

WINTER DAHLIA STORAGE

WRITTEN BY CATHRINE FEATHERBY. PHOTOS AND PERSONAL STORAGE METHODS BY VERN STEPHENS, CATHRINE FEATHERBY, AND PAUL McKITTRICK





**VERN STEPHEN'S
METHOD FOR WINTER
STORAGE.**

**PLANTS ARE TAGGED,
WITH THEIR NAME AT
THE BOTTOM, BEFORE
DIGGING.**



PLANTS ARE CUT DOWN BUT LEFT IN THE GROUND TO EYE UP. GROWERS LEAVE THE PLANTS IN FOR DIFFERENT TIME FRAMES DEPENDING ON WEATHER AND PERSONAL TIME ALLOTMENT. SOME PREFER TO DIG IMMEDIATELY. THERE IS NO SET RULE.



**A BUCKET OF VERN'S
DEVELOPING DAHLIA SEED
HEADS CUT OFF DURING
THE DAHLIA GREENERY
REMOVAL.**

**THEY WILL CONTINUE TO
DEVELOP AND THE SEEDS
WILL THEN BE REMOVED..
VERN, CATHY AND PAUL
ALL SAVE SEED.**

RIPE DAHLIA SEEDS



INFORMATION ON THIS PHOTO IS IN THE FOLLOWING SLIDES





**TUBER CLUMPS
NAMED AND
WASHED.
THEY SIT ON A
PLASTIC SHEET,
DRYING WITH
A FAN OVERNIGHT
OR UNTIL THEY FEEL
DRY.**



**ONCE THE TUBER
CLUMPS ARE DRY,
THEY ARE DIVIDED
AND CINNAMON IS
PUT ON THE CUTS
AS A FUNGISIDE.**

**THE TUBERS ARE THEN PLACED INTO
CONTAINERS WITH THEIR NAME TAGS, AS
SEEN IN THE PREVIOUS SLIDE.**

**FROM HERE THEY WILL BE NUMBERED IN
CORRELATION TO THAT OF THE CULTIVAR
NAME LISTED IN A BOOK.**

LAYERING TUBERS IN THE RAISED BED





THIS PHOTO SHOWS A PARTLY FINISHED BED OF TUBERS.

THE DRY TUBERS WILL BE LAYERED INTO A PROTECTED RAISED BED WITH WOOD CHIPS BETWEEN THE 4 LAYERS. THE BOTTOM HAS 1.5 TO 2 INCHES OF CHIPS AND ABOUT 1 INCH OF CHIPS BETWEEN LAYERS. CHIPS ARE WHITE SHAVINGS IN GRAY BALES FROM BUCKERFIELDS. THEY ARE REUSED FOR A FEW YEARS AND THEN REPLACED.

THE FINISHED BED OF TUBERS IS COVERED WITH 4-6 INCHES OF WOOD CHIPS AND THEN COVERED WITH 6 MIL. POLY. BE SURE TO PIN IT DOWN.

TUBERS ARE REMOVED FROM THIS BED IN MID TO LATE FEBRUARY. THEY ARE PLACED IN A SHOP WHERE THE TEMPERATURE IS RAISED OVER A FEW WEEKS. SOME VARIETIES WARM UP FASTER THAN OTHERS.

VERN'S 1 GALLON POTS FOR WINTER STORAGE



VERN'S 1 GAL. POTS OF DAHLIAS, DUG FROM THE GARDEN, WILL BE STORED AS IS IN HIS HEATED GREENHOUSE.

THEY WILL BE DIVIDED IN LATE JANUARY OR FEBRUARY.

IN THE EARLY SPRING, HE WILL MOVE THE POTS INTO HIS SHOP, IF HE IS GOING TO HEAT THE GREENHOUSE FOR CUTTINGS.

