

# The Dahlia and its Care in Fall

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It is nearly a hundred years since the first double-flowered dahlias were produced, and, after many ups-and-downs, the dahlia has recently had a

a mixture of four parts of bone meal and one part of nitrate of soda. Dry sheep manure (sold by seed men) lightly raked in the soil is a convenient form of fertilizer. It is generally advisable to commence to feed the plant as soon as it comes into flower. Too rich a soil results in large plants and few flowers, therefore it is advisable to apply the fertilizer when needed.

## WHEN TO PICK

September is the month for dahlias. It is then in perfection, as it delights in a cool, humid atmosphere. It will not do well in a hot, dry summer. In a very

hot season, I have found dahlias to do better in a partially shaded situation. The best flowers are on young plants, and if large, perfect blossoms are desired, pick off the side buds. Dahlia blooms should, if possible, always be cut before sunrise or after sunset, and immediately put in a pail of water and put in a cellar or other cool place, and left there for six hours before being shipped or otherwise disposed of. By changing the water every

spray with Paris green. If planted near a meadow, grasshoppers often destroy the blooms.

## FALL TREATMENT OF TUBERS

The dahlia root should not be lifted until a week after the frost has killed the plant. This gives the tubers time to ripen, and they ripen much better after the tops have been killed than before, and the tubers are not so liable to shrivel up during the winter. Cut the stalks off within six inches of the tubers, remove all the soil possible, allow them to dry, then place in a cellar or other place secure from frost. Place in barrels or boxes and cover with dry, clean sand. Some growers use tanbark or sawdust, but I have never used anything but sand. Some growers lift the roots early in the morning of a bright day, place the roots upwards without removing the soil from the roots, let them dry in the sun for half a day, then remove to cellar, and place in a box or on a shelf. I have found this to work well on light soils, but on heavy soils the tubers are likely to decay. If the roots are left uncovered in a dry cellar, they will shrivel and lose their vitality. If covered with damp sand or soil, they will decay. Many say that any treatment which will keep the potato during the winter, will keep the dahlia equally well. This has not been my ex-



An Amateur Gardener

At residence of Mr. T. H. Taylor, Hamilton

renewed popularity. This is largely due to the introduction of improved varieties of the cactus-flowering sorts, which are more graceful for cutting than the older varieties. The improved single-flowered sorts, especially the "century" family, are also very fine for cutting, while, in the decorative class the new peony-flowered dahlias, with their bold, artistic flowers, of elegant form and beautiful colors, supply an entirely new form in this class. Now, each year gives many new varieties of dahlias of such wonderful form and color that hundreds who never cultivated the old-fashioned dahlias are now growing the newer types. As the dahlia is of the easiest culture, and its varieties of every conceivable color, their culture cannot fail to give satisfaction to the lover of flowers.

It is now too late to write of the soil and cultivation best adapted to the dahlia, further than to remark that the deep cultivation which was beneficial at the early stages of the dahlia's growth, should cease as soon as the plant comes into bloom. After that the surface of the soil should be kept well cultivated to the depth of an inch or two, to conserve the moisture. The frequent stirring of the soil will give better results than watering, but where dahlias are planted near trees or shrubs which take the moisture from the soil, it is well in dry weather to water them.

## FERTILIZING

Sometimes the flowers of dahlias, which have come into bloom early, gradually become smaller and smaller. This generally results from a lack of plant food in the soil. This may be prevented by broadcasting around the plant a small quantity of some good fertilizer, such as

morning, clipping the stems a little, and setting the base or bowl in a pan of cold water in a cool place at night, the flowers can be made to last a week.

There are few insects affecting the dahlia. The chinch bug sometimes eats off the buds. The best remedy is to

perience, although tubers of early planted roots, well ripened, will often keep well uncovered in a cellar.

Photographs of horticultural interest are always welcome for publication in THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST.



Dahlias Growing in Front of a Verandah

Residence of Mr. H. R. Nixon, St. George, Ont.