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## new favourite dahlia arrangement

Posted in All Floristry and Crafts, October, Dahlias, All videos, Floristry demos on 1st October 2019



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### NEW FAVOURITE DAHLIA ARRANGEMENT

I'm going to talk you through my new favourite [dahlia collection](#) and I came across all these at different times in Holland. The first one is this absolutely amazing dahlia called '[Happy Halloween](#)' and you can see why. I saw that in a trial field in the north of Holland five years ago and just as soon as I saw it I knew I wanted it. Lots of people find orange really difficult but the thing about orange is that in a house it's difficult, even in clothes it's difficult, but actually in flowers it's fantastic because it's a brilliant contrast to all these rich, strong colours. I always think of it like a squeeze of lemon with smoked salmon, you know these colours are rich and smoked salmon is rich, and you need the sharpness of something like orange or an acid green to really cut through. 'Happy Halloween' is one of my absolute favourites and it flowers from really early to really late so it's just a fantastically good grower.

Next, this is a much more delicate, unusual one which I saw in a beautiful garden, again in Holland, a place called De Boschhoeve which is full of wonderful dahlias. As you can see it's called an [anemone-flowered dahlia](#) and it's these beautiful singles with this ruffled centre. You would think that would mean that they would be bad for bees and butterflies, but actually they're not. You'll see in the garden - we'll try and get some shots of it later - that they're always covered in butterflies because all of these are in fact nectaries, so they are stacked full of nectar.

Then I've got another one which I also adore, particularly for pots, and this is called '[Roxy](#)'. It's not particularly

new but I haven't grown very much of it. It's actually quite a late one and this is the only flower we've got, even though we're in August now. It's such a late year, 2013, for dahlias because it was so incredibly cold in the spring; so I've just got one lone beautiful Roxy for my arrangement.

The final one is a variety called '[Con Amore](#)'. What I love about 'Con Amore' is you get this deep rich, velvety crimson colour but you also get these splashes of brighter reds and sometimes even splashes of magenta going through the flower. It's really quite variable and I love that because again it brings in a little bit of brightness to the sombre, really dark ones.

So I'm contrasting them all to [nicotiana 'Lime Green'](#) which is my very favourite foliage plant and I'm going to arrange them in an acid green vase, which is just a perfect marriage. It has been a very good year, this year, for nicotiana 'Lime Green', which sometimes can get mildew. Funnily enough, in a very humid year it tends to get mildew more but this year has been so hot and dry that it's been really healthy. It's just such a pleasure for me to pick it for that reason, because sometimes it struggles and because I don't want to use chemicals here, we don't always get good results from the 'Lime Green'. If you wanted to make sure of it in a damp a year, you need to spray it with Bordeaux mixture - which is a traditional copper sulphate fungicide - but I'd rather not do that.

So I've got my basic structure from the nicotiana and then I'm going to put in my really bold 'Happy Halloween' scattered through that. To be honest, the colour combination in this is relatively random; I haven't got a sort of harmonious colour range, that's almost the point, but I'm certainly not going to go for anything pale because that would make it look all wrong. What I think of are the real stained glass saturated colours, so 'Happy Halloween' in first and then the beautifully contrasting 'Con Amore'.

Always remember when you're making an arrangement: you want things in a heart and you want things out on the horizon; things deep down in and things standing out proud. That gives you the solidity of the heart, which you want a little bit of to balance it, but also the interest of the silhouette. It's hot today, so Roxy's looking a bit floppy, but it'll recover and I'll just pop it in as my upper story along with the 'Blue Bayou'. So, here's a very simple vase of my new favourite dahlia collection with nicotiana 'Lime Green' - very simple and very lovely.

Happy gardening,

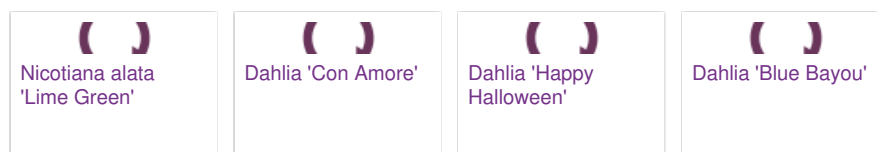
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