PAUL McKITTRICK'S METHOD FOR WINTER STORAGE

**LIFTED TUBER CLUMPS
DRYING IN TRAYS.
TUBERS ARE DUG,
WASHED AND SET INTO
TRAYS READY TO BE
DIVIDED.**



PAUL'S CUTTING, DIGGING, DIVIDING AND STORAGE PROGRAM

DAY ONE: DIG/WASH/DRY 25 PLANTS

DAY TWO: DIG/WASH/DRY THE NEXT 25 PLANTS AND DIVIDE THE FIRST 25 TUBER CLUMPS.

DAY THREE: DIG/WASH/DRY ANOTHER 25 PLANTS; DIVIDE THE SECOND 25 CLUMPS; STORE AWAY THE FIRST 25 DAHLIA CLUMP TUBERS.

THIS SAME ASSEMBLY LINE CONTINUES EACH DAY DEPENDING UPON WEATHER AND TIME AVAILABILITY. DUG TUBER NUMBERS CAN BE LOWER DEPENDING ON TIME AVAILABILITY.

PAUL CUTS DOWN, DIGS, AND WASHES ALL ON THE SAME DAY, AS DO I. CLUMPS IN THE TRAYS ARE PLACED, PROPPED UP FOR AIR FLOW, IN SEMI SHADE AND LEFT FOR UP TO TWO DAYS AT THE MOST.

NOTE THAT DAHLIA CLUMPS LEFT SITTING IN THE GARDEN OR FIELD ARE SUBJECT TO ATTACK BY SMALL SLUGS THAT LIKE TO GO AFTER EYES.

ONCE TUBERS ARE DRIED BY THIS METHOD THEY ARE DIVIDED AND PLACED BACK IN THE SAME TRAY AND STORED ON A METAL GRILLED SHELF (WITH AIR FLOW FROM THE UNDERSIDE OF THE SHELF) FOR NO LONGER THAN TWO DAYS.



**DRY TUBERS
WHICH
ARE MARKED
FOR
IDENTIFICATION
AND THEN SET
INTO A
STORAGE TRAY**



TUBERS IN THE STORAGE TRAY ARE COVERED IN VERMICULITE OR A COMBINATION OF VERMICULITE AND WOOD CHIPS.



**THE STORAGE TRAY
IS PLACED INTO A
3-DRAWER UNIT.
THESE UNITS ARE
NOT AIR-TIGHT.**



**THREE DRAWER UNITS
IN STORAGE
RACKS IN THE COLD
ROOM.
THIS ROOM HAS A
HEATER THAT COMES
ON WHEN THE
TEMPERATURE GETS TO
THE DESIGNATED
SETTING.**

PAUL'S SECOND CHOICE FOR GROWING AND WINTERING TUBER CLUMPS IS TO DO SO IN 1 TO 2 GALLON POTS.

PAUL WASHES THE POTS AND TRIMS THE ROOTS RUNNING OUTSIDE THE POT.

POTS ARE THEN LEFT OUTSIDE IN THE SEMI-SHADE FOR 1 TO 2 DAYS.

POTS ARE MOVED TO A SHED TO COOL DOWN FOR 2 TO 4 DAYS AND THEN MOVED INTO THE STORAGE ROOM, WITH THE TUBERS, FOR THE WINTER.

PAUL, VERN, AND MYSELF ALL GROW PLANTS IN POTS AND THEN OVERWINTER THEM IN THESE SAME 1 TO 2 GALLON POTS.

PAUL PUTS HIS POTS INTO HIS STORAGE ROOM WITH THE TUBERS AND A HEATER. VERN STORES HIS IN HIS SHED WITH A HEATER.

I STORE MINE IN THE GREENHOUSE WITH A HEATER.

CATHRINE FEATHERBY'S METHOD FOR WINTER STORAGE.

YOU CAN DIG YOUR DAHLIAS WHENEVER IT IS COLD ENOUGH, THAT YOUR TUBERS WON'T DRY OUT, BEFORE YOU GET THEM DIVIDED AND PUT AWAY. IT OFTEN WORKS TO START JUST AFTER THANKSGIVING IN VICTORIA.

