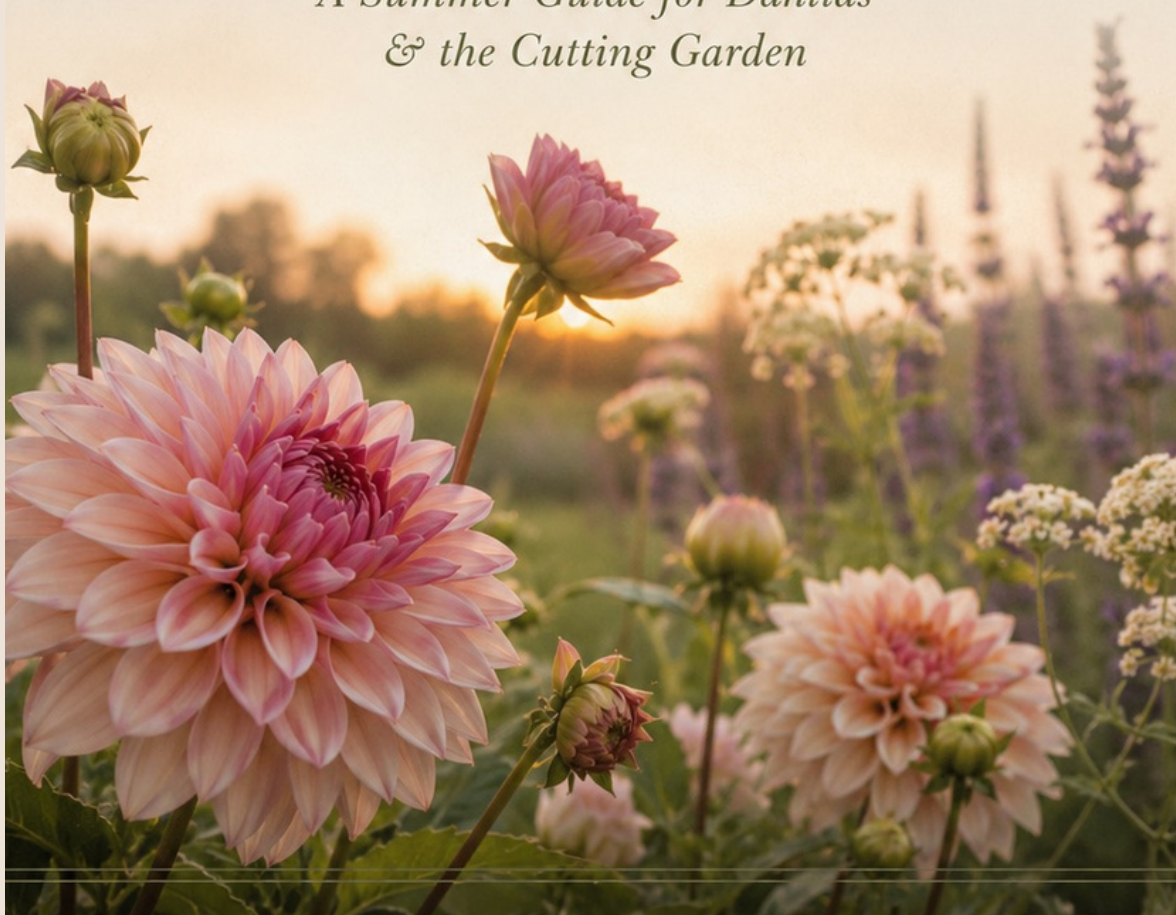




FLAMING ACRES
—• DAHLIAS •—

Tending *What's Growing*

*A Summer Guide for Dahlias
& the Cutting Garden*





FLAMING ACRES
• DAHLIAS •

Summer Is a Season *of Growth*

There is a quiet kind of beauty to June in the dahlia garden.

Not always the dramatic beauty of overflowing blooms or armfuls of flowers gathered into buckets—but the quieter beauty of becoming.

