

Dahlia Café Au Lait

Culture Guide

Dahlia hybrida

Product form: Vegetative

Habit: Upright

Garden Specifications

Garden Height: 4–5' (122–152 cm) tall

Garden Width: 2–3" (61–91 cm) wide

Exposure: Full Sun

Propagation of Unrooted Cuttings

Root emergence: 8–10 days

Rooting hormone: Highly recommended. An overhead heavy spray to the cuttings (penetrating the rooting media) using water-soluble K-IBA at 200 ppm 24–48 hours after sticking can hasten and promote more even rooting.

Bottom heat temp.: 70–74 °F (21–23 °C) for the first three weeks. After roots are well developed, temperatures can be lowered to hold and tone the cuttings.

Misting: Mist schedules vary depending on light and temperature conditions. Apply just enough moisture to rehydrate the cuttings and keep them from wilting. Cuttings should be hydrated and in a non-wilted stage within 24 hours after sticking. Cuttings that continue to wilt heavily after 24 hours will callus unevenly and will be delayed in rooting. CapSil® (spray adjuvant) can be sprayed on the cuttings at a rate of 2–4 oz/100 gal within 1–2 days after sticking to help in rehydration of the cuttings. Misting should be significantly reduced after 3–4 days and after cuttings become fully hydrated.

Rec. tray size: 105-cell (30 mm) or larger



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Propagation timing: 4–5 weeks for a 105-cell plug; add more rooting time for significantly larger plug sizes.

Lighting

Day extension lighting: Necessary to 14 hours

Light intensity: 1,000–1,200 foot candles (200–250 micro mols) for the first two weeks after sticking or until root development occurs. Light levels can be increased up to 3,000 foot candles (600 micro mols) as rooting increases and the cutting matures.

Day length response: Facultative short day

Daily light integral (DLI): 4–6 mols/day for the first two weeks after sticking or until root development occurs. DLI can be increased to greater than 12 mols/day after root formation.

Media pH: 5.8–6.2

Media EC: SME EC: 0.9–1.3 mS/cm, PourThru EC: 1.4–2.0 mS/cm

Fertilizer: Begin fertilization at 100 ppm nitrogen when roots become visible. Rates can be increased up to 200 ppm nitrogen after roots become well developed. Use primarily Cal-Mag® Plus (calcium nitrate + magnesium nitrate) fertilizers in propagation to prevent unwanted stretch.

Pinching: Not recommended

Plant growth regulators (PGRs): Café Au Lait has a vigorous habit and may require a PGR treatment in propagation. If needed to control growth after rooting, sprays of B-Nine® WSG (1500 ppm) are usually sufficient. A tank-mix spray of Florel® (350–500 ppm) + B-Nine® WSG (1,500 ppm) can also be used to control growth and improve branching. Do not spray Florel® on stressed or weak cuttings. For all sprays listed above, the mist should be off for a minimum of one hour for the PGR to absorb into the leaf tissue.

TECH TIP: Long-day lighting (day length extension or night interruption) is needed during propagation to avoid premature flowering and tuber formation.

Finishing

Lighting

Light intensity: 8,000–10,000 foot candles (800–2,000 micro mols)

Day length response: Facultative short day

Daily light integral (DLI): Greater than 18 mols/day

Transplanting: Transplant liners in the spring into ground beds at approximately 12" x 18" spacing (or greater in hot, humid locations to allow for air flow to prevent disease). Starting dahlias from rooted liners rather than tubers is very different. You must provide the liner with optimal irrigation and nutrition in order for it to establish properly and be able to support full big blooms. If not given enough water and feed, Café Au Lait will start to produce semi-double and single flowers.

Fertilizer: 200–250 ppm N

Pinching: Yes, at least 1 hard pinch is recommended after transplanting in the ground. To get fuller more double flowers consistently also remove smaller side buds to allow for main buds to more fully develop.

Support Netting: Highly recommended.