CUT DOWN THE PLANTS AND ATTACH THE LABEL, WHICH IS ON THE STAKE, TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PLANT, OR RELOCATE THE LABEL BEFORE CUTTING.

DIGGING YOUR DAHLIAS



WHEN DIGGING, MAKE A SLICE INTO THE SOIL, ALL THE WAY AROUND THE PLANT, FAR ENOUGH OUT SO NOT TO CUT OFF TUBERS.

IF YOU HAVE TWO PEOPLE YOU CAN EACH WORK FROM OPPOSITE SIDES AND LIFT THE TUBER CLUMP OUT WITH EVEN PRESSURE. THAT WAY, YOU'RE NOT LIFTING FROM ONE SIDE AND POSSIBLY BREAKING TUBERS FROM THE OTHER.

WITH ONE PERSON KEEP LIFTING GENTLY WHILE GOING AROUND THE PLANT UNTIL YOU FEEL YOU CAN LIFT IT OUT.

IF THE SOIL IS LIGHT, IT IS EASY TO LIFT THE PLANT BUT IF IT IS HEAVY, IT IS GOOD TO BRUSH SOIL AWAY FROM THE TOP OF THE PLANT, SO THE NECK AREA OF THE TUBERS DON'T BREAK WHEN LIFTING.

TUBER CLUMP BEING LIFTED AND TUBER CLUMPS NOW OUT OF THE GROUND



TUBER CLUMPS BEING WASHED



TRY TO NOT HOLD THE TUBER CLUMP IN THE AIR WHEN WASHING, AS THIS CAN LEAVE THE TUBER NECK VULNERABLE TO BREAKAGE.

STERILIZE YOUR IMPLEMENTS

BEFORE CUTTING TUBER CLUMPS OR DOING ANY WORK ON SEPARATE CULTIVARS, STERILIZE YOUR IMPLEMENTS.

ALSO DO SO WHEN WORKING IN THE GREENHOUSE, IN THE GARDEN DOING PLANT MAINTENANCE, AND CUTTING FLOWERS.

ALWAYS STERILIZE BETWEEN PLANTS.

