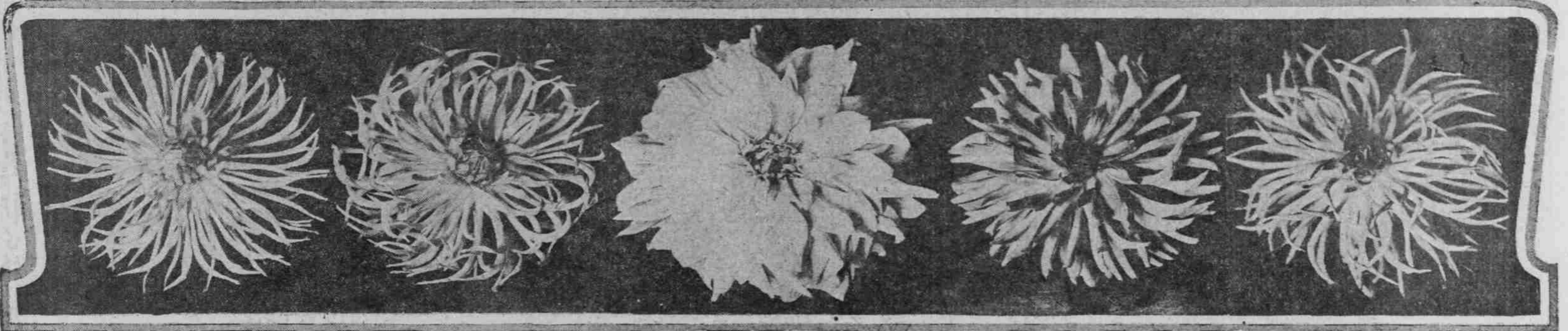




DAHLIA REIGNS AS PRINCESS IN QUEEN ROSE'S COURT

Portland Is Taking Leading Place in World of Floral Culture as Climatic Conditions Here Are Ideal for Propagation.



BY DEWITT HARRY.
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PRINCESS DAHLIA, gorgeous and superb, is rapidly becoming the favored hand-maiden of Queen Rose in Portland's floral court. Reaching a perfection in this miracle-working climate seldom attained elsewhere in the world, she is rightfully establishing a following all her own, and every day seen more admirers attending her levees. In no sense are the two flowers rivals, for the rose reigns supreme in spring and summer and her friendly supporter only enters the lists in fall, reaching her perfection about this time every year.

During the month of October dahlias in profusion of every shape, size and type and in a veritable riot of coloring contribute their share towards the embellishment of their favored home. Hardly a residence in the city but that has some of the plants, ranging from elaborate displays to isolated varieties, from complete beds and gardens to sidewalk hedges. From acres of the plants in the farms to one or two tubers in a tiny yard, the dahlia is the undoubted leader of fall flowers and no other plant has yet outdone it in its many forms and shades. In all its luxuriance of different and distinct forms and regal, glowing colors coupled with its profusion of bearing it in the ideal fall flower when the companion shrubs have shed their beauty and blooms are generally scarce.

Dahlia Is Floral Youngster.

Most of the better known varieties of flowers found in the usual garden have been known for ages and are mentioned in history. The dahlia is unique in that it is the popular youngster of the entire collection, as its real growth and development has taken place within the past century. Even at that it does not seem to have had a just deal, for surely a flower so beautiful, choice and offering such possibilities should be more popular than in the case.

While a stroll about Portland today will give a surprise to those who have not taken the pains to observe the number of plants in bloom here, it will also be an education in the beauty and number of types. Visits to the dahlia farms in the city, one on the Blough road, near Woodlawn; one near Peninsula park, one on Sixth street, near Carthers, in southern Portland, and others at most of the florists, will show even the most careless observers that, locally at least, the plant is destined for a great future.

Hardy, adapted to show rooms, beautifying the garden, for cut flowers, for decoration and, indeed, for almost all the purposes for which flowers are used, the dahlia will be found to fill the bill. Only one drawback, the plant and flower are rather delicate and will not stand rough handling or usage. Heavy windstorms or rain bruise and batter the foliage and buds almost beyond repair, and when the flowers are cut they will not live for long out of water. However, if they are properly cared for they last for two weeks in

the house and, as the plants come in many heights and grades of foliage, the garden usage is unlimited.

New Varieties Originated.

