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THE DAHLIA.

Mexico is the native land and home of the Dahlia. But think not that the dahlias which there grow on the sandy plains bear much resemblance to the exquisitely colored and perfectly formed flowers shewn in the beautiful colored plate which embellishes this number. It is now almost a hundred years since Alexander von Humboldt sent the first dahlia tubers from Mexico to Madrid, in Spain. The flowers were something like a small purple sunflower. From Spain it was carried to France, and at length, in 1814, some roots were brought from France to England. From England it was introduced into the United States, about the year 1825. Since then the skill of the gardener has been improving the form and coloring, until we have such perfection of form and elegance of coloring as are seen in our plate.

In order to assist those of our readers who may choose a tuber of double-dahlia, to grow it successfully, we subjoin a few hints on its cultivation.

The dahlia flourishes best in a moderately cool and moist summer. Such was the summer of 1883, and those of our readers who attended the meeting of the

Fruit Growers' Association, held that autumn in St. Catharines, will not have forgotten the magnificent display of dahlias in the grounds of the writer. It is not possible for us to regulate the character of our summers, but knowing the kind of weather and general surroundings that suit them best, we can give them measurably such environment as will, under all the circumstances, produce the best possible results.

The soil best suited to the dahlia is one that has been made rich, has been deeply cultivated, and is quite friable. Even then it is well to put a shovelful of well-rotted manure into the hole, incorporate with it some of the best of the surface soil, scatter a little surface soil on that and plant the dahlia tubers so that the neck or collar of the plant will be just slightly below the surface of the ground. Drive a stout stake beside it, to which you can tie the dahlia as it grows, for it will need this support lest it be broken to pieces by the winds. Give the plant abundant room, say from five to six feet in every direction, and if you have several plants, set them that distance apart each way.