



**'D**apper' dahlia is one of the newest dwarf series on the market, with six colors. Dapper features small, semi-double, 2-inch blooms; dark green foliage; and a uniform habit. The Dapper colors are consistent across varieties — from Bronze through Deep Rose, Pink, Scarlet, White and Yellow.

Dapper plants are early to flower and versatile in 4-inch and larger pots, baskets, color bowls, patio planters and window boxes. Dappers, available as both rooted and unrooted cuttings, work well in combination pots, as their dwarf habit and flower power really shine. This series also performs well in the landscape because of its sturdy, compact shape and nicely mounded, 8- to 10-inch habit.

#### SCHEDULING

Dapper is fast-cropping at 6-8 weeks from a rooted cutting to a 4-inch pot. Use one cutting per 4- to 6-inch pot or 1-gallon container. Add an additional 2-4 weeks for finishing larger pots and gallons. If using Dapper dahlias in a basket, use at least three cuttings per 10-inch or five cuttings per 12-inch basket.

#### PROPAGATION

Clean and disinfect your propagation area thoroughly before cuttings arrive. As with all vegetative material, quality is dependent on how quickly the cuttings can be put into propagation.

Open the boxes upon arrival, and stick the cuttings as soon as possible. If the cuttings have to be held until the following morning, store the opened boxes at a temperature of 42° F.

## Culture Tips for

# 'Dapper' Dahlias

This dahlia takes vegetative dahlias to new heights, combining its smaller flowers, uniformity and flexibility with reliable pot and garden performance.

By Lori May

Rooting hormones containing 500-1,000 ppm IBA will aid in rooting. Be sure to shake off any excess hormone, as too much can cause damage.

Rooting time is 15-21 days with a bench temperature of 68-72° F. Mist lightly for the first 4-6 days. It's important to avoid over-misting, as keeping the foliage too wet can contribute to disease pressure, especially Botrytis.

#### GROWING ON

Use a well-draining, soilless media with a pH of 5.8-6.2, and keep the media evenly moist. If the plants are kept too wet early, growth and flowering will be slowed. Do not allow to dry down to wilt, as this can have an even bigger effect on the final quality of the crop.

Dahlias are moderate feeders, so fertilize at a constant rate of 200-250 ppm nitrogen. Alternate between 20-10-20 and 14-0-14. Keep an eye on your ammonia levels, as excessive amounts will cause soft growth. Most importantly, dahlias are sensitive to high soluble salt levels, so maintain an EC as close to 1.0 as possible.

Maintain a night temperature of 62-65° F and a day temperature of 68-72° F. Cooler temperatures (mid to lower 50s) will promote tuber development and delay flowering; temperatures higher than 80° F can also delay flowering and cause bud abortion.


With regard to lighting, there are two critical factors for the best-quality crop: Dahlias need over 2,000 foot-candles of light, as lower light levels can result in leggier plants with fewer buds; and dahlias need daylengths over 12 hours for early flowering, as shorter days will promote tuber development instead of vegetative growth and bud set. Use night-interruption lighting (minimum 10 foot-candles incandescent or 400 foot-candles HID) from 10 p.m.-2 a.m. during short-day periods.

Dappers are bred to be compact and branching. They generally do not require growth regulators. If necessary, B-Nine can be used at 1,500

ppm 2-3 weeks after potting. Bonzi at 2-4 ppm has also been reported as effective on dahlias.

Pinching is not required, but it can improve branching if done 12-18 days after transplant. Keep in mind that in doing this, flowering will be delayed at least 5-7 days.

The most common insects on dahlias are thrips, aphids, whiteflies and fungus gnats. Use labeled rates of insecticides for control.

Pythium, Rhizoctonia and Botrytis are the main dahlia diseases. Preventative applications of fungicides can be applied to avoid these problems. Culturally, avoid overhead watering, and maintain good air circulation to help prevent Botrytis infections. Allowing the media to dry slightly between waterings will also help prevent root diseases. 

*Lori May is account manager for Goldsmith Seeds. She can be reached at (517) 333-4282.*



### Spreading petunia

The Explorer series flowers early and will continue to flower even under the short days of fall. Flower size is approximately 2-3 inches, and the petals have a shiny, waxy texture that repels water. Explorers are very floriferous and recover quickly after a storm or rain. They have a spreading habit and can easily cover three feet.

The series consists of nine colors, five of which are new. Blue, Pink, Rose, Magenta and Purple join White, Lavender, Coral and Rose Pink. In 392 cells, Explorers need a well-drained, sterile media with a pH of 5.8-6.2 and

a temperature of 72-75° F. In jumbo packs, they need a pH of 5.5-6.2, a night temperature of 55-65° F and a day temperature of 65-75° F. Explorer will start to flower in late March to early April without supplemental lighting; night interruption or day extension lighting using either high-intensity discharge (HID) or incandescent lights is recommended. Explorer will flower 6-8 weeks after transplant under long days in the spring and 4-6 weeks after transplant in the summer under long days with high light and a minimum temperature of 65° F. Sakata, Morgan Hill, Calif.

**Write in 1401**



**GeoSeed**

121 Gary Road, Dept 269  
Hodges, SC 29653

## Seed For Professionals

- 100% dedicated to Seed, your seed needs our only business
- Thousands in stock
- Climate controlled building, newest proven research specs
- Super Cleaning Available. Ask about DreamSeed™
- Germ testing constant and comprehensive
- Personal service and product knowledge of highest standard
- Our people pledge the care and commitment of lifetimes in seed

Yours truly,

George B. Park

Call Toll Free 888-645-2323 • Fax 864-227-5108 • Email [geo@emeraldseed.com](mailto:geo@emeraldseed.com)

### *Knautia macedonica*

'Mars Midget' is shorter and more compact than the species, reaching only 16 inches tall, and is therefore sturdier. The heavily branched, flowering stems are topped with dozens of 2-inch-wide, ruby-red flowers that appear from June until frost. Mars Midget is a valuable, long-flowering perennial that attracts butterflies to feed and rest. Jelitto, Schwarmstedt, Germany.

**Write in 1402**

### Kalanchoe

'Hakon' is a single-flowering, average-vigor kalanchoe with dark green leaves and orange and light orange flowers. Hakon's suggested pot size is 3½-5 inches, and it requires only a light growth regulator application. FGB, De Lier, The Netherlands.

**Write in 1404**

### Hosta

The American Hosta Growers Association has selected 'Regal Splendor' as its Hosta of the Year. A mature Regal Splendor can grow to 36 x 40 inches, with 10- x 5-inch, pointed, bluish-gray leaves with wavy, creamy white margins. A notable feature of the plant is its upright growing habit. In July, lavender flowers appear on scapes that can reach five inches. American Hosta Growers Association, Chapel Hill, N.C.

**Write in 1403**

### *Eucomis comosa*

'Oakhurst' is a deep-purple-leaved novelty that prefers full sun to part shade. It is well-suited for Zones 7-10 or Zone 6 when protected. This plant attracts hummingbirds, butterflies and makes an excellent cut flower. Oakhurst is 20 x 24 x 32 inches when in flower. Terra Nova Nurseries Inc., Tigard, Ore.

**Write in 1405**