CLEANING YOUR TOOLS

**THE RECOMMENDED METHODS FOR THIS
ARE:**

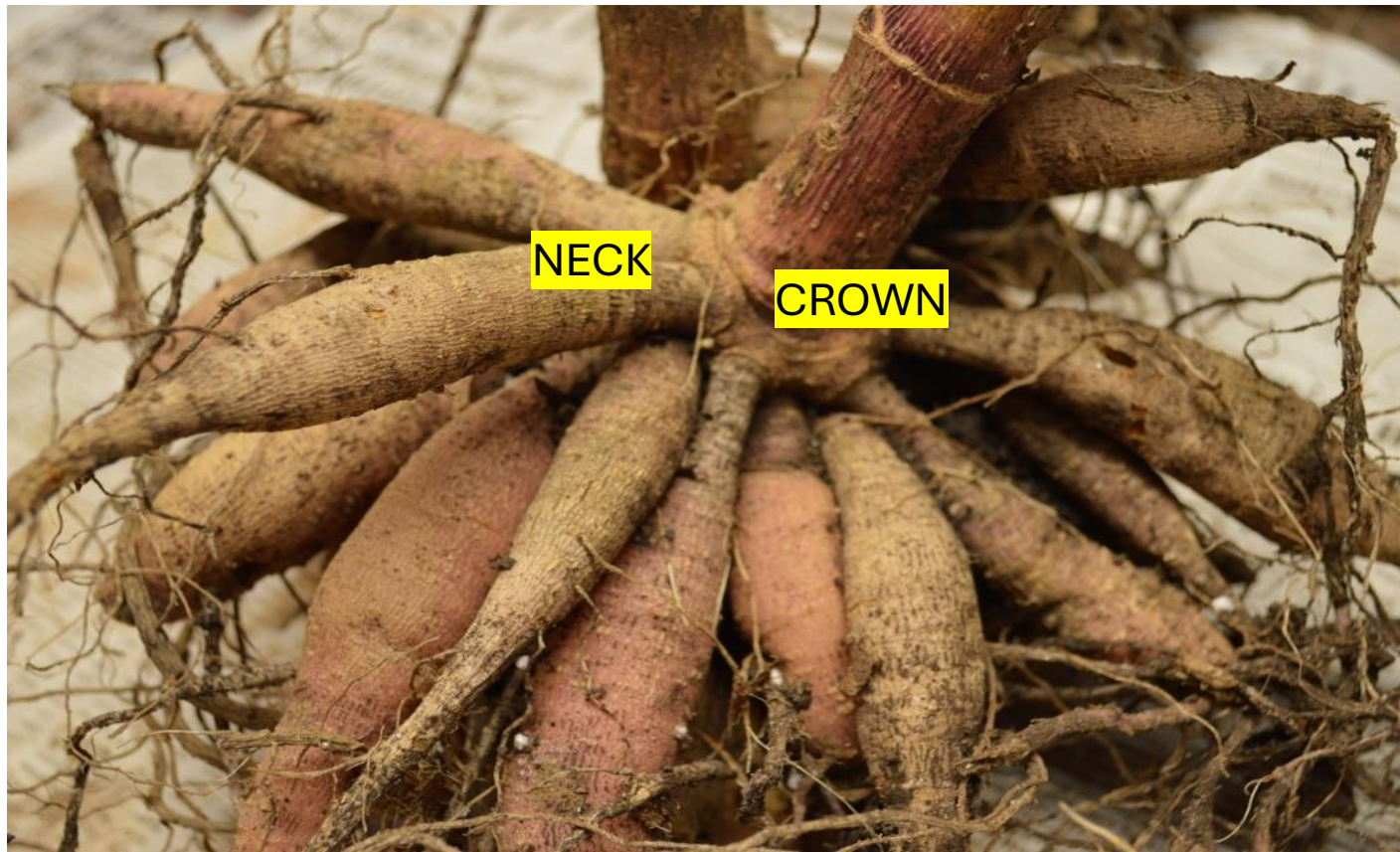
**BLEACH (10PERCENT) + 4 TSP. DAWN DISH
SOAP PER BUCKET.**

ETHANOL (70%)