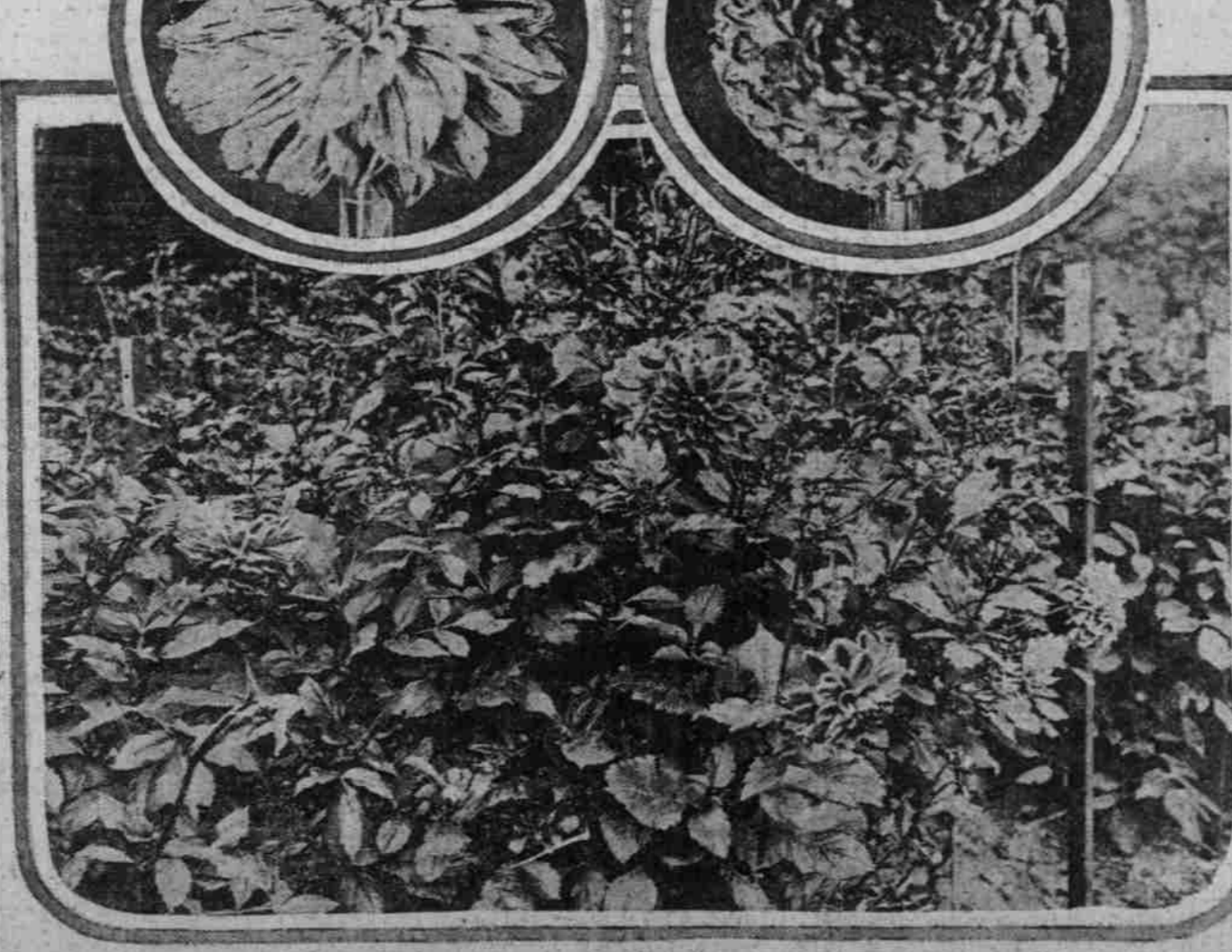
During the past few years the dahlia has made rapid steps and local propagators have managed to originate a multitude of new varieties. Portland is rapidly coming to take a leading place in the dahlia world. The show of the National Dahlia society here in 1915 was admittedly the best that body has held and it assured this city a prominent place in the future history of the flower, the cultural world beginning to rely on Portland more and more as a basis for supply and propagation.

Few of the visitors at dahlia displays can realize that such delicate orchid-like coloring and such large and beautiful blooms can be grown in the open. Just a few hours devoted to a stroll about the city will prove this is the case here, where in other localities hot-houses and glass are necessary, and the amazing results possible here are difficult to attain under artificial conditions. Truly Portland is the home for the dahlia.

Every Home Should Have Plants.

With the natural adaptability here it is almost unbelievable to note the small number of flower-loving people of Portland and vicinity who grow these wonders of the floral world. It should be the case that every home in the city had some of the plants. However, the same case frequently happens to Portland's rose, for even that nationally noted flower as produced locally is not receiving the attention that it should.

