

**'MAGIC' SHOW**

**C**APTURE THE MAGIC Moment" is the theme of the 35th National Dahlia Show, opening Saturday at Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in Oyster Bay. More than 2,000 dahlias of all sizes, shapes and colors — including Magic Moment, the white dahlia that is the show's signature bloom — will be on display in the Burns Horticultural Center. And hundreds more flowers will be in fine form in the arboretum's Paul Callahan Dahlia Display. The two-day dahlia-fest is sponsored by Mid Island Dahlia Society, Planting Fields Foundation and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Show times are 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$5 a car. For more information, call 516-922-7604 or visit [www.midislanddahlia.com](http://www.midislanddahlia.com).

NEWSDAY, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2001



**STORING DAHLIA TUBERS**

**L**IKE MOST divas, dahlias need a beauty rest. And you have to put them to bed for the winter properly. Most growers wait until the first hard frost blackens the blooms. You can dig them out before then as long as they've had 150 days of growing. But don't wait much longer than one week after frost. Some fanciers actually wax their dahlia tubers with paraffin before storing them, but it's not necessary. Root clumps can be divided prior to storing or in the spring: With a sharp knife or pruning shears, cut the tubers so that each division has at least one shoot or budding eye. Here's some advice for digging and storing dahlias:



1. Cut tops off the plants to within 12 inches of the ground and label each clump. Don't put the cut stalks in the compost because slugs and borers may lurk in the hollow stems. Dig around each clump, about a foot from the plant, and gently pry out the root mass. Don't pull out the plant by the stalk. Shake off excess soil.



2. Cut stems to about 2 inches.



3. Wash or hose off the clumps, then soak for 15 minutes in a solution of 3 ounces of bleach in one gallon of water. Turn them upside down and let them dry in a shady, frost-free area for several days.

4. Tightly pack tubers upside down in cardboard boxes filled with newspaper, vermiculite or perlite. Don't use peat moss; it pulls water from roots. Cover with sheets of newspaper and close the box, leaving holes at each end for ventilation.

Or you can pack tubers in Zip-loc plastic bags filled with coarse vermiculite; punch air holes near the top of the bag. Doris and Jay also suggest the lasagna method: Spread coarse vermiculite at the bottom of a Styrofoam cooler, place tubers upside down on the vermiculite, then add a layer of newspaper; repeat the layers until all your tubers are packed.

Store tubers in a cool place, between 35 and 50 degrees (45 is ideal). If it's too cold, tubers turn to mush. If it's too hot, they dry out. Check them once or twice during the winter. If they look shriveled, mist them. If they're too wet, repack them using dry material.

— Irene Virag



Tubers must have post-frost cure!

plastic bags - Holed w/ Vermiculite 45°-50°

Cap and Alumina use / orange for week / cut feeder roots wash 1/3 cup bleach to gal of water split tubers

Have to split before cure for week upside down

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# DAZZLING DIVERSITY

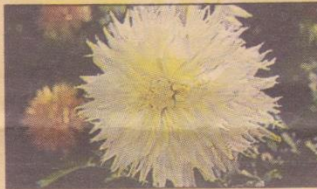
If you think you know what a dahlia looks like, look again. You might be surprised. The dahlia is a flower of many faces — not to mention sizes and colors. Here are a few that might dazzle you.

**JUANITA** is a dark-red “cactus” dahlia, which means its spiky petals radiate in all directions from the center. It’s considered medium-sized, with blooms that measure 6 to 8 inches across.



**NORMANDY PROMISE** is a pink “semi-cactus” dahlia with broader petals than a cactus dahlia. It’s ranked as a small dahlia, even though its blooms are 4 to 6 inches in diameter.

**SCAUR SWINTON** is a dark-pink “formal decorative” dahlia that has flat, evenly spaced petals. Flowers are medium-sized.



**UKRAINE** is a yellow “informal decorative”-type dahlia, with an irregular arrangement of twisted petals. It’s classified as a giant dahlia, since its blooms grow to more than 10 inches in diameter.

**GRACE McNULTY** is a purple “orchid” dahlia. It has a single row of flat, uniformly spaced petals surrounding an open center. Orchid dahlias are not classified by size.



**ALPEN CHERUB** is a white “collarette,” with a row of inner petals that are ruffled like a collar around the central disk. Collarette dahlias are not classified by size.

**HY MALLOW** is a purple “ball,” so called because the blooms are ball-shaped with a slightly flattened face. Flowers are more than 3½ inches in diameter.



**ORETI DUKE** is a purple “pompon” dahlia, with tightly furled petals layered to form a rounded flower head. Pompons are smaller — they measure