**ALCOHOL (98%) – WIPE TOOLS AFTER
TREATING.**

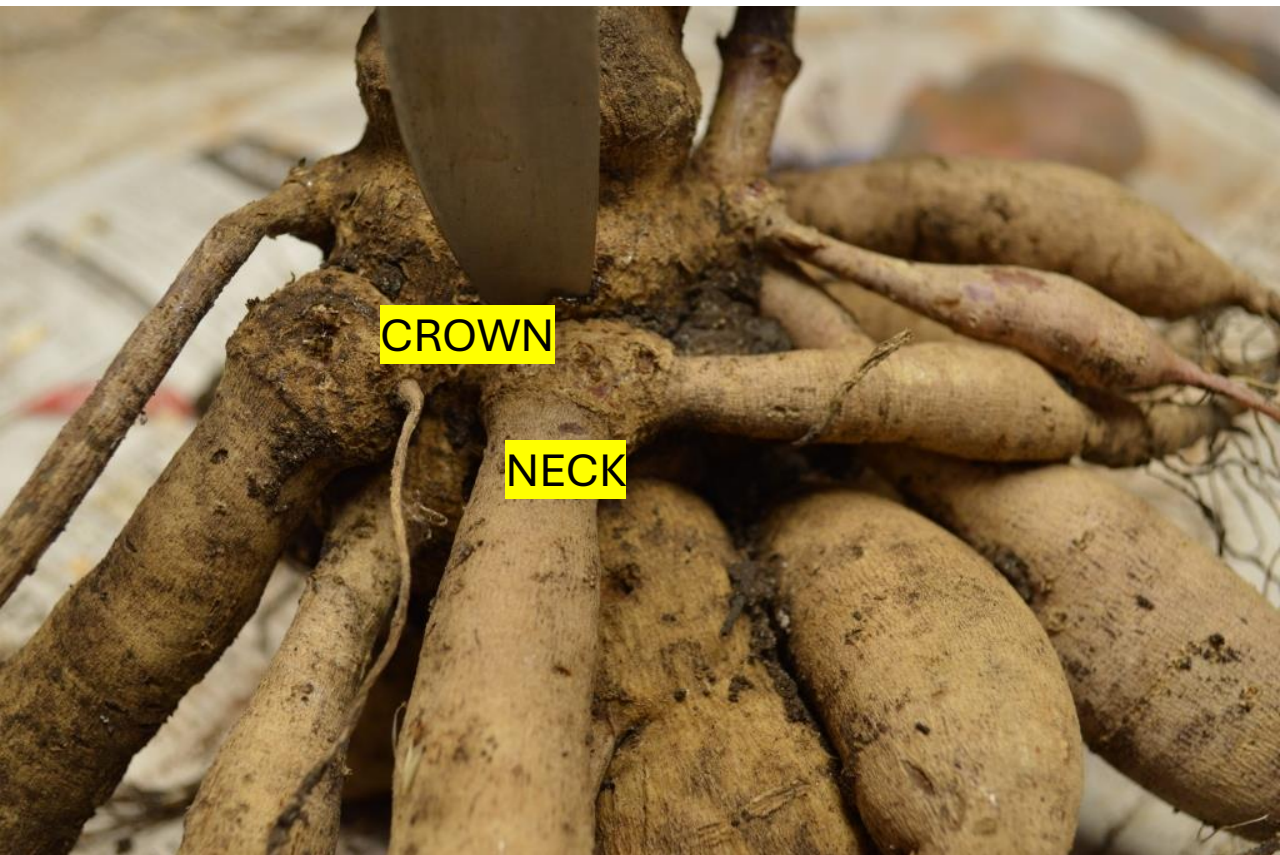
TUBERS AND WINTER STORAGE

TUBERS ARE THE PART OF THE DAHLIA WHICH PRODUCE THE NEXT YEARS GROWTH. THE TOP OF THE TUBER IS THE CROWN WHICH IS A PROTRUDING FLESHY AREA CONNECTING THE MAIN STEM AND TUBER. IT CONTAINS THE EYES (NEXT YEARS GROWTH). BELOW THE CROWN IS THE NECK AND BELOW THAT IS THE BULK OF THE TUBER.

