

• PEONIES AND THEIR CULTIVATION.

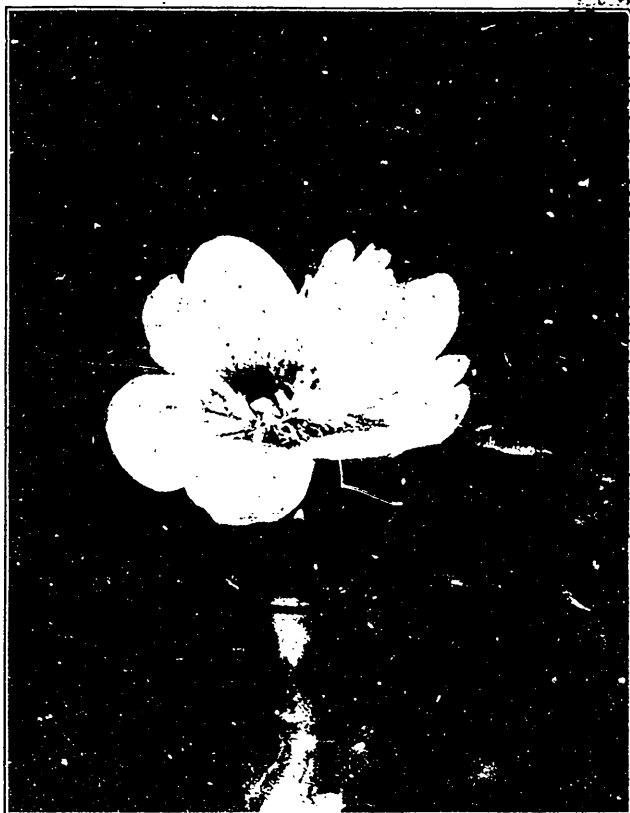


FIG. 2136. SATSU-GASHIRA, PEONY.

THE Chinese herbaceous peony originated in Siberia. Its tuberous roots were used by the Tartars as an article of food.

Since Messer Schmidt in 1725 gave the original single white form a botanical status, it has been called by various authorities the white flowering, the edible, the fragrant, and now commonly the Chinese peony.

PROPAGATION.—There are three methods by which Peonies are propagated; by division of roots (the most prevalent); by grafting to rapidly increase rare sorts, and by seeds to obtain new varieties.

DIVISION OF ROOTS.—This is the easiest

and most satisfactory method. The roots may be lifted and divided any time from the middle of August until the stalks appear again in the spring.

The best time, however, is in the early fall when the cut surfaces soon callous over and new rootlets form before the frost sets in.

Take a large stool, cut off the leaves and separate into as many divisions as can be made with an eye to each tuber.

In digging, care should be taken that all of the tubers are dug up, for if not, they may remain dormant a season, and then produce a shoot, giving rise to many stray plants frequently found in old beds.

Tubers divided without an eye should also be planted, as they often act in a similar manner, and make a showing above ground in two years' time.

GRAFTING.—This method is resorted to in herbaceous Peonies when new and rare varieties are to be rapidly increased.

An eye of the desired sort is inserted into the tuber of some strong growing variety, from which all the previous eyes have been removed.

This operation is generally performed in August. They should be placed in frames for the winter and transplanted the next year into nursery rows.

SEEDS.—Propagating by seed is somewhat tedious, and is only resorted to for increasing distinct species and for obtaining new varieties by hybridization.

*This paper on the peony, by W. A. Peterson, is reprinted from Bailey's Encyclopedia of Horticulture, an invaluable work to all students of Horticulture.