

Some Notes on The Dahlia

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THE culture of dahlias is almost as simple as the growing of potatoes. Existing varieties are propagated by division of the tubers, by cuttings and, to a limited extent, by grafting. New varieties are obtained from seed. The buds, or eyes, are in the neck of the tuber, not in the body of it, as in the potato. The tuber may be divided into as many pieces as there are eyes, care being taken to have a good sized piece of tuber for each eye, for the first nourishment of the young plant. Cuttings made from the growing wood are readily rooted in sand with bottom heat.

Do not plant a dahlia tuber—or any tuber or bulb—in contact with manure.

The following are conditions from which good results may be expected,—open sunlight, a free circulation of air, a plentiful supply of moisture, and a good loamy soil, well pulverized and not too rich in nitrogenous plant food. Give each plant about ten square feet of surface.

The tubers start to bud before it is desirable to plant. If these be placed in a strong light,—not in direct sunlight,—and protected from frost, the buds will develop slowly and make strong plants for setting out.

Training of the growing plant is desirable, and the most approved method is known as “the single stem branching system.” The chief feature of this system is to prevent the plant from making a main trunk, and the method is simple. When the young shoots appear, remove all but the strongest one. Allow this one to grow until two pairs of leaves have been developed, then pinch back the main stem, or leader, to the upper pair of leaves. This will give a short single stem with four long branches close to the ground. A similar pinching back of the leading stem of each of these four branches may be made. The effect of this system of training is to give low-set, symmetrical and widely-branched plants that will withstand high winds without being tied to stakes. Another desirable result is that the first imperfect, short-stemmed flowers that are formed on many varieties under the ordinary system are avoided and, under the system recommended, finer flowers are produced on long stems, well supplied with foliage.

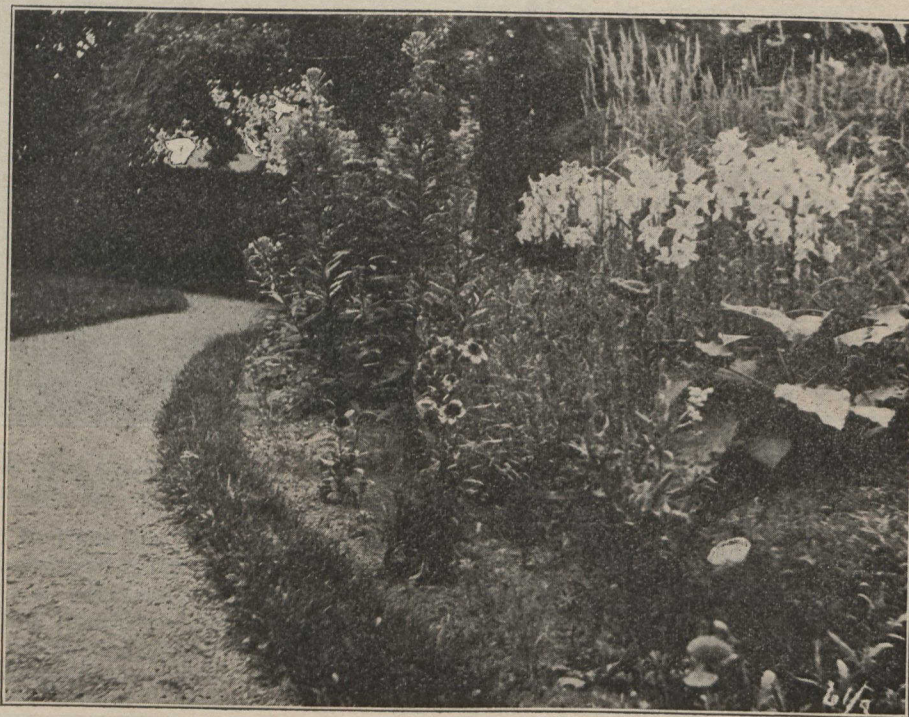
The dahlia is a late blooming plant. It will not give satisfactory results from forcing or from too early planting. The finest blooms, and these are the chief consideration with amateurs, are developed in September, the season of long, cool, dewy nights. Planting from the 1st to 15th June in Ontario will probably give in an average season better results than earlier planting.

Two or three days after the first killing frost, the stems should be cut off, the tubers carefully lifted, and allowed to dry in the sunshine, after which they may be stored in sand in a cool, but frost-proof cellar, care being taken that the moisture does not collect and remain in the crowns of the tubers. Such moisture will almost invariably produce rot.

Dandelions in Lawns

Dandelions, narrow-leaved plantains, docks and weeds of that class can scarcely be gotten rid of except by spudding, and unless this operation is performed

killing young dandelion plants. A twenty per cent. solution of sulphate of iron is used. Dissolve two pounds of sulphate of iron in a gallon of water, stirring with a stick to hasten solution. Apply with a hand sprayer. Use one gallon of this solution to one square rod of greensward. A second application may be necessary. The grass will be blackened and appear killed but in a week or so it will recover and grow with increased vigor. Old dandelion plants cannot be killed by spraying. On these apply dry sulphate of iron to the heart of the old plant. If this is repeated once or twice, it will kill the old plants. Where the lawn is large and the dandelions plentiful, either of the foregoing operations may require too much time



A Well Planted Perennial Border is Beautiful from Beginning to End of Season.

The one illustrated was taken at “Dunain,” the residence of Mr. Barlow Cumberland, Port Hope, Ont.

when the weeds are young, it may not be satisfactory, especially in the case of old dandelions. A spud may be purchased at a hardware store or from seedsmen. Run the instrument (which resembles a wide screw driver or chisel) downward alongside of the root to loosen the soil so that it may be pulled out whole. Except in the case of young dandelion roots, do not be content with simply cutting off the plant below the surface of the soil. After using the spud, immediately use a pounder to fill up the holes that otherwise would afford lodgement for seeds that are blowing about freely. These spots may also be sown with grass seed to advantage.

Dandelions may be treated with chemicals but where they are very prevalent the process is slow. A few drops of sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol) poured on the crown of each plant usually will kill them. Spraying is also advocated for

and expense. In such cases the only thing to do, is to dig or plow up the turf, and make the lawn over again.

Weeds are more plentiful on thin lawns than on those that are thick and velvety. By improving the turf, by means of fertilizing and additional seeding to thicken it most weeds will disappear. Keep the mower going, as it will do much towards keeping down most weeds.

From England comes a suggestion for the conversion of the home greenhouse into a swimming tank when flowers will not grow. During the summer months the greenhouse often is idle. Use lime and cement for floor and sides and turn it into a pleasure place. The water may be warmed, if necessary, by the pipes that are used in winter for greenhouse purposes.