
BOOK REVIEW

Dahlia Growing by Swami Vinayananda (Associated Publishing Co., New Delhi 110 005) 1985, pp. 92, Price Rs. 70.00 or US \$20.00

Along with the rose and the chrysanthemum, the dahlia is regarded as one of the great garden flowers of the world. It probably originated in Mexico and was named after the Swedish Botanist Anders Dahl (1751–1789). Its growth and development have been spectacular; from single or semi-double nondescript flowers, the dahlia has attained a status and respectability, perhaps rivalled only by the rose. Over 20,000 dahlia cultivars are known today and several are added every year. Amongst the largest flowers are the dahlias. In form and colour too, the dahlia is second to none.

India's entry into dahlia cultivation is recent, but her contribution is quite notable. The late-cutting method of dahlia preservation and improved breeding techniques, have attracted world-wide attention and Indian dahlia growing methods have attained repute as well as respectability.

The contribution of the author to all these areas of dahlia growing is quite noteworthy. Indeed, he is now regarded as the most outstanding authority on dahlias in this country. With many years of experience in, and a single-minded devotion to, the field the Swamiji is most competent to write this book.

The book has been written well. All aspects of the dahlia are covered; history, general cultivation, propagation and breeding. His own highly original and interesting methods of propagation, breeding by selective hand-pollination, out of which he appears to have obtained significant results, have been dealt with extensively. A useful glossary and several appendices enhance the value of the book.

The only reservation is the cost; at Rs. 70 it seems neither just nor justifiable.

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