

RURAL AND SUBURBAN

DAHLIAS AND DAHLIA GROWING

(Specially Prepared for the Colonist.)

With the recent development of the 'Cactus and Art Dahlias, and the introduction of new and improved Show, Pompon, Decorative and Fancy varieties, there has been a marked increase of interest taken in the cultivation of these, the most beautiful of all flowers.

All Dahlias are very easily grown, but will always repay any little extra attention in a wonderful manner. The newer types are such a remarkable revelation in the form and color of the flowers that any one who is the happy possessor of a garden should grow at least a dozen plants of different kinds.

General Culture

About two weeks before the tubers are taken out of the cellar, it is a good plan to water them in order to induce them to sprout. Just as soon as the eyes show, separate the tubers, allowing only one eye (bud) to each tuber. If there is more than one eye on a tuber, remove all but one. If the plants grow so rapidly indoors that they become spindling, plant them outdoors as soon as possible in order to induce a stronger growth.

The soil best adapted for Dahlias is one which is naturally light, but which has a sub-soil that retains moisture. Never add manure to the soil in the spring; this must be done in the fall and the manure plowed or spaded in at the time.

Never plant Dahlias closer than three feet apart each way; four to five feet apart is even better. Place the roots horizontally about three inches below the surface of the soil, and await the growth before doing anything more. When the stems make their appearance above ground, insert the stakes for tying. These should be four feet high for the Single and Pompon, five feet for the Show, and six feet for the Cactus and Decorative types. Connect these stakes with a cross-bar, one for every four plants.

Just as soon as the plants are ten inches high, loosely tie them to the stakes, and cut off the lower leaves. The best material to use in tying is raffia tape. This is really not raffia, but a material which is quite broad, very strong, green in color, and comes in spools which can be attached to a coat lapel, and is therefore very handy. If this cannot be easily obtained, use raffia, or what is better, string or cloth.

Remove the first two as soon as the plants have reached a height of two feet and a half, and tie in a regular direction whenever it appears necessary. The stakes should be better tied to the bar which connects the stakes, instead of to the main stake. This will allow more light to reach the centre of the plant and will relieve the main stalk from additional weight. The plants will also resist strong winds better.

Just as soon as the lower branches appear, cut them off and do not allow more than one stalk to a plant. There should be no foliage or branches up to a foot above the ground. When the first buds show, pick them off and do not let any form for fully two weeks, as the plants will not be strong enough to support the flowers. The flowers from these early buds are always very imperfect, anyway.

Just as soon as the first buds appear begin to feed the plants. The best food is sliced or chicken manure in dry form, which is placed around the plant at first, then lightly forked into the ground. If no rains appear in a reasonable time after its application, water the soil thoroughly.

The first flowers appearing on the plant are usually the best, particularly if it is the crown flower; but this rule is not always true, for the flowers of some varieties improve with the season, while others grow smaller and smaller.

Watering the Dahlia is a subject which must be well understood. When possible, it is better to avoid using water at all, but one thing must be observed, that at no time should the growth be checked because of lack of water. In case of a dry season, or where the soil is naturally dry, begin watering just as soon as the plants show the effects of the dryness; but never start watering unless you can keep it up all summer, because by watering a growth of fibrous roots is produced near the surface of the soil to reach the moisture, and they always remain near the surface where they can secure but little moisture if watering ceases; even if there is an average amount of rainfall after the first dry spell, therefore, it is most essential to keep on watering regularly and thoroughly all summer.

After three or more flowers have appeared on the plant, the number of buds usually increases very rapidly. As a rule, three appear at the end of each flowering branch. If large, perfect blossoms are desired, pick off the side buds.

Dahlias vary enormously in their habit of growth. Some remain dwarf, others grow tall and lanky. While some assume a bush form, making an enormous leaf growth. Those latter must receive special attention in the way of pruning. Pruning is not difficult and there is only one point to keep in mind. Where the foliage is in the way it is well to remove some of it. Always cut off the branches close up to the main stem, do not leave stubs that will decay.

Blight often attacks plants when they are in full bloom. This is easily recognizable by the change of color in the foliage. If either turns light green, yellow spots appear on the foliage withers and dies. Spray with Bordeaux mixture or ammoniated copper carbonate solution.

