertilize, especially with nitrogen, or you risk small/no blooms, weak tubers, or rot.
- ▶ Remember once the plant is established your dahlias will benefit from a low-nitrogen fertilizer such as a 5-10-10 or 10-20-20. You may want to try this at the end of July and early August.



June 01



July 20



Dahlias make great cut flowers

Share them with friends