Local fanciers are hoping that with the cessation of war increased interest will be taken in floral culture in Portland, that nature's beauties will be better appreciated and that the civic duty of residents of the Rose City in this respect will be carried out with a fuller sense of their responsibility. In this case both the rose and the dahlia, as well as other flowers, should receive their rightful share of attention when next autumn's garden is planted. Now is the time for flower-loving residents



Center—Typical view in Portland commercial dahlia garden, which contains several thousand varieties. Below—Fancy show dahlia hedge at a city residence. Separate flowers shown are of new-blossoms originated and shown in Portland and range through all types and shades.

to see, investigate and study the possibilities and plan for their dahlia reception and care in 1920 and the ensuing years.

Contrary to the ordinary conception the dahlia is in reality a very reasonable plant to attain insofar as costs are concerned. It is not a bulbous plant, but a tuber. That is, the root is in the form and has the general habits of a potato, possessing eyes and all that goes with the spud. It is the growth of these potato-like offshoots, planted in hills in the same manner as is the lowly but useful Irish favorite, that produce the amazing and colorful results. The cost for dahlia tubers is extremely reasonable, some of the florists offering them as low as \$1.00 for a dozen assorted varieties. Once get a start and the rest comes easy, as each year there is a harvest of new dahlias in the hills.

Gardens Are Riot of Color.

Some of Portland's gardens have a splendid showing of dahlias, and the color scheme and growing plans are innumerable. The correct method for the planting of the tubers is in hills, two or more roots to a hill, about five feet apart. The foliage is usually luxuriant, and many of the plants will bear as high as 500 perfect blooms in the course of one year. In order to have a good display of the flowers a fair-sized bed is necessary, but the soil conditions are not difficult to attain, as some of the plants have been known to do excellently in even pure sand, climatic conditions being the main essential.

Expert growers are pleased at any time to pick out plants that will meet the varied conditions, and this has become a large business here. Tubers that will do well under certain climatic conditions are grown and perfected here and the roots shipped all over the world. In one recent order received by a local grower a prominent resident of an eastern city sent a photograph of the house and grounds mapping out the beds and describing the present character of the gardens surrounding the home. The task was for the local man to

choose the varieties best suited for that climate and a color scheme that was fitting and to have the plants grow to the correct height in order to make the most pleasing display.

Tubers Shipped from Portland.

In cases of this kind the sketch of the bed is studied by the shipper in Portland and the plants chosen according to their height, foliage and color in order that they will give the best results. The element of climate, soil and adaptability also has to enter into consideration, as well as the fact of giving a sufficient variety to make a good showing. This business is proving attractive here, and commercial growers on a large scale are finding that they have their hands filled with taking care of orders that are pouring in as the excellence of their wares becomes better known. It is freely predicted and seems almost a certainty that Portland, within a very short time, will be the capital of the dahlia world.

The ideal bed to make a creditable showing of these choice plants should be about 10 by 30 feet in rough dimensions. This will give a chance to plant three rows of hills, six hills to the row, calling for the use of some 40 tubers. The cost of the tubers should not run more than \$25 for the best selections, and it is possible to get any color scheme desired, and also any height of foliage. For instance, if the bed is set against the house the tallest plants would be placed in the rear row and the shrubs gradually lessening in height until the shortest ones are in front.

Plant Flowers Like Potatoes.

Should the bed be set in the open so that it could be approached from all sides, the tallest plants would be placed in the center and the shorter ones on the outside. With two tubers to a hill the bed at its maximum bearing should be showing about 400 flowers, a perfectly wonderful display, and the chances are that if all the rules and conditions are observed in order to make the growth as favorable as is possible that the 36 plants will bear several thousand blooms during the season. This estimate would seem to those who are of the cultural value of the dahlia to be rather far-fetched, but a casual investigation will serve to show that it is by no means overdrawn, and that even better results are frequently attained here.

In several of the farms in the city literally thousands of varieties are shown, running the whole gamut of colors and varieties. New flowers are constantly being originated and the older and better-known varieties being improved. Each year a number of flowers of this prolific family hitherto unknown make their debut, and it takes a keen and constant study of floral culture to keep pace with the marvelous development of the dahlia. There seem to be no limits to the possibilities and even the experts are constantly being surprised by the results of their experiments. Cross pollination and breeding results in amazing plant prodigies and often the

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