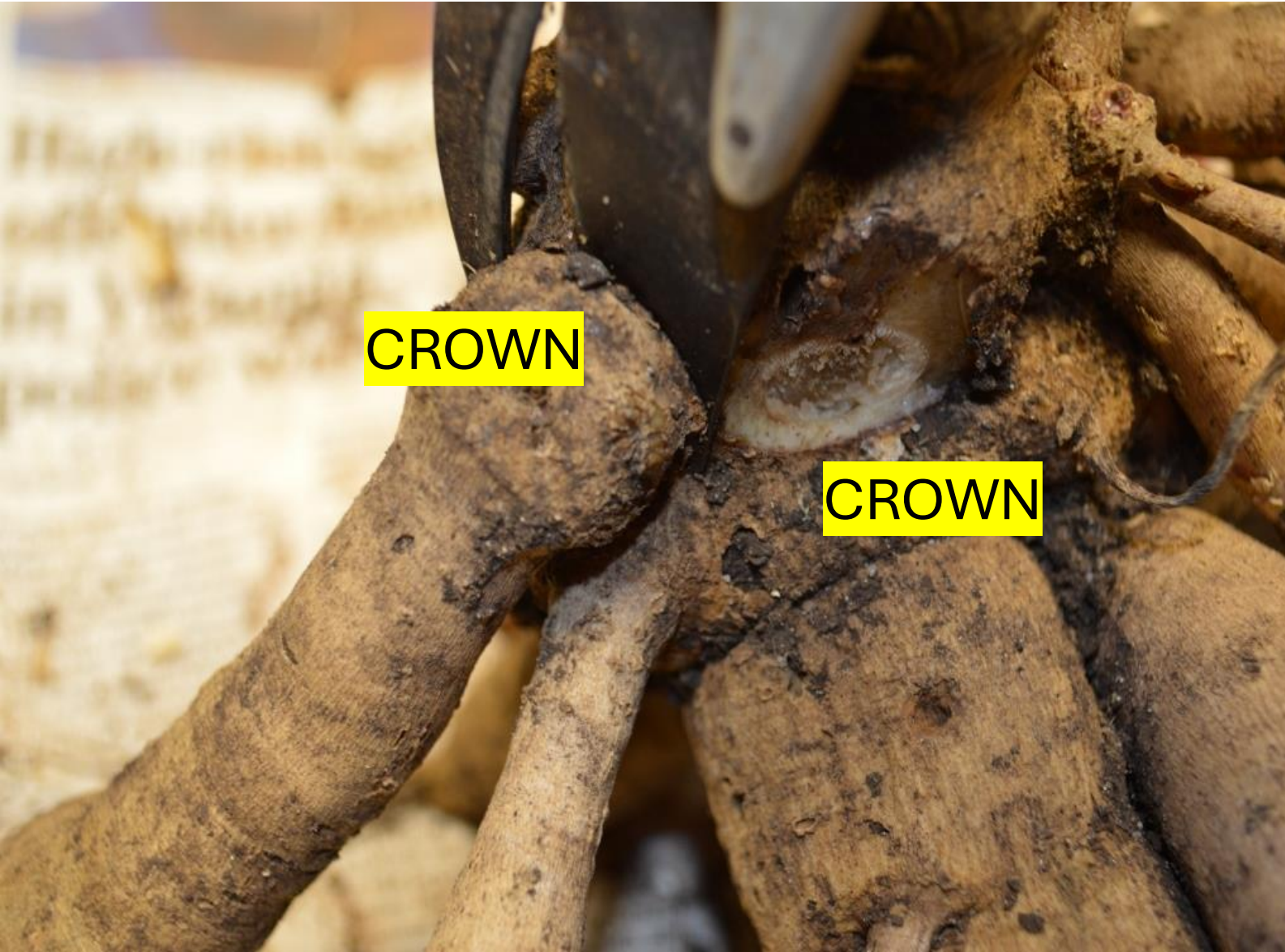


DIVIDING TUBER CLUMPS IN PREPARATION FOR WINTER STORAGE

THE NECK IS THE MOST VULNERABLE WHEN
HANDLING TUBERS AS IT CAN EASILY BREAK



SAME TUBER CLUMP AND SECOND TUBER REMOVED



**THE FIRST TUBER WAS
REMOVED USING A HEAVY
KNIFE AS IT WAS
DIFFICULT TO GET TO WITH
THE CLIPPERS.
THIS TUBER IS BEING
REMOVED WITH THE
CLIPPERS.
TUBERS OFTEN GROW IN
LAYERS SO TRY NOT TO
DAMAGE TUBER CROWNS
BELOW THAT WHICH YOU
ARE REMOVING.
NOTE THERE ARE
ADDITIONAL CROWN
AREAS ON THIS CLUMP
EASILY VISIBLE.**

TUBERS GROWING FROM OTHER TUBERS

TUBERS GROWING FROM OTHER TUBERS ARE OF NO VALUE TO KEEP AS THEY WILL NEVER PRODUCE EYES.

SOME VARIETIES ARE MORE INCLINED TO PRODUCE THEM. SIMPLY REMOVE THEM IF THE TUBER LOOKS TO BE VIABLE WITHOUT THEM.



THIS TUBER HAS A WHOLE BASE OF EXTRA TUBERS. IT CAN BE DECEIVING BUT THERE ARE NO CROWNS AND THEY ARE GROWING FROM A SINGLE TUBER. IT WAS CHUCKED AS THERE IS NO REASON TO PROPOGATE A LESSER QUALITY TUBER IF YOU HAVE BETTER.