Dahlia blooms should never be cut during the sunny hours of the day. Cut the flowers either before sunrise in the morning or after eight o'clock in the evening. Whenever they are cut, place them at once into a bowl of water, immersing the whole stem, and remove them to a cool place—the cellar or some location similar. Here they should remain for at least six hours before they are brought into the living rooms. By changing the water every morning, the flowers can be made to last easily from four to six days.

A great many people in Victoria leave the tubers in the ground all winter, but as we sometimes have a very heavy frost, it is not a practice that we can recommend, especially if you have some really choice varieties. The best plan is to let the foliage die completely, then cut the stalks down to within six inches of the soil. Lift the roots early in the morning and place them upside down with all the soil attached that can easily be lifted, and let them dry in the sun for two or three hours. Then remove them to a frost-proof storage room, where they should be placed either in a box or on a shelf until the following spring.

Purposes. If the blooms are intended for competitive purposes, the ground must be well dug and pulverized during the previous winter, at the same time adding a liberal quantity of good horse manure (if light soil, cow manure is best). About the end of May, the ground should again be stirred, and laid off in beds five feet wide, with an alley one foot in breadth between them. Into these beds a double row of stakes may be placed, about two and a half feet apart, each way, on the average the tall ones may be a little more, and the dwarf ones a little less. Some growers prefer a greater distance between the plants, but we have proved the space given to be most suitable. The stakes must be firmly fixed before planting. The best time to get the plants is the end of April, and beginning of May. When received from the nursery, they should be immediately potted into four or five inch pots, and placed in a moderate hotbed or in a warm greenhouse, care being taken to allow the plants to become dry, as the slightest check will tend to throw them into bloom prematurely. During the latter part of May, they should be gradually hardened off, and planted out when all danger of frost is past. Frequent waterings, occasionally with liquid manure, tying and thinning the shoots, will engage the attention of the cultivator till the beginning of August, when the buds will be appearing. A good mulching of well-decomposed manure will be of great service now. If very large blooms are wanted, only four or five branches should be left on each plant, and all buds exceeding two or three at the end of each stem should be removed. A few lateral shoots may be allowed to grow, which will carry flowers later on. When the flowers begin to expand, they will be all the better if a little protection from the weather, a piece of board or tin nailed to the top of a stout stake answering the purpose very well. Some prefer boxes with glass tops.

Some Dahlias Worth Growing. If the amateur gardener does not intend to send away for any of the very latest creations, the following list will be of valuable assistance in making a good selection, as it contains some of the most magnificent Dahlias grown: Ema, flat, tinted with violet; Eva, pure white; F. H. Chapman, yellow, overlaid with deep orange; H. J. Jones, delicate primrose centre shading to rosy pink—a magnificent exhibition variety; Britannia, salmon pink; Jessie Mitchell, brownish orange; Gloriosa, scarlet; General French, deep bronze; J. Weir Giff, rich purple centre, deepening to purplish crimson at back of petals; Lord Roberts, white with creamy centre; Magnificent, salmon buff; Mayor Tuppeney, centre yellow, edged with pink, outer petals orange tawny with crimson edge; Mrs. J. J. Crowe, clear canary yellow; Mrs. Jowett, apricot, slightly shaded with copper red; Radiance, orange-scarlet, passing to yellow; Red Rover, bright crimson-red with white; Richard Dean, red, heavily tipped; Sandpiper, bright orange-scarlet; Uncle Tom, dark crimson maroon, almost black in centre; F. H. Chapman, yellow, overlaid with deep orange; Arachne, white, edged with crimson; Exquisite, pinkish apricot; Herbert Mortimer, cherry red; Beatrice, pale rose; Khaki, orange fawn and yellow; Mme. Van Den Dael, all

very pink; Progenitor, crimson lake; Prince of Yellows, pure yellow; Maid of Kent, crimson and white; Krimhilda, pink and white; Zephyr, pink; Fern Leaf Beauty, red and white; Zephyr, rose; Poes Vigor, Colarette; Czar, dark red; Grand Duke Alexis, white—one of the most magnificent Dahlias ever grown; Edward VII, cherry red; Earl of Rembroke; Eastern Queen, magenta; Fighting Mac, scarlet; 20th Century, rosy crimson, tipped with white, with a white band; Columbia, vermilion and white; General Butler, velvet crimson, almost black at base, and white tips; Clara G. Stredwick, salmon and yellow; Innovation, crimson and white.

