



How Much Well Water Is Enough?

from Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

Dear Tami and Jeff: We've just purchased some land on which we plan to build the retirement house of our dreams. The adjacent landowner tells me that we shouldn't consider a well that will deliver less than 10 gallons of water a minute. Is this a hard and fast rule?

The 10 gallon per minute (GPM) is far from a hard & fast rule, but it is the common misconception. I'm looking at a printout for the Redwood Avenue area of Grants Pass that includes the flow rate for 25 properties in the area. The range is from 6 to 60 GPM.

The average household of four could be expected to use approx. 400 gal. of water per day. A 5 GPM flow rate would yield more than 7,200 gallons per day (GPD), 2 GPM would provide 2880 GPD. Anything more would be a bonus for an outside shower or similar use.

If the 5 GPM flow rate is of concern, there is always the alternative of establishing a holding tank. This works as added insurance against a possible season of severe drought that might reduce the flow rate somewhat.

Water is a geological cocktail so DRINK MORE WATER!



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Growing great dahlias

BY STACEY DENTON

For years I struggled on a steep learning curve to grow dahlias successfully. Gophers, cucumber beetles, earwigs, slugs, very few weeks of blooms before frost, few stems per



Dahlias grown by the author. Photo: Ann Nguyen of cargocollective.com/ann-nguyen.

plant...the list of challenges is long. But now I can say, I think that I've figured it out, and you can too. Dahlias really do prefer a maritime climate—our hot, dry summers are not ideal conditions—but here are a few ideas to get you going in the right direction this upcoming growing season

Plant early. I recommend planting your bulbs in one-gallon pots, in a greenhouse, if possible, or just when the danger of frost has passed. Fill your pot nearly full with soil, and place bulbs near the top with any "eyes" facing up. Cover lightly with one inch of soil and water deeply. I start my dahlia tubers in the greenhouse in April, four to six weeks before our last spring frost. This early start under cover allows me to beat the slugs in the field because, by the time I plant them outside, the dahlias have enough growth to withstand slug predation. Also, a dusting of diatomaceous earth when I plant them helps deter the slugs who do show up.

Plant into fertile, well-composted soil. If you don't, plan to regularly fertilize your dahlias. I give plants a liquid drench of seaweed or fish tea weekly during their bloom period

if I've planted into less-fertile parts of my field. Well-balanced fertility will lead to healthy plants that are more resilient to pests.

Pinch. This is the key to more plentiful stems on your dahlias. At 8 to 12 inches, pinch back the center growth tip by making a clean cut with sharp snips. The dahlia will recover with multiple side branches that lead to more flowers. Sometimes dahlias will have two to three robust stems instead of a single one—pinch back all of these. It's hard to do at first, but worth it in the long run!

Exclude pests. If you can't stand to see little bites stolen from your perfect dahlias, I recommend bagging blooms with mesh "organza" bags. It sounds tedious, but it's way more effective than any organic spray and, once you get the hang of it, about as fast. Put these on just as buds begin to grow plump. Then have a plan for gopher control. Plant in an area of your garden where you don't see gopher activity or else be ready to

trap. It's also possible to plant in do-it-yourself cages made from hardware cloth. Just remember, if your dahlias are really thriving, they could produce 6 to 12 tubers of the same size that you planted, so make your cage large enough to let them grow as big as they'd like. Also, I lift my dahlias in the fall (after our second frost) and store them in the winter to protect them from critters.

Stake your dahlias. On the farm, we trellis the dahlias horizontally with Hortonova-brand netting, but they can also be staked individually or corralled as a group with t-posts and string running the perimeter of your beds. Do it early! It's no fun to try to stake a blooming dahlia after it has already fallen.

Harvest. Hurray, this is the very exciting moment you've anticipated so hopefully. When you make cuts, go deep! Taking a long stem, even if you wind up cutting off some smaller side buds, encourages the plant to make more long stems. It will likely result in a larger abundance of flowers too. If you don't regularly harvest for bouquets, plan to deadhead spent flowers. Deadheading (not the kind that you may have done in your youth to a certain rock and roll group) is vital for promoting the plant's creation of new flowers.

Spring is just around the corner! May your garden be bountiful and inspiring.

Stacey Denton

Flora Farm & Design Studio
stacey@weddingflora.com

Stacey specializes in growing organic flowers for weddings and special events. Her dahlias are available for summer weddings and by way of her Dahlia CSA at weddingflora.com. Her dahlia tubers are available through siskiyouseeds.com.

Williams Farmers' Market opens in April

BY SARAH SHEA

Winter is a wonderful time for farmers, when we can reflect on seasons past, restore our energy for the coming spring, and complete all the projects we didn't finish in the busy growing season. It is also a time to become excited for the warming days, pore over our seeds, and plan what fun things will be sown in the coming months.

One of my favorite things to plan for is the Williams Farmers' Market. The market is held in Williams every Monday from late April until the end of October at our beautiful downtown location on Sugarloaf Community Association (SCA) land at 206 Tetherow Road. The nonprofit SCA has seven acres of fields, playgrounds, and a learning center.

The Williams Farmers' Market is held on Monday afternoons from 4 to 6:30 pm so as not to compete with harvesting and attending other local markets. The beauty of an afternoon market is that the produce could not be fresher—it is picked that morning! Every Monday



morning throughout the season, local organic farmers are in their fields harvesting for our community, trying to anticipate what folks will be excited about—a fresh batch of fingerling potatoes, crisp sugar snap peas right off the vine, or those strawberries that seem to never end.

Williams is a small community, but it hosts an incredibly diverse array of organic farmers, artisans, and healers. Our market reflects this diversity with delicious organic produce, organic meat, eggs, incredible crafts, baked treats, herbal elixirs, and so much more. For those folks who have never been to the Williams Farmers' Market, I encourage



Williams Farmers' Market offers fresh produce from local farmers.

you to come! By attending the market you will be supporting local farmers and artisans, helping reduce pollution by driving less, enjoying the bounty of our climate, and helping create a beautiful community event.

For more information on the Williams Farmers' Market, check out our Facebook page or contact me. Thank you for supporting local farmers!

Sarah Shea

White Oak Farm
info@whiteoakfarmcsa.org

Grants Pass Water Lab

Eric Schaafsma
Technical Director
eric@gpwaterlab.com

541-476-0733 964 SE "M" Street
Fax 541-476-8132 Grants Pass, OR 97526

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