**ONCE DIVIDED, TUBERS ARE AIR DRIED.
USE CINNAMON ON THE CUTS**



THE TRAYS ARE SITTING ON UPSIDE DOWN TRAYS FOR BETTER AIR MOVEMENT



HOW LONG TUBERS DRY DEPENDS ON THEIR SIZE. YOU WANT THEM DRY BUT NOT BECOMING WRINKLED. THIS IS CURING THEM.

THOSE THE SIZE OF A PENCIL OR SMALLER SELDOM SURVIVE SO ARE NOT KEPT.

TUBERS ARE NUMBERED CORRESPONDING TO THE SHEET SHOWN IN THE NEXT SLIDE.

THEY ARE THEN PLACED IN A PLASTIC BAG, USING THREE SIZES, WITH THE NAME ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE BAG. THE BAG HAS HOLES ON EACH SIDE TO PROVIDE AIR. I USE A HOLE PUNCH AND PUNCH OUT EACH SIDE $\frac{3}{4}$ OF THE WAY UP FROM THE BOTTOM. TWO ADDITIONAL HOLES ON THE LARGER BAGS.



Dahlia Cultivars 2020 - WINTER STORAGE

AVE RY #	TUBER #	NAME	SIZE/TYPE	HT	# of tubers	# pots	
			AA				
	AA1	Ben Huston	AA ID BR	5	10		
	AA2	Kenoraa Clyde	AA SC W	5-6			
	AA3	Nick Sr	AA ID R	3.5	4		
	AA4	Rogue Starburst	AA ID W	4.5-5			
	AA5	Show 'N' Tell	AA LC DB (PNW)	3.5	8		
	AA6	Wyn's Farmer John	AA ID LB	3.5			
	AA7	Wyn's King Salmon	AA SC DP	3.5			
			A				
	A9	Belle of the Ball	A LC PR	5.5	5		
	A10	Camano Sitka	A IC LB	5-6	30+		
	A11	Chi eeZ Whiz	A ID LB	4	20		

METHOD OF KEEPING TRACK OF TUBERS. NOTE THE TUBER NUMBER WHICH IS WRITTEN ON EACH TUBER. NOTE ALSO THE NUMBER OF TUBERS STORED. NOT ALL CLUMPS DIVIDED YET.

WOOD SHAVINGS, VERMICULITE OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH ARE PLACED INTO THE BAG WITH THE TUBERS. IF THE STORAGE MATERIAL IS BONE DRY IT CAN DRY OUT THE TUBERS. I SPRAY WITH A VERY SMALL AMOUNT OF WATER IF TOO DRY.



**IF ANY MOISTURE SHOWS UP ON THE BAG
THE TOP IS OPENED UNTIL IT IS DRY.
BAGS ARE PLACED INTO STYROPHOME
BOXES WHICH ARE LABELED.
BOXES ARE STORED IN AN UNHEATED
GARAGE ATTACHED TO THE HOUSE WHICH
USUALLY STAYS BETWEEN 37 AND 50
FAHRENHEIGHT. OR 2.78 AND 10 CELSIUS.**

ANOTHER METHOD OF KEEPING TUBERS IS A PLASTIC BIN. SHOWING THE PLACEMENT OF TUBER CLUMPS SO THAT IF THEY SPROUT, THEY WILL HAVE ROOM TO GROW. DAHLIA CLUMPS WERE COMPLETELY COVERED WITH VERMICULITE AND THEN THE LID PLACED ON THE TOP. THIS BIN DOES NOT HAVE A TIGHT SEAL.



WAKING YOUR TUBERS IN EARLY SPRING TUBERS WINTERED IN PLASTIC BAGS



I START TO WAKE UP TUBERS IN EARLY FEBRUARY. THE TUBERS ARE CHECKED, LIGHTLY BRUSHING THE TOP SO FUTURE EYES ARE VISIBLE. REMOVE ANY BAD ONES, AND TURN THEM, SO THE EYES WILL BE AT THE TOP OF THE BAG FACING OUT.