Note—Most of the above varieties are carried by Victoria seedsmen and sold at reasonable prices, but should you be unable to procure what you want, drop a postal to The Colonist Rural and Suburban Department, and we will probably be able to inform you where you can obtain them.

For forcing the White Lily, the bulbs should be lifted and potted in the fall in 6-in. or 7-in. pots, according to the size of the bulb; the

flowers of a purple shade and are showy. These are best grown in sheltered, sunny situations, or in rockeries, but in some localities it is best to protect the flowers by a frame, as the dampness stains the flowers. There are several varieties of this species. The best forms are Krelagei, which blooms just before, and histroides, which blooms just after, the type.

An even earlier-flowering iris, but not so showy, is Bakeriana, which is blue, with purple and orange markings.

Mr. J. N. Girard, of Elizabeth, N. J., who has grown more irises than any one else in this country, finds that those of this group prefer a peaty, sandy soil, and will not tolerate the existence of any organic manure, and that for the best success, they must be planted where they can be kept dry during the summer. He has also found it necessary, frequently, to change the position of the bulbs until a suitable environment has been found. If the plants commence to increase the second year they may be left where they are, but if not, they should be removed to another locality in the garden.

flowers late in the summer. Other varieties are alba (white), variegata, which has variegated leaves, and acuta, which has very narrow leaves.

Two bulbous irises which everyone should grow, are the English Iris (I. Xiphoides) and the Spanish Iris (I. Xiphium). The bulbs of these are planted in the fall in a light, well-drained place, and they should be well mulched for winter. The earlier of these is the Spanish Iris, which may be had in variegated shades, violet and purple. The English Iris—and there are many forms of it—is white, lavender, blue and purple. Mount Blanc is the best.

The most gorgeous of all the irises is, without a doubt, the Japanese, and too much cannot be said to encourage one to grow a few of these in his garden. It is a popular belief that the Japanese Iris requires a very damp situation in which to grow, but this is not so. I have seen it successfully grown in clay which was comparatively dry. They may be had in all shades of blue, violet, purple and lavender, also white. Many of the flowers are self-colored and others beautifully marked or mottled. They are the last of all the irises to bloom, commencing early in July and possibly in some localities further south, in June.—Arthur Couch, in Suburban Life.

FORCING RHUBARB IN THE DARK

The method of forcing rhubarb in the dark is so simple and inexpensive that growing for home use or for the market is entirely practicable. Last winter I prepared a small bed in my house cellar to show how easily and cheaply it could be forced. The bed contained but two roots and was placed at the end of the cellar, close to a potato bin. Not wishing to heat the entire cellar, the bed was shut off from the main part by simply tacking an old heavy carpet to the floor and sleepers above, letting it fall to the cellar bottom. The wall formed one side of the inclosure and the carpet was nailed to the floor above so as to form the other side, and ends. The roots were dug in December and left on the ground until solidly frozen. They were then stored in an old hoisted and simply covered with boards until Jan. 18. They were then set close together on the cellar bottom and loose earth was worked under and between the bunches to fill the spaces. The carpet was nailed up and the work, except the care of the lamp and lantern, which were used to give the required heat, was over.

Daylight must not be permitted to enter for any length of time, even through cracks or small holes. Artificial light to a reasonable degree will do no harm. However, the lamp and lantern were in such close contact with the growing stalks that the leaves began turning green, which is objectionable. This was remedied by smoking the lantern globe and lamp chimney and giving a more subdued light. The leaves soon took on a beautiful, golden color, which is characteristic of the dark-grown product. On Feb. 24, the rhubarb was ready for use and one dozen were picked. As the bed was intended for home use the heat was on and off at will, thus prolonging the growth. The bed produced more than could be used at home and a portion was sold.

