

ADS Dahlia University - Tubers

What should tubers look and feel like?

Healthy tubers will be firm and plump – not shriveled* or spongy. They will look and feel like a raw sweet potato. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Neither the size, shape, or color will give you an indication of the flower the tuber will produce. A small tuber can produce a big flower!

You will want to see at least one “eye” on the tuber – this is the start of your dahlia plant. Eyes develop along the crown of the tuber. The crown is a bulging ridge going around the thin portion of the tuber called the neck. Initially the eye will just be a bump on the crown and then it will develop into a sprout/shoot. If the sprout/shoot gets broken off before the tuber is planted, don’t worry, the tuber will more than likely produce another sprout/shoot.



Where can I get good tubers?

Tubers are available online from many suppliers. See our [advertisers](#) page for some possibilities. You will want to buy early - many suppliers are out of the popular varieties as early as January. You can also get cuttings from online suppliers.

Increasingly, local nurseries and garden centers and even at the “big box” stores are selling tubers in the spring.

A really fun way to obtain tubers is at a local, ADS-affiliated Society’s sale or auction. Local sales offer a good variety of tubers that will do well in your area. You’ll also find local favorites and sentimental varieties. And you’ll probably get advice to go along with them! Meeting growers in your area is a good

way to expand your dahlia knowledge. For a schedule of tuber/plant sales in your area visit the [ADS website](#).

*If you have a tuber from a favorite dahlia that is shriveled but seems to have a bit of life in it, try this. Sprinkle a few drops of water into a plastic bag, put the tuber in, do not seal, and put somewhere warm. Often the tuber will plump back up. Watch closely for any signs of mold and remove the tuber from the bag if you find any.

Our courses are written by dahlia enthusiasts, not necessarily scientists or horticulturalists. These enthusiasts are pleased to share their experience and best practices with you. Please keep in mind that there are a variety of opinions in the dahlia community and that different solutions and procedures work in different circumstances and locales. We urge you to participate in a [local society](#) where you will meet great growers with knowledge of growing dahlias in your area...and you'll have fun!

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