

THE DAHLIA.



THIS flower is not grown as successfully as it might be, because its wants are not properly understood. The tubers should be started into growth in March or April, in the house. Much of the success to be aimed at in the cultivation of this plant depends on an early start. Keep the started tubers in boxes till the weather becomes warm, for a slight frost will kill the tender growth, and a cold spell will so check the development of the plant that it will take it a long time to recover. Therefore, do not be in a hurry to put your plants in the open ground. Have the soil very rich. It can hardly be too rich, for the dahlia is a great eater. As soon as the stalks begin to reach up set three stout stakes in a triangle about the plant, about a foot apart each way, and be sure to tie the main branches to them, for they are very brittle and easily broken by the wind. On washing days pour the wash-water about them, and see that they never lack for moisture. If you start them early in the season, provide rich earth for them, and keep them moist at the roots, you will have splendid flowers from them. As a general thing, they are started into growth in the open ground, are not given a rich soil, and are never watered. Under these conditions they never give satisfaction. But, when properly cared for, they are simply magnificent. They come in all colors of the richest shades, and the variety seems almost endless. Of late years the single sorts have come into favor, and they are deserving all the popularity they enjoy. They are really more graceful than the double kinds, as their blossoms are borne on long and slender stems, well above the foliage, and have the appearance, at a little distance, of a flock of butterflies hovering over the plant.—Christian Union.

China Asters.—Respecting the cultivation of China asters, little need be said. If early flowers are wanted or if the plants are to be grown in pots as specimens for exhibition, the seeds should be sown indoors or in a frame as early as the middle of April, in this latitude. But if the plants are to be grown in borders, it is quite as well to sow the seed in the ground where the plants are to grow. The China aster is essentially an autumn flower, and I have no desire, from the amateur's standpoint, to force it ahead of its season and to make it compete with the flowers of midsummer. We sowed the seeds of about fifty varieties on the 4th of June last year. The soil was rich and kindly—a good loam—and the plants came on with vigor, and, notwithstanding a prolonged drought, every variety gave a profuse bloom throughout September and October, and a few sorts—like Queen of the Market—spent themselves and died before frost came.—H. BAILEY, in Bulletin 90.