By early summer, dahlias are entering one of the most important stages of their growing season. What may appear above the soil as “just leaves” or rapidly stretching stems is actually part of a much deeper process taking place beneath the surface. While plants are pushing upward toward sunlight, they are also working hard below ground—developing roots, strengthening tubers, and building the foundation that will eventually support healthy blooms later in the season.

This is the season of preparation.

The season where strength is formed long before flowers appear.

SIDEBAR THOUGHT

*Strong stems
today become
armfuls of
blooms
tomorrow.*



WHAT DAHLIAS ARE DOING IN JUNE

RAPID UPWARD GROWTH

During June, dahlias often seem to grow almost overnight. Warm soil, longer days, and increasing sunlight signal the plant to begin its most active stage of vegetative growth. New stems lengthen quickly, leaves multiply, and plants begin taking on their mature shape.

Some varieties remain compact and tidy, while others may stretch dramatically in just a matter of days. This rapid growth is normal—and often a sign that the plant is establishing itself well.



ROOT & TUBER DEVELOPMENT ARE HAPPENING SIMULTANEOUSLY

Even though most of the visible activity is happening above ground, one of the most important parts of the plant is developing where you cannot see it.

As stems and foliage grow, dahlias are simultaneously strengthening their root systems and beginning the early stages of new tuber production. Healthy roots allow the plant to absorb water and nutrients efficiently, while strong tubers become the energy storage system that supports blooming later in the season—and the future of the plant itself.

In many ways, June is less about flowers and more about foundations.



WHY HEALTHY FOLIAGE MATTERS

It can be tempting to focus only on blooms, but healthy foliage is one of the greatest indicators of a thriving dahlia plant.

Those green leaves are not simply decorative—they are the plant's energy source. Through sunlight, dahlias produce the energy needed to strengthen stems, develop roots, and eventually create flowers.

A healthy plant in June should generally show:

- Steady new growth
- Leaves free from major spotting or damage
- Strong upright stems
- Increasing fullness week by week
- Rich green foliage

The more vigorous the foliage now, the stronger the blooming potential later.



SETTING REALISTIC BLOOM EXPECTATIONS

One of the most common questions gardeners ask in early summer is:

“When will my dahlias bloom?”

The answer depends on several factors—including planting time, soil temperature, weather conditions, variety type, and your growing zone. Some early varieties may begin blooming by midsummer, while others will take much longer to mature. And that is okay.

The garden may not look dramatic yet—but important work is happening.

This stage of the season asks gardeners to trust growth they cannot fully see yet.



To water
faithfully.



To support
healthy plants.



To keep tending
what is still
becoming.

Because often, the most beautiful seasons in the garden are built slowly—one healthy stem, one deep root, and one quiet day at a time.



Watering Deeply & Consistently

As summer settles in and temperatures begin to rise, watering becomes one of the most important parts of caring for healthy dahlias.

And while it may seem simple on the surface, how you water can make a tremendous difference in the strength, health, and blooming potential of your plants throughout the season.

Dahlias thrive when moisture reaches deeply into the soil—encouraging roots to grow downward in search of water rather than remaining shallow near the surface. Deep roots create stronger, more resilient plants that are better able to handle summer heat, dry spells, and the heavy demands of blooming season.

WHY CONSISTENCY MATTERS

Dahlias grow best when watering remains steady and consistent.

Long periods of dryness followed by excessive watering can place unnecessary stress on plants, sometimes leading to slowed growth, wilted foliage, split stems, or inconsistent blooming. Healthy moisture levels help plants continue developing steadily without constantly shifting between drought and oversaturation.

Consistency does not necessarily mean watering every day. It means creating a dependable rhythm that keeps the soil evenly moist without becoming soggy.

DEEP WATERING VS. SHALLOW WATERING

Frequent light watering may temporarily dampen the soil surface, but it often does little to support strong root development below ground.