Any house cellar, root cellar or shed which can be made absolutely tight and frost proof will answer the purpose. The above points must be strictly observed. The cellar bottom should be of earth and loose, to the depth of 2 or 3 inches deep. Vigorous roots not less than two or three years old must be used, and may be set in place any time during the winter. They must be thoroughly frozen before being set in. The roots may be dug out before freezing, after which they may be trimmed off and are ready for use, or they may be stored until wanted. Thawing will not injure them. They should be dug with all the soil possible adhering, as the moisture will be required, for forcing. Artificial heating will be required and may be provided in any way most convenient. Gasoline, oil or other stove or event lamps may be utilized. No great amount of heat is necessary, and it may be left on or off at will. The time of maturing will depend largely upon the amount of heat used. Watering is not a necessity, although helpful towards the latter part of its growth. The rhubarb is far superior, both in quality and color, to that grown in the greenhouse, or even out of doors. Very little leaf is produced, and that of a beautiful golden color.

When the work is carried on for market purposes, and the house cellar or root cellar is not available, cellars are built for the purpose. I have seen a cellar in actual operation. The heat had been on four or five weeks and several cuttings had been made. This cellar produced two crops which sold for \$160 at wholesale. Each crop will give from three to seven pickings, according to variety and vigor of roots, which, when exhausted, are carried out for manure, or stored for dividing and transplanting in the spring. In preparing for market, three stalks are tied in a bunch and 12 of these bunches are tied in a bundle at the butts and tops. This is called a dozen and sells for 30c to 75c at wholesale, according to the season. When the forcing season is over, which will be indicated by the weak or spindling growth of the stalks, turn off the heat, or remove the roots, to a temperature which will merely hold them dormant. As soon as weather and ground admit, divide the roots to two or three eyes, and transplant to rich ground, 4 feet apart each way. With thorough cultivation they will be ready for forcing again the second year.



NEW SINGLE DAHLIAS. Flambeau, red and white; Winona, deep crimson; Flora, orange.

ordinary mixture of loam and sand will suit them very well. Place the pots on ashes in the open, where they may remain until there is danger of the frost bursting the pots, when they should be protected with a frame, there to remain until the flower spikes begin to push up in the spring. Give just sufficient water to encourage root action. The pots may then be removed to a temperature of about 50 to 55 degrees; they dislike hard forcing at this stage. Stand the pots on the ground to keep them as cool as possible. A good place is under the front walls of the house where the sun's rays do not reach them. When growing freely give plenty of water, and syringe twice a day. When the flower buds begin to expand and the buds to swell they may be placed in the hot-house, when they will quickly open in perfect form. Pick out the anthers as each flower opens to preserve their pure whiteness. Started in batches at intervals of ten days, a succession may be maintained from Easter onwards.

THREE MONTHS OF IRIS BLOOM

The iris is the poor man's orchid. Like the orchids, there are many kinds which can be grown with comparative ease, while, on the other hand, there are a number of kinds which are interesting from the amateur's point of view, because they are either rare or their exacting requirements tax the enthusiast's ingenuity to its utmost in furnishing conditions under which they will thrive.

Unlike the orchids, however, their cost is moderate. Bulbs or roots of the commoner kinds can be bought for a few cents apiece, while the possession of some of the rarer kinds will necessitate an outlay of perhaps two or three dollars for only a small root.

By a selection of species and varieties, an almost unbroken succession of iris bloom can be had from early spring until July. The earliest-flowering irises belong to the reticulata group, of which Iris reticulata is the most common. These are bulbous irises, and they are dwarf, growing from six to eighteen inches high and blooming in March. They

No. 2. PROSPECTING NOTICE.

Other District. IS HERBERT GIVEN that after date I intend to apply for a license to prospect for petroleum on the following shore lands and lands covered by water:

Being at a post planted on the shore of lot 53, in the District of Otter, in the Province of British Columbia, marked R. K. L's corner post, thence north eighty eight chains, thence east eighty chains, thence south eighty chains, thence west eighty chains, to the point of commencement, to contain six hundred and forty (640) acres, more or less.

R. KENNETH LINDSAY, R. G. GIBBONS, Agent, 1910.

No. 3. PROSPECTING NOTICE.

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No. 4. PROSPECTING NOTICE.

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No. 5. PROSPECTING NOTICE.

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