

Now that the frost has killed the dahlias plants we must think about how we will store them over the winter. If the soil in which they have been grown is well drained they may be left in the ground until spring in eastern and piedmont North Carolina. In the mountain areas they must be taken up and placed in storage or they will freeze.

As soon as the plants are killed by frost, cut the stalks off at the surface of the ground. Before hard freezing weather cover the hills with about six inches of pine straw or other similar materials. Do not allow water to stand around the hills. In the spring when growth starts, the dahlias clumps should be taken up and divided and then replanted. Even if you do not want to increase the number of plants you will get better dahlias if you divide the clumps, plant back one division, and give the rest away to your friends.

If you have a root cellar or a

basement where the temperature does not go below freezing or above 30 degrees, it would probably be best to take the clumps up in the fall because even here in Raleigh we occasionally lose dahlias when the temperatures are low enough to freeze the soil a few inches deep.

And it is usually the high priced or rare variety that is lost. However, if your basement is heated and warm the roots may dry out excessively and may be lost in storage.

In preparing for storage, cut the stalks off at the surface of the ground soon after the plants have been killed by frost. With a spading fork loosen the ground all around the clump of roots. Then work the spading fork underneath the clump and lift it out of the ground. Since different varieties vary a great deal in root characteristics some have short thick roots—the digging operation must be done with care so as not to

break the necks of the roots in lifting the clump out. A root with a broken neck is worthless. The soil may be gently shaken from the roots or may be washed off or may be left on the clump to protect the roots. In the storage cellar or room the clumps may be placed directly on the floor or may be packed in boxes or baskets lined with paper. Peat or vermiculite make good packing materials which will also prevent drying out of the roots. Sawdust may also be used.

In the spring as soon as the buds or sprouts begin to show, the clumps should be divided. Each division should contain at least one bud or eye and one root. Remember that the buds or eyes are usually on the base of the stem or crown and not on the roots themselves.

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Muggs and Skeeter By Wally Bishop

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PEGGY THIS TOUCHDOWN WILL MAKE ME A HERO WITH THE GIRLS! THEY'LL CHEER ME, THEY'LL CHASE ME—

THEY'LL!

NEXT TIME BOYS YOU'D BETTER GUARD THE SIDE-LINE MARKERS!

HOLY SMOKE!

DADDYBURNIT, JABBER, HAVE YOU NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN SQUIRT TARGETS WITH A WATER PISTOL?

HERE! YOU CAN TAKE THEM UP YOU OUT OF MISCHIEF!

SWISH

**Exports Of Farm Products Expected To Increase**

An increase of as much as 10 percent in exports of farm products to other countries during the last half of 1954 and the first half of 1955 is held a possibility by the Foreign Agricultural Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

During the preceding year exports of farm products improved 4 percent over the low postwar level of 1952-53.

If government surplus disposal programs are successful, the increase in farm exports may even exceed the 10 percent expected this year, according to FAS. But over the long run, volume of exports will depend more upon high quality and

**Farm Population Is Still Dropping**

North Carolina had less land in farms and fewer people on farms in 1953 than in 1952, according to the annual County Farm Census Summary released recently by the Statistics Division of the State Department of Agriculture.

Total land in farms declined 73,143 acres, but harvested cropland increased about 2,000 acres, improved pastures gained 55,387 acres, other pastures increased by more than 218,197 acres, and idle cropland decreased by 4,530 acres.

People of all ages living on Tar Heel farms in 1953 totaled 1,426,798, a decrease of 40,000 or 2.7 percent, from the previous year. This downward trend in farm population has been underway for some years.

**Percentage-wise, utilization of farm land was about the same in 1953 as in 1952.**

Harvested acreage at 29 percent, idle cropland at five percent, and improved pasture at four percent were the same for both years. Unimproved pastures rose from six to seven percent.

Similarly there was little change in the proportions of harvested cropland. Cotton represented 12 percent, wheat six percent and soybeans four percent in 1952 and 1953. Corn at 34 percent and oats at seven percent were up only one percentage point as compared with 1952.

Total tobacco and peanut acreages declined in 1953. Tobacco acreage at 648,636 was down about 56,000 acres from 1952. A drop of nearly 14,000 acres brought the total for peanuts down to 184,604 acres.

Cotton was harvested from 788,131 acres, a gain of 23,412 over the 1952 harvested acreage. The 2,209,373 acres of corn reported in 1953

**represented a very slight increase over the previous year.**

The summary shows a sharp gain in the total number of beef cows and heifers of farms as of January 1, 1954. This figure at 250,428 compares with 211,940 on the same date a year earlier, representing an increase of 18 percent. Milk cows and heifers, two years old and over, totaled 313,863, an increase of only 1,412 over the January 1, 1953, inventory.

Hens and pullets of laying age on North Carolina farms totaled 7,192,381 as of the first of this year, which represented a decline of almost five percent from the number on farms a year earlier. Sows and gilts for farrowing also showed a slight decrease, totaling 115,297, compared with 123,796 a year ago.

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