Deep watering, however, encourages moisture to penetrate farther into the soil where roots truly need it. This helps dahlias establish stronger root systems and healthier tubers while reducing stress during hot weather.



Established dahlias often prefer deep watering 3–4 times weekly rather than daily shallow watering.

A thorough soaking is almost always more beneficial than frequent surface moisture that evaporates quickly in summer heat.



SIGNS OF UNDERWATERING

Dahlias will often show signs when they are struggling to receive enough moisture. Watch for:

- Wilting during the morning hours
- Drooping stems or limp foliage
- Crispy or browning leaf edges
- Slowed growth
- Buds failing to develop properly
- Dry soil several inches beneath the surface



Some afternoon wilting during extreme heat can be normal, especially during very hot days. Plants that recover by evening are often simply responding to temporary heat stress rather than true dehydration.



SIGNS OF OVERWATERING

Too much water can be just as harmful as too little.

Overly wet soil can deprive roots and tubers of oxygen, increasing the risk of rot and disease beneath the surface.

Common signs of overwatering include:

- Yellowing leaves
- Soft or mushy stems
- Stunted growth
- Persistent wilting despite wet soil
- Fungus or mildew issues
- Soggy soil that remains saturated for extended periods



Dahlias prefer moisture—not constantly waterlogged soil.

Strong roots are built slowly through steady care, deep watering, and consistency through the heat of summer.

Raised Beds VS. In-Ground Watering

Where dahlias are planted
also affects how quickly soil dries out.



RAISED BEDS

Raised beds tend to drain more quickly and warm faster in summer. Because of this, they often require more frequent watering, especially during hot or windy weather.



IN-GROUND PLANTINGS

In-ground gardens typically retain moisture longer, particularly in heavier soils. These areas may need less frequent watering but still benefit from deep soaking when watered.



Learning how your particular soil behaves is one of the most valuable skills a gardener can develop.



WATERING DURING HEAT WAVES

During periods of intense heat, dahlias may require additional watering support.

Extreme temperatures increase evaporation and place greater stress on foliage, roots, and developing buds. During heat waves:



Check soil moisture more frequently



Water deeply early in the day



Mulch around plants to help retain moisture



Avoid allowing plants to completely dry out



Container-grown dahlias may require daily monitoring



The goal during extreme heat is not necessarily to keep the soil constantly wet—but to prevent severe stress and dehydration.



MORNING VS. EVENING WATERING

Morning is generally the best time.



Early watering allows moisture to soak into the soil before the heat of the day arrives while also giving foliage time to dry properly. This helps reduce the risk of mildew and fungal issues.



Evening watering can still be helpful during extreme heat.



but consistently wet foliage overnight may encourage disease problems in humid conditions.



Whenever possible, focus water at the base of the plant rather than directly overhead.

HELPFUL REMINDER

Strong roots are built slowly through steady care, deep watering, and consistency through the heat of summer.





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Supporting Strong Stems

Before Heavy Blooms Arrive

Early summer is not only the season of growth—it is also the season of preparation. Long before dahlias begin carrying armfuls of blooms, they are busy building the structure that will eventually support them. Strong stems, balanced branching, and sturdy support systems all begin now, while plants are still developing.

One of the greatest gifts you can give your dahlias in early summer is intentional support before they actually need it.



WHY STRONG STEMS MATTER

As the season progresses, dahlias can become surprisingly heavy plants.

Large blooms, rapid upward growth, wind, rain, and summer storms can all place tremendous strain on stems. Without proper support, healthy plants may bend, snap, lean, or collapse under the weight of their own blooms later in the season.

Creating strong structure early helps plants:

- Produce sturdier stems
- Support larger blooms
- Improve air circulation
- Encourage more branching
- Create better cut flower stems
- Reduce storm and wind damage

Healthy structure now often determines the success of the plant later.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PINCHING DAHLIAS

One of the most helpful early-season techniques for many dahlia varieties is pinching.

