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Dahlia Lubega Power Series

By Jennifer Calhoun

As patio planters continue to gain interest with consumers, plants such as dahlias are rising to the occasion. This explosive series packs power into planters of all sizes.



Container gardening has become the new norm for gardeners of all ages.



According to consumer trend research, as many as 75 percent of people



buying annuals use them in containers or pots. Why? Well, there are several reasons. First, people don't always have the space to plant a full



garden. The American dream has changed from settling down in a home with a yard to experiencing the world when the opportunity arises. Millennials are living with their parents longer, renting apartments, or even buying tiny houses that can be moved easily. Baby Boomers are downsizing to low-maintenance townhomes. Even large, new homes that are being built often have a patio but not much more "green" space.

Another reason people love gardening in pots is that it's just easier. You can plant a patio pot in just a few minutes. If you choose, you can plant more, or you can stop there. There's no weeding, they don't take long to water, and you can move your pot to a place with more sun, less wind or where it would look better.

With all this demand for patio planters, you need to make sure that your potted plant program has the variety and flower power to deliver. If you need more power, then you need Lubega Power dahlias, the new series from Benary+ for the North American market.

Lubega Power dahlias have huge, colorful solid and bicolor flowers that will dazzle consumers. All five types of Lubega dahlias have a robust habit that works well indoors or out, in patio pots or mixed containers. Here is a little more information about these outstanding performers that will fly off the shelves.

Dahlia Lubega

The Lubega series is available as unrooted cuttings from Benary+. This series was bred to be early to bloom, versatile and an all-around performer. Naturally self-branching, these beauties are easy to grow because no pinching is necessary. The large, bright, fully double blooms cover the plant all season. At retail, Lubega dahlias work well in 4.5- to 5.5-inch pots, but can also be sold in patio pots and mixed containers.

Dahlia Lubega Special

Bicolors are always a hit with consumers so they will love Lubega Special dahlias. Each variety in the series has a bold eye that is sure to get attention at retail.

Dahlia Lubega Dark

This new series sports dark foliage that really sets off the bright, bold blooms.

Dahlia Lubega Power

If you are looking for more vigor for larger pots, then Lubega Power is what you need. As the name implies, this series is bigger and more vigorous, but still maintains the outstanding branching of the original series. This allows the plant to stay upright without staking.

Dahlia Lubega XL

The largest of the Lubega dahlias, the Lubega XL Series is for your largest pots. Bred to be the focal point of any garden, these huge, fully double flowers will not disappoint. Finished plant height is about 16 to 18 inches.

Propagation

- Crop time is about 12 to 14 weeks to a 6-inch pot.
- Stick one cutting per cell.
- Provide proper ventilation and horizontal airflow.

Rooting takes about three weeks for Lubega dahlias. During December and January you might need to add a week due to low light conditions. The pH level of your soil should be between 5.8 and 6.2. After sticking you should mist cuttings for about two to three weeks. On day five, begin to reduce the frequency of misting. By day 10, reduce even further. By day 14, only mist the cuttings during the day as needed. Take care not to let the plants dry out. Don't cover the URC directly with foil if mist is not available. This will make the URCs rot. Instead, build a tent so the leaves are not damaged. Greenhouse temperature should be kept at 68° F. If you are

producing rooted liners, one week before shipping bring the plants into a normal greenhouse with temperatures at least 63 to 65° F. Keep on giving long days (14 to 16 hours).

Production

After rooting, use a well-balanced fertilizer, 15-5-15 or 14-4-14 at rates of 100 to 150 ppm. One pinch is recommended after the plants have rooted but pinching can be omitted for quick turns in small pots.

Maintain temperatures at 64 to 68° F days and 60 to 62° F nights. Lower temperatures lengthen the growing time and have a negative influence on the plant structure. Higher temperatures combined with a lack of light cause too soft a plant structure. The temperature for finished plants can be dropped to 54° F, but temperatures below 54° F can cause tuber formation which will limit flowering.

Dahlias are long-day plants. Provide long days of 14 to 16 hours for three to four weeks after transplant or use night interruption lighting. This will prevent premature budding and tuber formation and bulk up the plants. Supplemental lighting is most critical during early spring production when temperatures are low.

Provide proper ventilation and horizontal airflow especially for late-season turns. Dahlia are susceptible to powdery mildew, so preventative applications of fungicides are beneficial. Especially when conditions are cool and humid.

Plant growth regulators can be beneficial. The introduction of a temperature DIFF, prompt ventilation and high light intensity will also aid compact growth. Avoid over-watering.

PDF: Dahlia Lubega Power Series

Jennifer Calhoun

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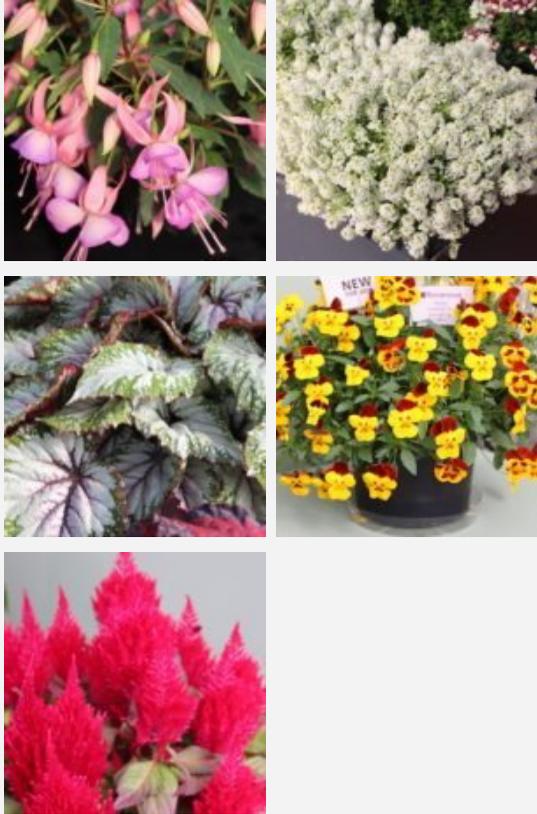


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