THIS METHOD ALLOWS FOR VISIBILITY OF DEVELOPING EYES.

TUBERS ARE KEPT IN THE HOUSE (KITCHEN) TO WARM UP. A BIT OF FUZZ ON THE CROWN IS NOT UNCOMMON AND CAN USUALLY BE BRUSHED OFF. REAPPLY CINNAMON. ONCE EYED UP, THEY CAN BE SEPARATED AND PUT BACK INTO THE COOL GARAGE FOR SELLING, OR POTTED FOR MYSELF AND PLACED INTO THE HEATED GREENHOUSE. DISCARD ANY ROTTING TUBERS AND THEIR STORAGE MATERIAL INTO THE GARBAGE, NOT COMPOST. THIS IS TO KEEP ANY POSSIBLE DISEASE FROM GETTING INTO YOUR GARDEN IN THE FUTURE.

OVERWINTERING IN THE GROUND



**CUT THE STOCK TO THE GROUND.
FILL A 3 GALLON POT WITH LEAVES AND PLACE OVER THE TOP OF THE DAHLIA.
HOLD IT DOWN WITH STAKES.**

WHAT KILLS THE DAHLIA TUBERS, LEFT IN THE GROUND, IS HAVING THE TUBERS FREEZE AND/OR GET TOO WET.

IN ORDER FOR DAHLIA TUBER CLUMPS TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE WINTER THEY NEED A DRYER LOCATION AND TO BE PLANTED DEEP OR COVERED DEEP ENOUGH WITH LEAVES TO NOT FREEZE.

ALWAYS CUT THE STOCK RIGHT DOWN SO IT IS NOT PROTRUDING AND ABLE TO FILL WITH WATER.

PUT LOTS OF LEAVES, AT LEAST 6 INCHES DEEP, (I USE OAK AS THEY SHEDS WATER) OVER THE TOP OF THE PLANTS AND ON THE WHOLE BED. DO THIS EVEN IF USING POTS AS IN THE PREVIOUS SLIDE.

SOME PEOPLE PLACE PLASTIC OR A TARP OVER THE LEAVES AND THEN PIN IT DOWN WITH WOOD, ROCKS OR WHATEVER WORKS FOR THEM. I USE BOTH THE POT METHOD AND THE LEAVES IN MY BACK GARDEN.

DAHLIA TUBER CLUMPS LEFT TO OVERWINTER IN THE GROUND CAN BE DIVIDED IN THE SPRING BEFORE THE TUBER SALE. THAT WAY YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE. REPLANT THEM, OR DIVIDE AND REPLANT THEM. IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A HEAVY FROST OR RAIN COVER THEM WITH THE LEAVES YOU REMOVED.

DAHLIAS LEFT IN THE GROUND SHOULD BE LIFTED AND DIVIDED EVERY COUPLE OF YEARS OR THEY CAN GET VERY LARGE AND DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH. EVERY PLANT IS DIFFERENT.

THE SARAN WRAP TUBER STORAGE METHOD

A METHOD NOT USED BY THE THREE OF US BUT USED BY OTHER VDS MEMBERS IS THE SARAN WRAP METHOD.

THE AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY SITE HAS A COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION OF THIS METHOD WITH PHOTOS.

ONE THING THE MAJORITY OF VDS MEMBERS ARE NOW DOING IS USING CINNAMON FOR A FUNGICIDE INSTEAD OF THE MANY PRODUCTS DANGEROUS TO US.

GO TO THE AMERICAN DAHLIA SOCIETY SITE.

SCROLL DOWN BELOW THE PHOTO AND CLICK ON “LEARN”.

SCROLL DOWN THE PAGE TO “ARTICLES” AND CLICK ON “THE SARAN WRAP TUBER STORAGE METHOD”