Pinching simply means removing the central growing tip once the plant reaches approximately 12–18 inches tall or has developed several sets of leaves.

While it may feel difficult to remove early growth, this small act encourages the plant to redirect its energy outward rather than only upward.

Instead of producing one tall central stem, the plant begins developing multiple lateral branches—which eventually means:

- Fuller plants
- More blooms
- Better stem length for cutting
- Stronger overall structure
- Improved bloom production throughout the season

Pinching may slightly delay the very first blooms, but it often rewards gardeners with healthier, more productive plants over the long run.



UNDERSTANDING LATERAL GROWTH

After pinching, dahlias naturally begin producing side shoots from leaf nodes beneath the cut.

These lateral branches become future flowering stems.

Rather than a single dominant stalk carrying only a few blooms, the plant becomes wider, fuller, and far more capable of producing abundant flowers throughout summer and fall.

In many ways, pinching teaches the plant to branch into abundance.



STAKING BEFORE PLANTS NEED IT

One of the most common mistakes gardeners make is waiting too long to support their dahlias.

By midsummer, stems can become large, tangled, and difficult to manage without damaging roots or tubers. Installing supports early allows plants to grow naturally into their support system rather than being forced into one later.

Supports may include:

- Wooden or bamboo stakes
- Metal T-posts
- Tomato cages
- Corrals or netting systems
- Twine support methods
- Decorative garden supports



There is no single perfect system. The best support system is the one that works well in your particular garden space and growing conditions.



SUPPORTING DAHLIAS THROUGH SUMMER GROWTH

As plants continue growing, stems may need gentle tying and adjustment throughout the season.

Tie stems loosely enough to allow movement and growth while still offering stability. Soft garden ties, twine, or plant clips can all work well.

Tall dinnerplate varieties and large decorative dahlias especially benefit from early support because their blooms can become extremely heavy once fully open.

A little support early often prevents major heartbreak later.



WIND, RAIN & SUMMER STORMS

Even healthy plants can struggle during sudden summer weather.

Heavy rain, strong wind, or irrigation combined with rapid growth can quickly weigh down large dahlia plants.

Well-supported stems are far more likely to withstand weather stress without breaking.



Strong roots below ground and strong support above ground work together to create resilient plants.



HELPFUL REMINDER

The strongest dahlia plants are not only beautiful—they are well-supported long before the blooms arrive.



Fertilizing for *Healthy Growth:* Bloom Development

Summer is the season when dahlias begin using tremendous amounts of energy.

As plants stretch upward, strengthen stems, produce foliage, and eventually begin setting buds and blooms, they rely heavily on the nutrients available within the soil. Fertilizing during this stage is less about forcing rapid growth and more about supporting balanced, healthy development throughout the season.

Healthy dahlias are not simply built by water and sunshine alone. They are built through steady nourishment over time.



1 UNDERSTANDING WHAT DAHLIAS NEED

Dahlias require different nutrients during different stages of growth.

Early in the season, plants focus heavily on developing strong roots, stems, and foliage. As the season progresses, energy shifts toward bloom production and tuber development beneath the soil.

Balanced nutrition helps support:

- ✦ Strong stems
- ✦ Healthy foliage
- ✦ Bud and bloom production
- ✦ Root and tuber development
- ✦ Overall plant vigor
- ✦ Better resilience during summer stress



The goal is not excessive leafy growth—but balanced, sustainable growth that supports the entire plant.



2 WHY TOO MUCH NITROGEN CAN BE A PROBLEM

One of the most common fertilizing mistakes with dahlias is applying too much nitrogen.

High-nitrogen fertilizers often produce large amounts of leafy green growth very quickly, but excessive nitrogen can sometimes lead to:

- ✦ Weak stems
- ✦ Fewer blooms
- ✦ Delayed flowering
- ✦ Plants that become tall and floppy
- ✦ Reduced tuber development



Beautiful foliage alone does not always mean the plant is thriving well. Dahlias generally benefit from fertilizers that support blooms and roots rather than excessive leafy growth.



