

WOODFIELD ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 389

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Update on Woodfield

Once again, the Woodfield entrance off S. Saginaw has been transformed by John Kovarcik with Ultimate Turf. This year is even more spectacular than in the past.

The following is a little introduction about our entrance this year from John himself:

To catch your eye, the border edge is pink begonias. We also have some red salvia, yellow marigolds, and tall, dark-leafed cannas.

But the vast majority of the plants this year are dahlias: 308 dahlias, with 109 different colors, all planted to form a unique wild flower look. The dahlias are even more amazing up close than they are just driving by, so please take time to get out of your vehicle and look at them up close. No one yet has been able to find their favorite flower.

When we set out to design the entrance, several criteria must be met.

First and foremost, it must be a WOW!

Second, it must have some height.

Third, it must be something no one has ever seen before.

Fourth, it must grow as well or better than anyone has ever seen it grow.

Fifth, it should look good driving by at 50 mph, good when you enter at a slower speed, and this year the flowers are absolutely amazing on your kitchen table (up close).

Sixth and lastly, it should look good by the end of July, be amazing by the end of August, and by year's end, it's a real car stopper.

I am not sure why it has taken me 12 years of growing the entrance before I found the amazing dahlia, but they may be around for a few years.

About dahlias:

- 1) There are 23,000 different colors of dahlias you can buy.
- 2) Dahlias are propagated by seed, cuttings or tubers.
- 3) Dahlias are typically planted the last week of May and start to look good by the end of August.
- 4) Dahlias have hollow stems, so most need stakes and ropes to hold them up.
- 5) Dahlias need to be dead-headed. Otherwise, they will quit flowering.

- 6) Dahlias are heavy feeders of fertilizer and water, and just keep getting better until they freeze around the first week of October.

Typical challenges with dahlias include:

- 1) Under-feeding and watering.
- 2) Mites.
- 3) Slugs and snails.
- 4) Rabbits and deer.
- 5) Powdery mildew.
- 6) Constant staking, roping, and dead-heading throughout the year. The heavy flower, plus any rain, will beat them to the ground.
- 7) At Woodfield we have: 280 stakes, 3,000 feet of twine, and remove 150 flowers daily. John expects those numbers will at least double by year's end.

The dahlia flower can range from 1" in diameter to 12" in diameter. We have had one that was 14" across.

They can be almost any color, except green or blue.

Most dahlias have more than one color, and some plants have different colors on them.

Some flowers are so unique or amazing crazy that they would be difficult for a good artist to draw.

With dahlias, the best is yet to come, so we hope you enjoy it!