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annual seeds. And as a reward, if he sold so many seed packets, he got to pick out a shiny new thermos or lunchbox from the catalogue. That was his payment--see? So, you know, you just get involved with it and one thing leads to another.... You begin to look at plants in a different way, and see them as, you know, valuable antiques, really. And this is very interesting: A lot of the gardens in that era (circa 1930s) were planted by men. And I've heard this is true of a lot of railroad men--they were involved in gardening. Both CN and CP had a very highly developed garden program; not right in this area. They would establish railroad gardens. (At the stations?) That's right. You can read this in the history of Canada, there's a book about it. And somehow it seems to have rubbed off on the railroad men. And also, what happened was, as men in Cape Breton went out in the world, they got exposed to different things and, you know, they had these interests. For instance, I know of two postwar gardens. And they were (established by) people who had been in the war and come back. They'd been around, they'd seen different things, and they got interested. So you see how gardens develop. Like in the beginning, with Roddie's Tansy patch-- you could see a chronicle developing. Like, I went around and I found all this stuff and it was all scattered. And when I wrote it down, I realized that there was a continuing thread and there was a development. From the Tansy patch--from the herb that they grew from necessity--to the gardens with the Rhubarb and the fruiting shrubs and the Dahlias and the flowers. And I found lots of examples. And those were mainly women who were doing that. And then later as the economy developed more, and the men went out in the world, then men (when they returned) were more involved in gardening. And I found this true with certain plants that men seemed to grow, like Dahlias. I don't know why, but Dahlia seems to be a man's plant, and I found lots of examples of men raising (them). It could be, I think, because their culture is very similar to potatoes. They're often grown next to potatoes. In fact, there's an example of that in the area. They plant them next to potatoes. See, (Dahlias are) tubers. They're grown in rows. And they often grow them as a screen, to divide, or as a protection for the potatoes. The people think that if you plant them there, they grow better. And it's convenient. Because the ground's plowed up, so why not plant a row of Dahlias. But it's funny how tastes change and the gardens change. But you see, that all came to an end now. It's all gone. Unless the plant still exists, and people to cultivate them. But the end of that type of gardening, it's gone in Cape Breton. The gardening that's here now is the supermarket, is the plant nursery, is the manufactured-by-the-zillion bedding plants. Now, there's nothing wrong with these plants in themselves-- perfectly nice --Petunias, Impatiens. It's just that they don't have the personality. They don't have the quirks. They don't have the uniqueness of these other plants. And of course, they'll never have the history. Never. Because they can't, just because they're annuals. END The illustrations for this article are taken from Jo Ann Gardner's excellent book *The Heirloom Garden*. You can order copies directly from



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