3 FERTILIZING FOR BLOOM PRODUCTION

As dahlias mature and begin preparing for flowers, many gardeners transition toward lower-nitrogen fertilizers that encourage blooming and strong plant structure.

Fertilizers commonly used for dahlias may include:

- ✦ Low-nitrogen bloom fertilizers
- ✦ Organic flower fertilizers
- ✦ Compost-enriched soil
- ✦ Well-aged manure incorporated before planting
- ✦ Slow-release balanced fertilizers
- ✦ Liquid feeding programs during active growth



The exact approach often depends on soil quality, climate, watering practices, and the gardener's preferred growing methods. Healthy soil remains one of the greatest long-term investments a garden can make.



4 FEEDING DAHLIAS THROUGH THE SEASON

Rather than heavy feeding all at once, dahlias often respond best to gentle, consistent feeding throughout the growing season.

Many gardeners begin fertilizing:

- ✦ After plants are actively growing
- ✦ Once several sets of leaves have formed
- ✦ After roots are becoming established
- ✦ Before heavy bloom production begins

As flowering increases, dahlias continue using large amounts of energy both above and below ground.



Remember:
While blooms may be developing above the soil, tubers are simultaneously developing beneath it.



♥ HELPFUL REMINDER ♥

Healthy blooms begin with healthy roots, steady nourishment, and soil cared for with patience over time.



Fertilizing for *Healthy Growth:* Tuber Development

Late summer blooms may capture attention—but healthy tubers are quietly forming beneath the surface all season long.

STRONG TUBER DEVELOPMENT MATTERS BECAUSE TUBERS:

- Store energy for the plant
- Support future growth
- Influence overwintering success
- Become next year's planting stock



Balanced fertilizing helps plants continue developing both flowers and healthy underground storage systems simultaneously.

In many ways, gardeners are caring not only for this season's blooms—but also for future seasons yet to come.



Strong plants
above the soil...

Strong tubers
below the soil.



ORGANIC MATTER & SOIL HEALTH

One of the greatest gifts to a dahlia garden is healthy living soil.

Organic matter improves:

- Moisture retention
- Soil structure
- Nutrient availability
- Root development
- Beneficial microbial activity



Compost, aged manure, mulch, and organic amendments all help create healthier growing conditions over time.

Healthy soil often creates healthier plants naturally.



WATCHING THE PLANT FOR CLUES

Dahlias often communicate their needs through their growth patterns.

Healthy plants typically show:

- Rich green foliage
- Steady growth
- Strong upright stems
- Healthy bud formation
- Consistent blooming
- Overall vigor



Pale foliage, weak stems, slowed growth, or poor blooming can sometimes signal nutrient imbalances or environmental stress.

Learning to observe plants carefully is one of the most valuable skills a gardener develops over time.



NUTRITION TIPS FOR TUBER DEVELOPMENT



Use balanced fertilizers
Support both top growth and healthy tuber production.



Reduce nitrogen later in summer
Too much nitrogen encourages leafy growth instead of tubers.



Feed consistently, not excessively
Steady nourishment is more effective than heavy doses.



Potassium & phosphorus are important
These nutrients help support strong flowers and healthy tuber growth.



Keep feeding through mid- to late summer
Tuber development continues well after blooms begin.



Good nutrition today =
Stronger plants, more blooms,
and better tubers for next season!

HELPFUL REMINDER

Healthy blooms begin with healthy roots, steady nourishment, and soil cared for with patience over time.





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Thank You *for Growing with Us*



We hope this guide inspires you to slow down, be present,
and enjoy every step of your gardening journey.

Your care, attention, and love bring beauty to life—
in the garden, in your home, and in the hearts of those
who enjoy your flowers.



Keep planting, Keep learning.
Keep sharing the beauty.

We can't wait to see what you grow
and create in your own garden.



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