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Dahlia

Dahlias are mostly thought to be native to the warmer regions of the Americas. Western Europeans first witnessed their beauty in ancient Aztec gardens. They also were found growing wild along moist stream banks, meadows and hillsides. These were bushy or cane-like hollow-stemmed herbaceous plants topped with colorful, often star-shaped mostly single blooms.

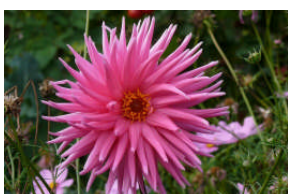


They were often grown for their edible tuberous roots similar to potatoes which are close relatives. The Indian word for Dahlia means 'water pipe' and fresh cut hollowed canes were used for drinking the freshest water just beneath the surface of streams and pools.

The hollow stems, once thoroughly dried were often filled with tobacco or various dried herbs for smoking and spiritual rituals. Modern hybrids number in the thousands which have resulted from countless cross-pollinations between seedlings.



Today's range of Dahlias include tiny delicate dwarf bedding plants highly suitable to container growing, a vast array of 30cm. to 1.5m shrub and cane dahlias used primarily for cut flowers, show and bedding plus giant 'tree' cane varieties topping 3-5m.



Dahlias need a warm, sunny, sheltered site for best results. Their tuberous-rooted nature allows them to survive in tropical, subtropical, arid and temperate regions around the world. They are best suited to loamy soils enriched with well-aged manure or compost and a balanced plant food which will produce spectacular results but they will grow in almost anything.

In temperate regions Dahlia tubers can be planted anytime once the soil warms up from early spring onward to early summer. They bloom throughout summer and

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