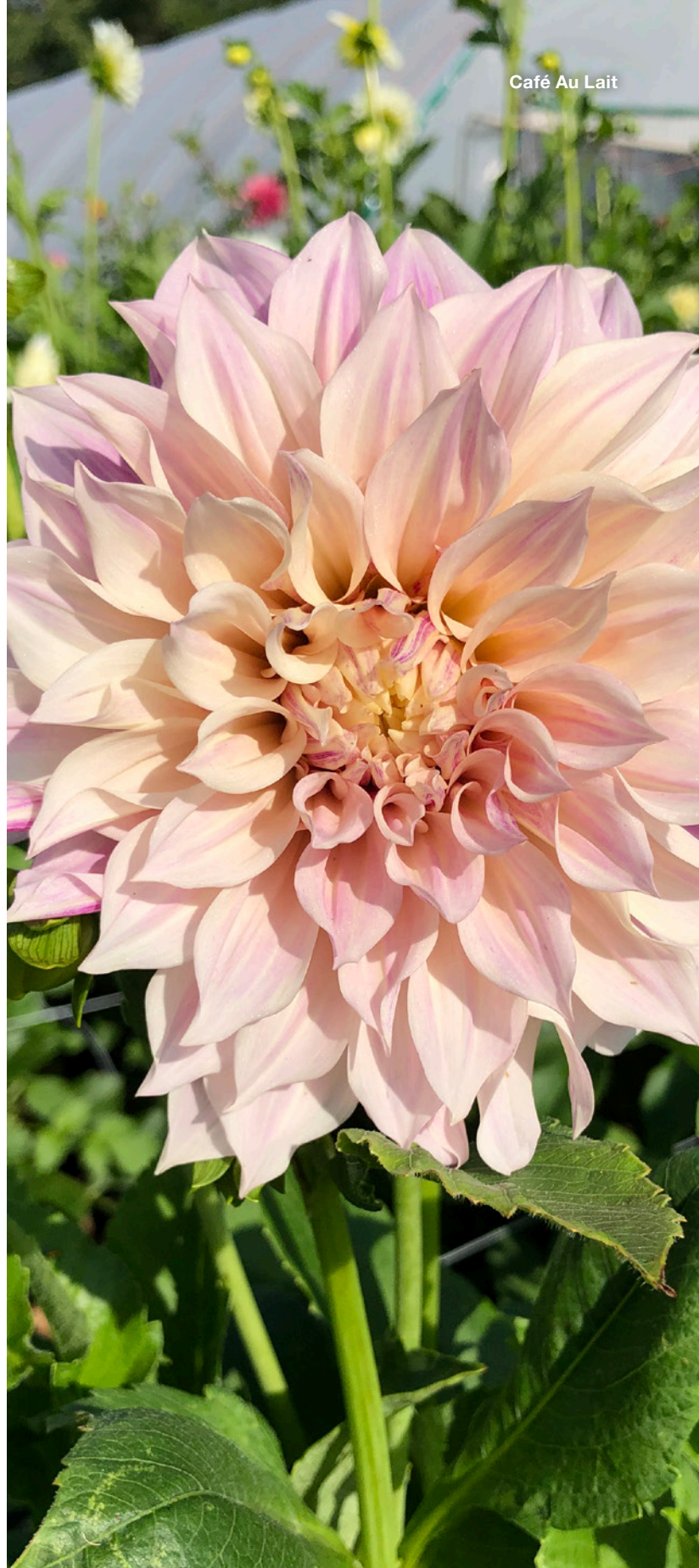
Tech tip: Café Au Lait will start to produce semi-double and single flower forms as the day lengths get shorter and cooler into the fall season. Café Au Lait will also be more prone to produce semi-double or single flowers when under various forms of stress from heat or sub-optimal irrigation and nutrition during establishment. Nutrition should be maintained through vegetative bulking and flowering in order to support production of fully double flowers longer. If plants are a light green or yellow tone they should be fertilized until tone improves to a healthy green tone.

Postharvest Handling: Harvest when the first few outer rows of petals are open but before the back petals start to fall off. Dahlias are not sensitive to ethylene so do not benefit from the use of anti-ethylene agents.

Expected vase life: 4–5 days. A holding solution is recommended to extend vase life. In general, dahlias do not tolerate long-term cold storage.

Common pests: Thrips, Aphids, Spider mites, Leaf miners

Common diseases: Powdery mildew, Botrytis, Basal stem rot



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