

August Dahlia Growing Guide: Disbudding

Depending upon when you planted your dahlia and the type of dahlia, you should have flower buds at the ends of your stems and notice that they occur in groups of three. **Disbudding** is the cultural practice of removing two of these buds. Beginners are sometimes reluctant to do this, but unless dahlias are disbudded, they will not produce large, perfectly formed flowers on long stems.

Ideally, when the flower buds of the tip cluster are about the size of peas, remove all but one by bending the unwanted two back and snap them off. At the same time, if you want longer stems, you can disbud the small, tender growth buds in the leaf axils of the top set of leaves on the stem. You might also need to do the same for the buds coming from the base of the next set of leaves if the variety produces short stems.

Remember that dahlias produce more flower buds than the plant can supply with food. Disbudding is necessary to channel sufficient food to a select number of flowers. As with a lot of learning, seeing this is helpful. Here is a link to an excellent video from Kristine Albrecht #155 Disbudding Dahlia Plants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpFy85uOle4>

Submitted by Justine Dial and Laura Matz. Adapted from the Puget Sound Dahlia Association.