

THE WINTER HOUSE-GARDEN.

WE cannot all have a greenhouse; we are not, all of us, wealthy enough to enjoy the luxury of a conservatory, but there are few of us who cannot have house-plants, if only a few. The true lover of flowers will not be restricted to the out-of-door garden during the summer months, although there is much said about the unhealthiness of in-door gardening.

While there are medical authorities to sanction this idea, still the weight of popular opinion is on the side of the flowers; and even many physicians maintain that even in dormitories, window-gardens exert no injurious effects unless there is lack of ventilation.

It is, at the same time, true, of course, that flowers in a close room have prejudicial effects upon those organizations that possess an aversion to them for which they cannot account.

The odour of the tuberose, for instance, make many people ill, and in such instances it is not necessary to state that those flowers producing such an effect should be banished.

For our window-garden we do not need a very commodious bay-window on the sunny side of a house, and the heat that is necessary to vegetable life is quite as good, been artificial, some say; but it is only reason to suppose that the sun is important to plants chemically as well as thermally. So, when it is possible, we should choose a window with southern exposure.

Seventy-five degrees by day, and forty-five by night, indicates the proper average. We must take care to provide the room with water in open vessels, so that a proper moisture may accompany the artificial warmth; if we neglect this, the flowers will fade and the plants cease to flourish.

Another precaution should be in regard to dust. When dust is allowed to settle on plants it closes the respiration of the leaves, and stops their breathing, for the leaves are the lungs of vegetation. If dust has accumulated by accident or thoughtlessness, it should be removed by a syringe immediately.

If plants are troubled by worms in the soil, the plants should be removed until the soil has been examined, bit by bit, and if the intruders are there, a little ammonia in a gallon of water poured over the earth will kill them, and give fresh impetus to the flowers.

For pot-plants the best combination is, one part sand, one of loam, one of leaf-mould, and a small quantity of compost.

Geraniums, fuchias, and most analogous plants demand nothing more, while bulbs do better in a nearly-all sand soil. Vines need something richer.

Kitchen odours are not healthful to plants, choking them, and stopping their respiration. If, therefore, we must have our house-garden in a room adjoining the kitchen, we must take great pains to change the air frequently, but taking equal care to see that they are not chilled by the too great and sudden change of temperature.

The *Speciosa Fuchsia* will fail to bloom if kept growing all the year round. Let it rest during the summer, if you desire it to blossom during the winter. It needs to be kept dry during September, and at least half of its top to be cut off; then re-pot it in the fall, give it more water, and keep it in a shady place. An east window is best.

It requires a soil of leaf-mould and sand, and the pot—make sure it is a twelve inch one—must have the best of drainage. Great care and close attention is needed to make this plant a success.