

The Tulip

By John B. Pettit, Fruitland, Ont.

Of all the so-called hardy Holland bulbs there is, in all probability, no other one so important for early spring display as the tulip. For beautiful forms and dazzling brilliancy of color the tulip is far in advance of all other spring flowers, and nothing can equal their gorgeous appearance in beds, groups, lines or ribbons in the spring garden or in any other position in which they may be placed.

About the middle of the 15th century the tulip craze started in Holland, and since that time there has been no decline in the popularity of this the most brilliant of spring flowers. In those days there were but very few colors and varieties, and most people of the present day are surprised to learn that none but the most wealthy were able to obtain a single bulb, much less have them planted by hundreds or thousands in their gardens or lawn beds, as now is often the case. The following instances of exorbitant prices demanded for bulbs in those days may prove of interest to readers. One single bulb of the variety "Semper Augustus" was sold for thirteen thousand florins, or, in our coin, about \$5,200. For a bulb of another variety a man paid his friend four thousand florins, a new carriage and a pair of handsome harnessed horses. In another instance four brothers went into partnership to buy a single tulip bulb, no one of the four having sufficient means to purchase it himself. These instances may be received with doubt, but documents are on record to verify the truthfulness of the same, and many interesting stories could be told of the great excitement that prevailed in Holland at that time, and of how fortunes were made and lost in bulb speculation when the tulip mania was at its height. Since that time there has come about a great change and now instead of few colors we have them, "in selfs," in all imaginable shades, purple, crimson, scarlet, pink, yellow and of the purest white. Of the striped, or variegated flowers, there are purple, violet, crimson, rose, puce, cerise and yellow stripes on snow-white grounds, and crimson, scarlet, maroon and red flakes or feathers on rich gold grounds. As for named varieties—there are hundreds of them. Instead of paying a fortune for a single bulb, we may now secure them for such a mere trifle that it is possible for almost every home to be supplied with hundreds of them. All this is the result of the labors of the hybridist and the practical gardener. The former has spent his time and exercised his skill in improvement of form and color, and the latter has studied out the cheapest manner of production and cultivation.

Of the many distinct classes we will in this article give a very short description of but a few, each having distinct characteristics and merits. (1) Bybloemens.—Of this class there are a number of beautiful variegated flowers of many different colors, but all of them are striped, flaked, feathered or spotted with white. They are extremely beautiful. (2) Bizarres.—This beautiful class is identical in every respect with the bybloemens except that its rich colors are dark and velvety and its variegations yellow where the bybloemens are white. This is a magnificent class. (3) Sweet-scented.—The flowers of this class are more or less fragrant as well as very beautiful. (4) Parrot.—These have exquisitely fimbriated petals, made up of crimson, green and yellow colors, some combinations of which remind one of the beautiful plum-

age of some species of parrot—hence the name. These are extremely large, distinct and beautiful. (5) Darwins.—This is the most recent class among tulips. The blooms are borne on long, slender stems, are large and richly colored, the shades ranging from black to crimson (mostly dark) and are grand. (6) Gesneriana.—This is a very brilliant scarlet with blue centre, very large, and in many respects the most gorgeous of all tulips. (7) Single Early.—Of this class there are hundreds of varieties and to it belong most of the single varieties in cultivation. (8) Double Early.—This class furnishes most of the double tulips grown at the present time. Some of them are almost as large and as fine as peonies. (9) Variegated Foliage.—This class has many varieties, both double and single. All have beautifully variegated leaves and the flowers are exquisite. This is a most charming as well as a rare class. (10) Duc Van Thol.—Of this class there are about a dozen beautiful varieties. They are dwarf of habit, but are very early bloomers, in this respect leading all other classes. They are mostly used for forcing for winter blooming.

Tulips are of the most simple culture and when once secured they will last a lifetime, not only giving regular yearly bloom but also increasing rapidly annually. They will thrive in any kind of soil and in any location. Although this is a fact they will give much more satisfactory results if care is exercised in the selection of their location. They thrive best in a rich, deep, sandy soil. This should be well and deeply spaded up before the bulbs are set. They should be planted four inches deep and from four to six inches apart according to variety and size of bulbs. In selecting a place for tulips a location should be chosen where they may remain for some years. Many people lift their bulbs every year after they have ripened up in the summer and replant them again in the fall. This is a mistake, for, besides the annual labor in connection with lifting and replanting, they will not produce as fine flowers or multiply as rapidly. They should be left in four or five years and then lifted for a summer as the clumps, by that time, would need dividing.



Fig. 1.—Representing the per cent. of profit from the pullets.