GrowerFacts

Dahlia Dahlietta™

(*Dahlia pinnata*)

Propagation

- Choose a well-drained medium with an EC of 0.75 to 0.80 mmhos and a pH of 5.8 to 6.2.
- Dahlia cuttings should be stuck the day of arrival. Cuttings can be stored overnight, if necessary, at 45 to 50°F (7 to 10°C).
- A rooting hormone can be applied to promote early, uniform rooting.
- Soil temperature should be maintained at 64 to 66° F (18 to 19°C) until roots are visible.
- Avoid saturated media during propagation. Saturated media will delay rooting significantly.
- While rooting, Dahlias should be grown under long days. Night-break lighting will reduce the likelihood of tuber formation. If daylength extension lighting is used, a daylength of greater than 12 to 13 hours is recommended.
- Begin fertilization when roots become visible with 75 to 100 ppm N. Increase to 150 to 200 ppm N as roots develop. Avoid phosphorous and ammoniacal nitrogen during the rooting process to reduce stretch and unwanted vegetative growth.
- As the rooted cuttings develop, high light, appropriate water stress and moderate air temperatures should eliminate the need for chemical plant growth regulators (PGR).
- **Dahlietta** Dahlia rooted cuttings should be ready for transplanting 28 to 32 days after sticking and should be transplanted as soon as possible.

Growing On to Finish

Media

- Use media with good aeration, drainage and water-holding capacity.
- A pH of 5.8 to 6.2 is optimum with soil EC in the range of 1.0 to 1.5 mmhos (2:1).

Transplanting

Rooted cuttings of **Dahlietta** Dahlia should be planted deeper than typical vegetative crops. Liners should be transplanted so that the first 1 to 2 sets of leaves are below the soil line in the pot. This will help maintain the stability of the plant as it matures.

Temperature

- Nights: 59 to 64°F (15 to 18°C).
- Days: 65 to 76°F (18 to 24°C).
- Temperatures significantly below this range will encourage tuber formation and delay flowering. Warmer than recommended temperatures will promote a more open habit and weak stems.

Light

- Keep light intensities at 4,000 to 6,000 f.c. (40,000 to 60,000 Lux).
- Supplement with 400 f.c. (4,000 Lux) HID in the North during periods of low light to reduce crop time.

Fertilizer

- Feed regularly with 225 to 300 ppm N.
- Excessive phosphorous and ammoniacal nitrogen will promote unwanted vegetative growth. Both should be provided in very limited quantities.
- Dahlias are sensitive to high soluble salts particularly under cool, low light conditions. Regular leaching with clear water is essential.

Long Day/Short Day Treatments

To ensure uniform and timely flowering and discourage tuber formation, night-break lighting should be used during finishing. This can be accomplished by providing long days (12 to 13 hrs.) with 400 f.c. (4,000 Lux) HID or 10 f.c. (100 Lux) incandescent light.

Controlling Growth

- **Dahlietta** Dahlia respond very well to a B-Nine (2,500 to 4,000 ppm) and Cycocel (1,000 to 1,500 ppm) tank mix. The first application should be made 14 to 21 days after transplanting or when active growth is visible.
- There is some variability in vigor between varieties in this series. Each variety must be judged individually as to the need for plant growth regulator application.
- These recommendations for plant growth regulators should be used only as general guidelines. Growers must trial all chemicals under their particular conditions.

Pinching

Dahlietta Dahlia can be pinched 10 to 14 days after transplanting, when liners have rooted in well and growth is evident. A “soft” pinch removing 1 set of expanding leaves is ideal. This will encourage basal branching, promote a better habit and help build the plant before flowering begins.

Common Problems

Dahlias are susceptible to phytotoxicity due to spray damage from insecticides and fungicides. Products to be used on Dahlias should be evaluated beforehand

for safety.

Insects: Thrips, leafminer, aphids, fungus gnats, whitefly.

Diseases: Powdery Mildew, Botrytis (gray mold), Pythium, Rhizoctonia.

All **Dahlietta** Dahlia cuttings are derived from culture and virus-indexed stock from the Ball Certified Plants® program.

Problem: Plant collapse or fall over

Causes: Stem canker (Botrytis); Physical damage to plant in shipping liner; Liners not planted deep enough to encourage stem root development

Problem: Excessive vegetative growth or lack of flowers

Causes: Excessive ammonia nitrogen balance in fertilizer; Over-fertilization under low light conditions; Grown under short days and cool temperatures; Low light and over-watering; wet media

Problem: Premature flowering of plants (plants are small)

Causes: Growth checked due to low fertilizer; Growth checked due to excessive drying between waterings; High light and high temperature

Dahlietta Dahlia Crop Schedule & Uses

Unrooted cuttings:
4-In. (10-Cm) Pots 1 PP* 9 - 12 weeks
6-In. (15-Cm) Pots 1–2 PP* 10 - 12 weeks

Rooted cuttings:
4-In. (10-Cm) Pots 1 PP* 6 - 8 weeks
6-In. (15-Cm) Pots 1–2 PP* 7 - 9 weeks

*PP: Plants per pot or basket

NOTE: Growers should use the information presented here as a starting point. Crop times will vary depending on the climate, location, time of year and greenhouse environmental conditions. Chemical and PGR recommendations are only guidelines. It is the responsibility of the applicator to read and follow all the current label directions for the specific chemical being used in accordance with all regulations.

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